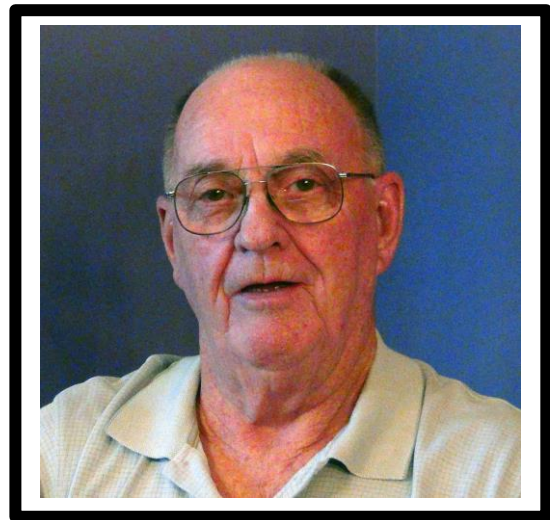
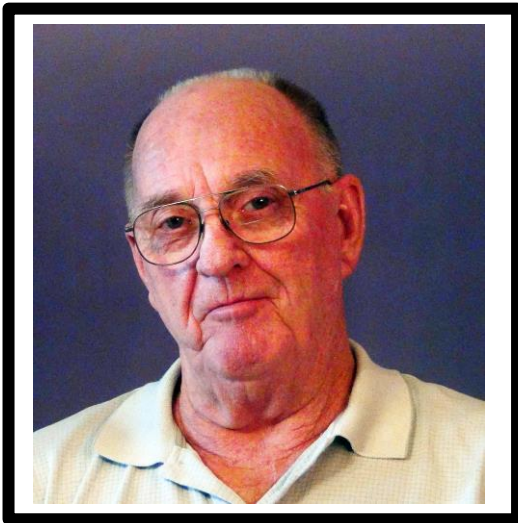


Transcript of Oral History Interview with

# **Richard Juker**

**Gladstone Volunteer Fire Department**

**November 1965 – December 1994**



with Oral Historian Kate Cavett of HAND in HAND Productions  
and Bob Jensen, President, Maplewood Area Historical Society  
for the Maplewood Area Historical Society

**On November 15, 2013**

at

HAND in HAND Productions' office in Saint Paul, Minnesota

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2014

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All pictures are from the Juker family  
and Maplewood Area Historical Society.

# ORAL HISTORY

Oral History is the spoken word in print.

Oral histories are personal memories shared from the perspective of the narrator. By means of recorded interviews, oral history documents collect spoken memories and personal commentaries of historical significance. These interviews are transcribed verbatim and minimally edited for accessibility. Greatest appreciation is gained when one can listen to an oral history aloud.

Oral histories do not follow the standard language usage of the written word. Transcribed interviews are not edited to meet traditional writing standards; they are edited only for clarity and understanding. The hope of oral history is to capture the flavor of the narrator's speech and convey the narrator's feelings through the timbre and tempo of speech patterns.

An oral history is more than a family tree with names of ancestors and their birth and death dates. Oral history is recorded personal memory, and that is its value. What it offers complements other forms of historical text, and does not always require historical corroboration. Oral history recognizes that memories often become polished as they sift through time, taking on new meanings and potentially reshaping the events they relate.

Memories shared in an oral history create a picture of the narrator's life— the culture, food, eccentricities, opinions, thoughts, idiosyncrasies, joys, sorrows, passions—the rich substance that gives color and texture to this individual life.

Kate Cavett

Oral Historian

HAND in HAND Productions

Saint Paul, Minnesota

651-227-5987

[www.oralhistorian.org](http://www.oralhistorian.org)



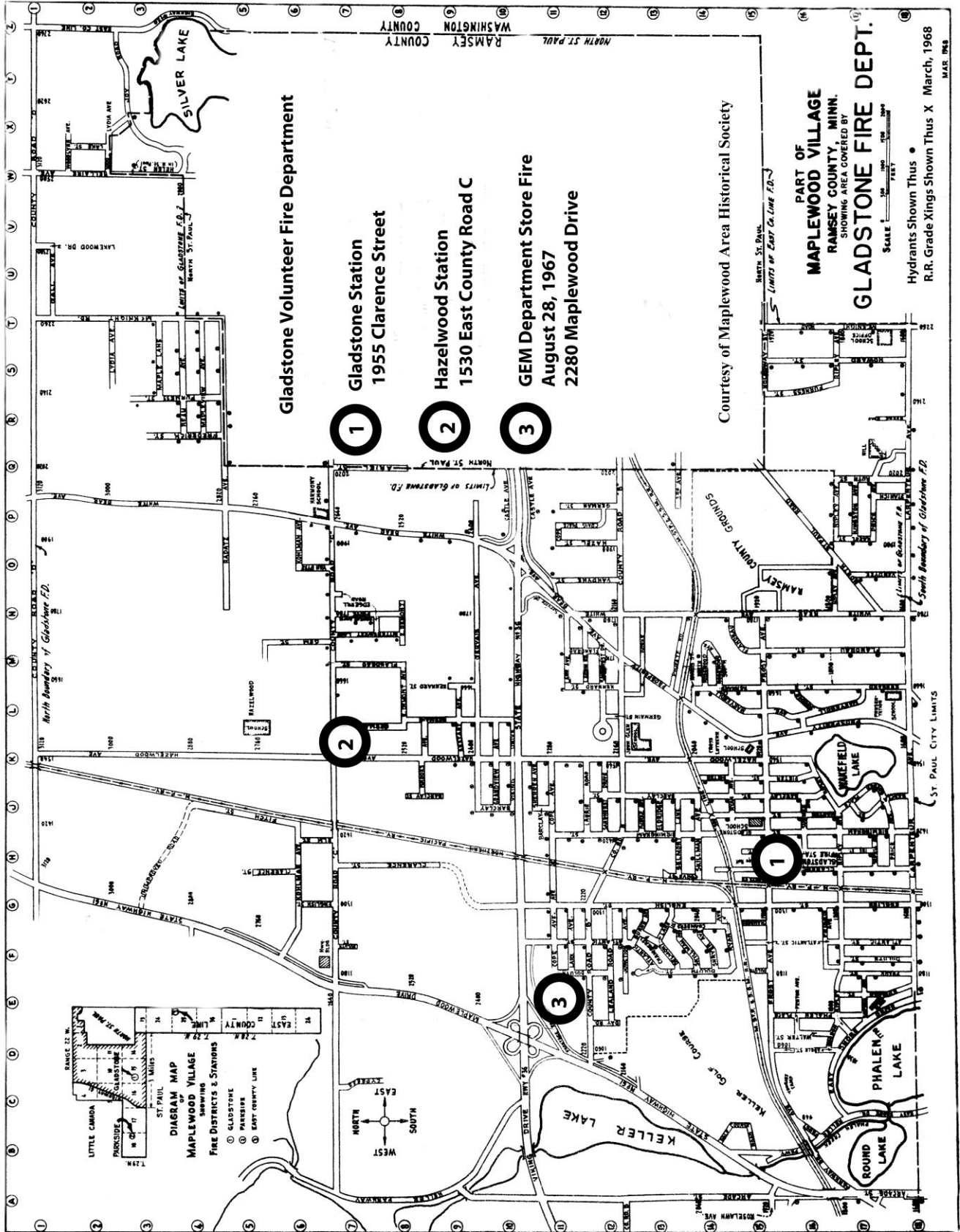
29 years old

1968



44 years old

1983



KC: Kate Cavett  
RJJ: Richard “Dick” John Juker  
BJ: Bob Jensen

RJJ: I’m Richard Juker. I like Dick better. I live on Barclay Street in Maplewood. I had my house built there. It will be fifty years in December that I moved into my house next month. And it was an exciting time in our life. We lived in apartments for three, four years, so this was a whole new experience. Like I say, it will be fifty years since I moved in there, and I don’t know how much longer I can stay there, but hopefully a few more years.

But I was there for a couple of years, and I thought—I see the fire trucks go by, and I started—my neighbor right behind me, he was a fireman for the Gladstone Fire Department<sup>1</sup>. We started talking and he said, “Well, you should join the fire department.” He said, “It’s a heck of a nice—it’s a good group of guys and helps the community.” So I said, “Well, I’m interested.” And he says, “Well, I’ll get a application.” Which he did. Filled it out and sent it down there, and I never heard anything from them for, I don’t know, three, four, five months.

Well, then every year they had a fireman’s dance, and they’d mail out the tickets to all the people in the Gladstone area. And then the firemen would come around and collect for them. If you wanted to donate, or if you didn’t donate, it didn’t matter. You know, a lot of times, we’d ask for the tickets back, but most of the time, we knew the people that, well, they couldn’t afford to donate or whatever. The money that we raised went to the Firemen’s Relief Association. So anyway, this fireman by the name of Jerry Nelson who became a real good friend of mine, he come knocking on my door for the firemen’s dance, and he

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<sup>1</sup> Gladstone Volunteer Fire Department chronology Appendix A

introduced himself. Of course, he was in uniform, and I said, "Yeah, I wouldn't donate a penny to that fire department." And he said, "Oh, why not?" "Oh, well, I put my application in four or five months ago, and I never heard a word." And he said, "Well, I'll take care of that."

And he jumped in his car, and boom, off he went. And he came back about fifteen minutes later and he says, "Come on." He says, "The chief is down there right now, and he wants to interview you." "Great." So I went down there. And this was in 1964. And they interviewed me, and of course, they were looking mainly for personnel that worked nights and were around in the daytime, and at the time, I was working for American Hoist<sup>2</sup>, and I was working split shift, one month days and one month nights, one month third. So I was around—two out of the three months, I was around in the daytime. That's mainly where they needed the help, so they—I joined. They accepted my application and I joined the fire department in November 1965, and I was on until December 1994.

RJJ: Yep, I was on the next day. Oh, yeah. Yeah, they—I don't remember what day it was, but as of that day—I signed the papers that night. I went down and interviewed with the chief and the assistant chief. Al Schadt<sup>3</sup> was the chief at that time, and Al Schilla<sup>4</sup> was the assistant. And between them, they had many years

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<sup>2</sup> **American Hoist & Derrick** began in 1885 as The American Manufacturing Company and changed its name to American Hoist and Derrick Company in 1892. The company became international in 1905. It was located on the West Side Flats, south of the river and downtown Saint Paul at Robert Street.

<sup>3</sup> **Al Schadt** was a Gladstone firefighter June 28, 1949, to March 1, 1981, was chief 1965 to 1968; and city fire marshal 1968 to 1985, with 36 years of service.

<sup>4</sup> **Alwin Schilla** was a Gladstone firefighter February 8, 1944, to 1965; was chief 1952 to 1964; with 21 years of service.

on the fire department already, and I don't really remember the interview. All I know is I went down there, and they accepted me. And they fit me with gear. I had a hook in the station where my gear hung, and I was officially on. But they told you, you know, if you come down here, you just stand there and watch. You can get on a truck, but make sure you're with somebody all the time. Don't try to go off and be a hero and do this by yourself until you get a little bit of training.

KC: I see you brought some notes with you, let's just put them right out there for easy reference.

RJJ: Well, that's some of the stuff my wife wrote down. [both laugh]

KC: It's nice having an assistant. You must be a very important person.

RJJ: Oh, well she—I'll tell you. She's a great woman. She does about 99% of the stuff that has to be done around here. All I do is take care of the outside and maintenance. She does all the cooking and the washing and the cleaning and whatever. You know, like I said, she's very devoted to me. Yeah.

KC: Now, when you were on the fire department, that took a lot of time. Can you talk about—my illusion is that you didn't have a lot of time for doing other things around the house with all the time and training you spent at the fire station.

RJJ: Yeah, it wasn't that bad. We had—drills were Tuesdays and Saturdays. And they started at, if I remember right, 0700 o'clock at night on Tuesday night, 0900 o'clock on Saturday morning. And they usually lasted for a couple of hours.



They—you know, we'd take the trucks out. We'd learn how to drive. We'd learn how to pump water. We'd—at that time, everything was taught by the old-timers, you know, the guys that were on the fire department for many years, and there was a few fellows that were really into it. They'd do studies on various hoses or various nozzles and light water foam. There was always new things coming up. It was really interesting. Like I say, you could put in a lot of time, but mainly Tuesdays and Saturdays.

RJJ: Trying to think. Oh, we had telephone. At the time I moved into my house, the only telephone you could get was a party line. Once you're on the fire department—you had to get a private line. The phone company would give you a private line, because when the alarm went off, the telephone would ring steady for two minutes. It wouldn't ring and off, ring and off; it would just ring steady until you picked it up. And then once you picked it up, you would get the dispatcher, and he would tell you where the fire is over the phone, I never did that. That was my wife's job to pick up the phone, because I was on my way out the door, so. But that worked well for quite a few years, as far as alerting everybody. Of course, we had the siren on the fire station. If you were outside, the siren would go off, and they expected you to respond. You couldn't do it all the time, but you know, they wanted you to come when the fire alarm went off, so.

C I T Y O F M A P L E W O O D

MAPLEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT

DRILL SHEET

RESPONSE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY \_\_\_\_\_  
MEETING \_\_\_\_\_ DRILL \_\_\_\_\_ FIRE \_\_\_\_\_

GLADSTONE STATION

HAZELWOOD STATION

- 01 ~~ALLEN, R.~~
- 02 ~~ARMSTRONG, G.~~
- 03 ✓ AUBIN, D.
- 04 ✓ BREHEIM, R.
- 05 ✓ CARLSON, C.
- 06 ✓ CHATTERTON, D.
- 07 ✓ DABRUZZI, E.
- 08 ✓ EMBERTSON, J.
- 09 ✓ FINBERG, R.
- 10 ✓ FRANZEN, J.
- 11 ✓ HAGEN, T.
- 12 ✓ HARTWIG, R.
- 13 ✓ HENTON, N.
- 14 ✓ JUZER, P.
- 15 ✓ KANSIER, T.
- 16 ✓ KASMIRSKI, J.
- 17 ✓ KNUTSON, T.
- 18 ✓ LEDMAN, T.
- 19 ✓ LEO, R.
- 20 ✓ LIESENFELD, A.
- 21 ✓ LINDAHL, W.
- 22 ✓ LISSON, L.
- 23 ✓ MOORE, R.
- 24 ✓ MOTZ, E.
- 25 ✓ MULVANEY, D.
- 26 ✓ MULVANEY, T.
- 27 ✓ NELSON, J.
- 28 ✓ ORMSBY, G.
- 29 ✓ OSWALD, R.
- 30 ✓ PETERSON, T.
- 31 ✓ PIRRUNG, R.
- 32 ✓ RASMUSSEN, J.
- 33 ✓ RECKTENWALD, T.
- 34 ✓ SCHADT, A.
- 35 ✓ SCHADT, J.
- 36 ✓ SCHALLER, R.
- 37 ✓ TRUSKOLASKI, E.
- 38 ✓ VAUGHT, R.
- 39 ✓ PETERSON, R.
- 40 ✓ CUSICK, D.

- 41 ~~BERGLUND, K.~~
- 42 ✓ CHINANDER, A.
- 43 ✓ DICK, A.
- 44 ✓ FORSYTHE, W.
- 45 ✓ HELLER, G.
- 46 ✓ JOHNSON, G.
- 47 ✓ MIKISKA, W.
- 48 ✓ MONTGOMERY, W.
- 49 ✓ MORGAN, T.
- 50 ✓ OSWALD, J.
- 51 ✓ REYNOLDS, J.
- 52 ✓ SUMMERS, J.
- 53 ✓ TREPANIER, E.
- 54 ✓ WADLING, C.
- 55 ✓ WESTBERG, R.
- 56 ✓ VORWERK, R.
- 57 ✓ WEBER, H.
- 58 ✓ MURITZ, R.
- 59 ✓ Mc COLLUM, A.
- 60 \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICER IN CHARGE

NUMBER ATTENDED

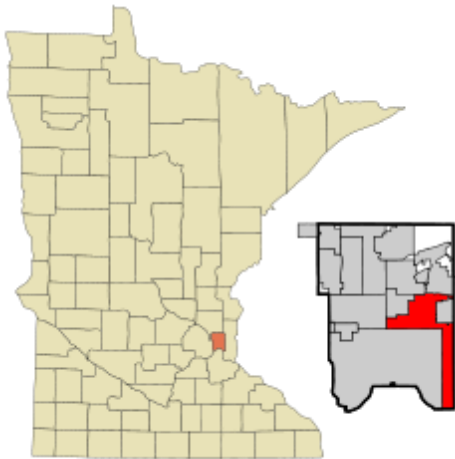
KC: Did you have to respond a certain percentage of the time?

RJJ: Well, in later years, yeah. When I first joined, it was whoever came was great, you know. But in the latter years that I was on the fire department, yes, there was a percentage that they wanted you to maintain, only because they were getting short of guys. And so they kind of put it on you. You had to maintain so many drills a year. You had to try to get whatever runs you could, because they wanted you—and it was very minimal part that they wanted you to maintain, but they did want you to try to get there as often as you could, you know. There was a lot of guys that, I hate to say it, but we'd be—we'd go down to the station, we'd go out on a truck, and we'd get six blocks from the station, they'd cancel us. And, you know, the fire was unfounded or whatever, because the police used to—anytime the fire siren went off, the police would always respond, too. And usually, the police were on the street in their squad cars, and they could get there right away. And they'd say, "Well, you can cancel the fire department. There's no fire here." And so we'd turn around and go back to the station. Well, there'd still be guys coming to the station, you know, to get their percentage up. They'd—we were returning from the fire, and they're just coming to the fire station. And that happened a lot. Well, I shouldn't say a lot. It happened. And of course, the chief—it was up to the chief.

So one thing I never wanted to be was chief, because it was just a—it was a lousy job, because it's all volunteer. Yeah, we needed a leader, and I think all the chiefs that I served under, they were all great guys, and they were all good leaders, I thought. But part of your job was to chew out these guys that weren't making their percentage. And how does a volunteer chew out a volunteer, try to get him to show up more?

I'm opposed to the full-time fire department, but it had to come. I always wished, back when I was, you know, my younger days, ten years on the department, that they'd have a full-time department. And I would have been the first guy on the list, because I was that gung-ho to be a fireman. But it never materialized. Maplewood<sup>5</sup> didn't have the money or whatever then.

KC: You got paid for every call you showed up for then?



City of  
Maplewood, Minnesota

RJJ: At the beginning, yes, we got fifty cents a call, and we got paid once a year. December first was payday. Well, actually, it ended December first, so you got the check about the third of December. And it was a big to-doo, because, I mean, we used to make a whopping \$200-\$300 a year, depending on how many calls you went.

And then, I think—it went on for quite a few years at fifty cents a call, and then finally we had some guys on the fire department that said, “You know what? I think we should get paid more.” And of course, they were trying to figure out how, and so they came up with a deal that they set aside—

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<sup>5</sup> **City of Maplewood** was incorporated in 1957 from New Canada Township in Ramsey County, Minnesota. New Canada Township was organized in 1858 and named by the earliest settlers who emigrated from Canada. It was largely dairy and truck farming until WWII veterans built homes and sought the comforts of suburbia. Maplewood was named for the maple tree which was a favorite of the township supervisors and for the nearby Maple Wood School and Maple Street. Gladstone, the earliest commercial neighborhood, was platted in 1886 and established a volunteer fire department in 1943. Parkside was a neighborhood that established a volunteer fire department in 1958. The city has a total area of 17.99 square miles.

and I don't remember the sum of money, but we got a budget from the City of Maplewood to run our fire department. We were independent firefighters. We contracted to the City of Maplewood, and the same with East County Line<sup>6</sup> and Parkside<sup>7</sup>.

Each department had a contract. We got paid x amount of dollars to serve the city, and with that money, we had to buy our own equipment, our own trucks, our own Scott air packs<sup>8</sup>, our own coats, boots, helmets. We had to pay our own electric in the building, the water. We had to maintain the building, and so, it was a pretty involved budget for a small, part time, volunteer fire department. And I think all the cities were going through the same thing.

But anyway, we got a budget, and we just took—and don't quote me on this, but it was like \$75,000 a year we had for responding to the fire calls. Well, it depended on how many calls we had per year, and how many calls you answered depended on how much you made. And it was a more fair deal that the guys that were really involved in the fire department, that showed up every time the alarm went off, they got paid for it, where the guys that kind of sloughed off and didn't want to show up, well, they didn't get paid. So you hope like heck there was not too many fires and not too many guys responding, and that would up your rate. And you know, it got up to—I think when I retired, and there again, I'm just off the top of my head, but we were making like eight or nine dollars a call, which was a lot better than fifty cents a call. And at the end of

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<sup>6</sup> **East County Line Fire Department** chronology Appendix B.

<sup>7</sup> **Parkside Fire Department** chronology Appendix C.

<sup>8</sup> A **Scott Air Pack** is a self-contained air breathing apparatus made by Scott Safety & Health Company for firefighters that includes a tank of fresh air connected to a face mask.

the year, we got—I'm thinking a thousand, twelve or fifteen hundred dollars. And there were some guys that were making a lot more than that, too. Then we also—the chief got paid extra to be chief. The assistant chief got paid for that. The captains got a little extra money. I was an engineer. I know I got paid fifty dollars a year extra to be an engineer.

KC: What's an engineer<sup>9</sup>?

RJJ: A driver. Drive the truck, operate the pumps, so. And there again, that's something that, back then, the engineer that was on the fire department, he would take you aside and say, "Hey, you want to be an engineer? You know how to drive a truck?" "Yeah, I know how to drive a truck." "Well, why don't you be an engineer?" "Yeah, okay, what do I have to do?" Well, he'd show you how. He'd show you what handles to pull and what things to do. And at that time, there was a lot of handles, a lot of valves and whatnot. And you'd go out and you'd learn from experience.

Sometimes, you'd get out to the call, and me, I only lived four blocks from the station, so I was generally one of the first ones at the station. And the first one at the station was expected to open the door and unlock the door, because you had to turn around and hit the lock. Otherwise, the guy next coming in, he would have to stop and stick the key in. So that was—you had to unlock the door, and then you had to go to the console, the radio, and tell the dispatcher that 120 acknowledges the call, and then he would repeat the call again. We had

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<sup>9</sup> The **engineer** drives the fire truck and operates the pump to ensure there is adequate water in the hose to the firefighters.

a big blackboard there, and you'd write on the blackboard where the fire was or whatever emergency. And then, generally, like I say, I was the first in the station.

There'd be two or three other guys right along with me, and one of us would answer the radio. And there's certain—a lot of guys just didn't want to drive the truck. No way. They'd rather ride on the back end or whatever. They didn't want to drive.

KC: Did you have previous training driving trucks?

RJJ: Well, yes and no. I drove my pickup. But no, they trained you. They—and at the time I joined the fire department, like I say, I was working at the Hoist, but I left the Hoist and I started driving for Metcalf Mayflower<sup>10</sup> over on Highway 36. And there we had, at the time, big straight trucks. And they were a little bit bigger than a fire truck. Not much, but about the same thing. So they—that's when they said, "Well, jeez, you drive a truck at work, why don't you drive the fire truck?" And that's fine. I guess—I don't know. I think everybody wants to drive a fire truck. I don't know, I did when I was a little kid, anyway. [Kate laughs]

Like I say, they trained you, and then you'd get out on calls. You know, we had house fires that we went to, and I always—engineer running the pumps, and the chief would come over: "You know what you're doing?" "Yeah, yeah."

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<sup>10</sup> **Metcalf Moving and Storage** at 1255 East Highway 36, Maplewood, MN 55109 began in 1919, became an agent for Mayflower Transit in 1967.



Fire hydrant

Currently located in front of Juker home

on. He'll come over and help you through it." And that's how we learned back in them days. We taught one another, I guess.

They have schooling now. At 916 [Vo-Tech] <sup>13</sup>, they set up a firefighting school where they train. A new recruit had to go this 916 and get Firefighter I, II, and III, if I remember right, which I think that's why they lost a lot of the volunteerism, because that required a lot of time.

KC: Did you go through the training for Firefighter I?

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<sup>11</sup> **Ready Line** or Attack Line or Initial Attack Line - A 1 ½" diameter fire hose on the fire truck that is ready to be quickly deployed to attack or spray water on the fire. It is pre-connected to the fire engine pump and can be quickly pulled from the truck and pressurized (charged) with water.

<sup>12</sup> **Fire hydrant** is an active fire protection measure, and a source of water provided in most urban, suburban and rural areas with municipal water service to enable firefighters to tap into the municipal water supply to assist in extinguishing a fire. Buildings near a hydrant may qualify for an insurance discount since firefighters should be able to more rapidly extinguish a fire on the insured property.

<sup>13</sup> **916 Vo-Tech** was an Area Vocational Technical Institute at 3300 Century Avenue North in White Bear Lake, began in 1969 and in 1996 was merged with Lakewood Community College to create Century College to provide post-secondary education in technical and occupational areas, including adult extension programs to prepare for or upgrade employment skills, such as firefighting.



RJJ: No, I never went through any of that, because it was basically the same things as I already knew. They just—like I said, there was a few guys, and I think Maplewood and maybe Oakdale and Woodbury, maybe North Saint Paul, they all got their heads together and said, “You know, we should have some schooling through a certified school like 916 [Vo-Tech] to train these guys.” So they—I think they all went to 916 [Vo-Tech] and told them what they wanted, and they set up this course. It was all the guys that were on the fire department put in their input. I was never on that committee, but like I say, there was a lot of guys that volunteered a lot of time to set up this stuff. The guys that came on later, I would say the last fifteen years I was on the fire department, they had this training at 916 [Vo-Tech], and it just required a lot of time. And like I say, a lot of guys—there was a lot of guys to that joined the fire department, and once they found out how much they had to go school, they quit. They just couldn’t handle it. The wife couldn’t let them go. I mean, this was all at nighttime, they had to go to school, and...

KC: I want to go back to the early days with the calling. Now, a phone call would come in with the long ring. Did you then have to call someone else, or was that your wife who did that?

RJJ: That was the wife. We had a call—I think I showed you. We had a call sheet that we had, and it’s right here on the front. And it would signify—it would tell who had to call who, and that was the wife’s job. My thing was to get to the fire station, so. She would make—it was what they call a mushroom call. If I remember it right, the chief and the assistant chief started it out, their wives, and then it would mushroom out to the rest of the fire department.

KC: What happened if a guy wanted to be a firefighter and he wasn’t married?

RJJ: Well, he was put on the end of the list then. [Kate laughs] He was way over here where he didn't have to call anybody, so.

KC: So this was a married deal.

RJJ: Yeah, pretty much. Yeah.

KC: As I look at the list you got a call from [Jim] Franze<sup>14</sup>, and then—

RJJ: And then I think I had to call [Dennis] Aubin<sup>15</sup> And that changed over the years depending on guys retiring or quitting or moving on or whatever. Every year we got a new call list.

KC: Where did you have your call list posted?

RJJ: In the cupboard door in the kitchen by the telephone. We still have one there, in fact. Lot of the guys that we're still friendly with, and you don't know their phone numbers, you open the cupboard door and there it is. My wife taped it up there right by the telephone. Well, she knew who she had to call, you know. But that was—that was only if the phones didn't work. Because everybody—the phone would ring in everybody's house, but say for some reason the siren went off and they never sent anything, where the telephones didn't go off, the siren

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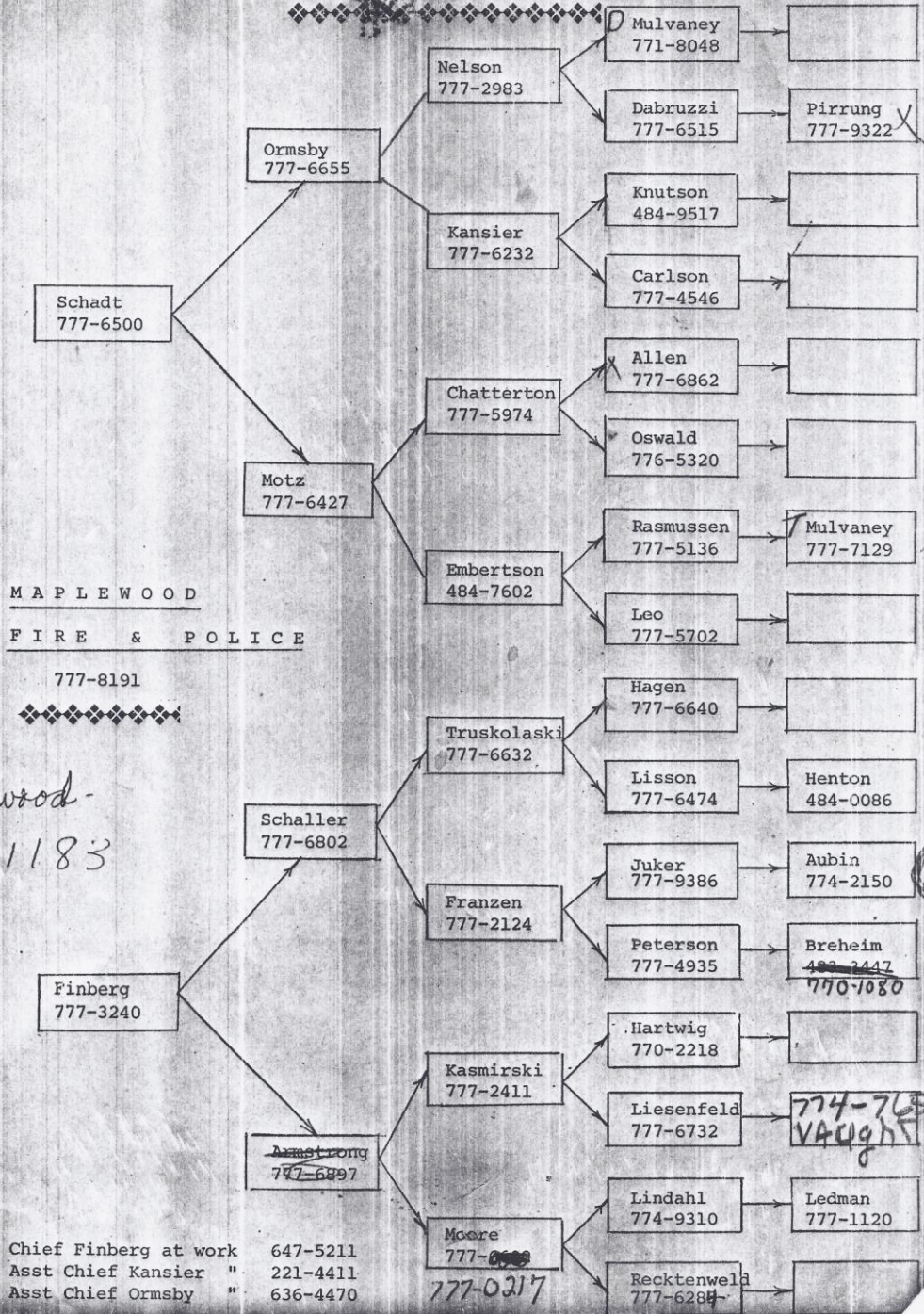
<sup>14</sup> **Jim Franzen** was a Gladstone firefighter July 11, 1967, to July 3, 1993; was chief 1985 to 1991; with 26 years of service.

<sup>15</sup> **Dennis Aubin** was a Gladstone firefighter May 9, 1972, to January 20, 2001; with 28 years of service.

# GLADSTONE FIRE DEPT

REVISED  
8-72

MAPLEWOOD, MINN



MAPLEWOOD  
FIRE & POLICE  
777-8191

*Hogelwood-*  
*770-1183*



Chief Finberg at work 647-5211  
Asst Chief Kansier " 221-4411  
Asst Chief Ormsby " 636-4470

went off, and then you'd call the person that you were supposed to call and say, "Hey, the siren has gone off, but no phone service."

KC: But you could hear the siren from your house.

RJJ: Yeah, yeah. I was just four blocks away. It was loud. Generally speaking, I couldn't hear it if the windows were shut. You could hear it, but faint, you know. But in the summertime—in fact, there's a lot of people over the years complained—you know, in later years, complained that that stupid siren is going off all the time, especially the guy that lived right next door [to the siren]. He lived there for years, and I forget his name now. I didn't think I'd ever forget his name, but he complained, because the siren was, you know, like right in his bedroom window. I mean, it was way up high, but you know, 0230 in the morning, that siren would go off. Well, finally we agreed that okay, we won't blow the siren from 10:00 [2200] o'clock at night until 0700 o'clock in the morning, so that made them happy for a while. An then after a while he was unhappy because he was taking a nap in the afternoon and it woke him up. It also alerted the people in the neighborhood that there's something going on. Kids out in the sidewalk or street or whatever, that clear the streets because the fire department is coming, so. And there's a lot of cars and whatnot coming into the station.

KC: I grew up in a small town and we had a volunteer fire department. I remember that was part of life—sirens. And a lot of people would jump in their cars and follow the fire truck.

RJJ: Oh, yeah, yeah. We had that, too. I think Parkside—I'm not sure. I think their siren still goes off. It seems to me I hear it at noon every day. A lot of fire departments blow it at noon, at 6:00 [1800] o'clock, at 10:00 [2200] o'clock at night. We never did any of that. But I know North Saint Paul, they blow their siren at noon, yet, so. Just something that they're trying to carry on that I don't know if it's good, bad, or otherwise.

KC: Can you talk about how your service to the fire department affected your family?

RJJ: Well, they—I think they all—well, they all grew up with it. Like I say, my oldest boy, he was like three or four years old when we moved into the house. He was probably six or seven when I got on the fire department, so they kind of grew up with it. And they accepted that, you know, if they hear the siren, get out of the driveway, go to the side of the street, because there's people responding from all over. I don't think I ever had any problem as far as—I know my third—my middle son, Greg. He was the one that was really involved. He liked to get involved in the fire department, different activities and that. But the other kids, they didn't seem to, one way or another, mind if I was going. They knew that if they heard the siren or the telephones that Dad was going. And it happened a lot on birthday parties. Christmas Eve, I know we've had—it seems like every year we'd have a Christmas tree fire or something on Christmas Eve. So—but they just carried on, you know. It was like, "Okay, Dad's going, but he'll be back." And that pretty much sums it up as far as the kids.

KC: Didn't your daughter write you a letter about your service and how she felt about you going off?

RJJ: Yes, and I forgot—I know my wife talked about it, but yeah, that was my oldest daughter. She's a pretty sentimental girl, and she wrote a letter that, you know, it

seemed like every time there was something going on, Dad had to go to the fire. I know my wife kept the letter. I didn't know she did. She says she's got it in a safe place. We can ask my wife, and she can come up with a date on that, because like I say, I'm a poor one on dates. That was my wife's job, taking care of all the stuff and keeping it together.

**In 1992, 28 year old daughter Pamala Juker wrote this letter to her parents.**

12-26-92

Mom & Dad -

I've wanted to tell you how much I love, admire, and respect you both.

Dad - the quality I admire the most in you is your ability to give - to us, others and strangers.

All my life you've had to give to others by always leaving at what I felt was a inopportune time - fire calls. You would leave during dinner, birthdays, tornadoes and holidays - I was extremely selfish!

You gave yourself 100%+ to help someone in need - with their lives or their home. This kind of commitment to life is admirable.

How many people would give of themselves, no matter what they're doing, to try to help someone else from devastation.

I only hope I can give of myself like you've given to others. You've never made me feel

second best - you're also have given to us kids more than we know or begin to repay.

I know you don't expect to be repaid - I hope I have as much courage to give as you do.

I have great sadness for the people who lost their home last night and I'm very proud to know my father was there trying to save what he could of their home.

Just imagine what this world would be like without people like you.

Thank You dad for a beautiful life I love You!

Mom - Your recent situation really gets everyone thinking -

I'm glad they were a poor shot - they would've robbed me of one of my most precious gifts - my mom - again selfishness - I want you around a lot longer - for me

and my kids.

I've always admired your strength. You're a very courageous woman - during those tornadoes Dad would have to run off in - you had to calm down four scared and frantic little ones plus worry about your husband "out there." It must have been difficult.

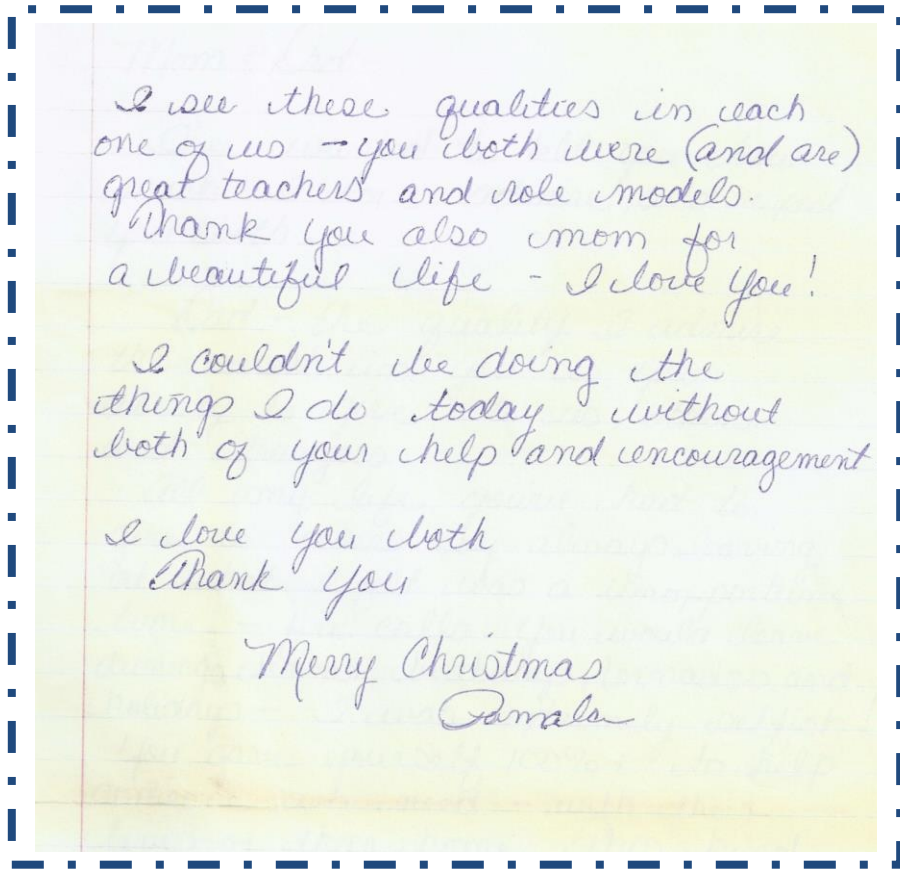
You've always done everything that needed to be done - that needed a lot of strength, especially when Dad was away - I'm exhausted with just 2 kids and a husband who stays in town.

You see things in your community that needed to be done - and you did something about it - you were gone a lot with being on the Council - giving of yourself (like Dad) to make this a better place for all of us.

Your drive and assertiveness is outstanding!

You are two extraordinary parents that four kids have ever been raised with.





Like I say, at that time, it was Saturday drills and Tuesday drills, so I tried not to hit both of them, because usually it was a repeat. You did the drill on Tuesday, and it was pretty much the same thing on Saturday. But you got different guys giving the drill, and everybody would have a little bit different input on how to handle a hose or hook up a hose or whatever. And so you got—there was—like I say, back at that time, it was mainly guys that you—they'd been in the fire service for a long time, and you had to trust them.

We had house burnings, where they'd—people would want to get rid of a house, and instead of somebody coming in and tearing it down, they'd contact the fire department, and we'd use it for drills. We'd go in and we'd set fires in the house, go in and put the fire out. And then we'd come out and whoever, the

firebug<sup>16</sup> we had, he'd go in and set a fire in the basement, and we'd have to go in and put that fire out. We'd do that three, four, or five times, and then we'd burn the house down. And that was good training there, because you knew what the fire was doing. I had no idea going into a house what to expect until I actually went in. I had Tom Kansier I remember he was assistant chief at the time, and he was right by my side. He had ahold of my coat and I had ahold of the nozzle. And I got in there and I seen that fire coming over my head, and I thought, "Oh, my God, what am I doing in here?" And he said, "Well, hit it." And I'm sitting there: "What?" "Hit the fire!" He'd be yelling at me, and he'd shout, "Turn the nozzle. Hit the fog and sweep it around." Did that and all of a sudden, boom, it was gone. The fire was out, and I thought, "Wow, that was fun. That was neat." And I did quite a few of them drills. Like I say, after a while—I was at a few house fires over the years, but not that awful many, because I was always running the pumps on the truck, so.

KC: Was there ever a time when you were frightened, when it was very—it was dangerous?

RJJ: Well, there was one time. I remember it was the Meister's house up on Frost Avenue, right off White Bear Avenue. And it was Christmas Eve. They had a basement fire, which—basements are always dangerous, because there's usually only one way out, and you have to go in and you have to come out that same staircase. And they had a basement fire, and it was, I don't know, six, seven o'clock at night. And at that time, when I first got on the fire department, we had a charcoal mask that you had a pack that you wore on your side here, and it hooked up to your facemask, and I know if you lifted your leg like that, it would

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<sup>16</sup> **Firebug** is someone who sets fires.

block off the intake, so you weren't getting any air, so you had to make sure that this side was down your side. I got one at home in the garage. I still got the dumb thing.



1992 Edition Air Pak, Mask, &  
4500 SCBA Cylinder

Anyway, we had graduated to Scott air packs, which was a tank on the back, and then the hose came around up to your mask. And we were at this fire up at Meister's house, and the tank, when it got so far empty, a bell would go off to let you know that you had to get out of the fire, because you're running out of air. You only got like, I don't know, two, three minutes left to get out. And this Denny Mulvaney<sup>17</sup>, at the time, he was down in the basement fighting the fire, and his bell was going off, so he came—I was going down the stairs, and he was coming up, and somehow his hand got in between my chest and that hose coming up from my tank, and he was trying to get out because he was running out of air, and it ripped my mask off. And I'm sitting there: "Wow, what am I doing down here?" And of course, I turned right around, because he was taking me with him. [laughs] He was going out. Yeah, that was a little bit—not scared, but I didn't like it, you know. As I say, I preferred to stay out on the pumps. But it so happens somebody else got down to the station before me, and they drove the truck, so you did what you had to do, so. That was really the only one that really scared me. And I was in on a few fires, but generally speaking, you always had a captain with you or a chief with you, assistant chief, that knew what was going on, and he'd tell you what to do, where to hit the nozzle, whatever.

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<sup>17</sup> **Dennis Mulvaney** was a Gladstone firefighter May 1, 1971, to August 4, 1981; with 10 years of service.

The fire that keeps coming to mind is the GEM Store fire<sup>18</sup>. That was the biggest fire. There again I was operating the pumps on the truck, but that thing was—that was just incredible. It was a big fire, so I think that was the biggest one. I know—

KC: The biggest one you fought?

RJJ: Yeah.

KC: What do you remember about that fire?

RJJ: Well, I remember I was sick. I had a heck of a head cold, and I come home from work and I tell my wife, I said, “Don’t even bother me. I laid down on the couch, and I wasn’t laying there five minutes, and the alarm went off, and it came in as the GEM store. And I’m sitting there, you know: “What could burn at the GEM store?” So I got up and went down, and of course, I drove the first truck in and had Chief Bob Finberg<sup>19</sup>, and I says, “Where do we go?” He says, “Main entrance. Just pull up by the main entrance.” At that time, the smoke was rolling out of the front end, out of the roof, and I seen him go inside, and I thought, “Oh, my God. He’s going—“He was going in to try to find out where the fire was. And, of course, by that time, fire trucks are coming from all over. And it was just—it was mass confusion for quite a while.

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<sup>18</sup> **Gem Store Fire** The GEM Department Store was located at 2280 Maplewood Drive, the southeast corner of Highway 61 and Highway 36, was a discount department store for members. A fire destroyed the store on August 28, 1967, noted for large plumes of dark smoke visible for many miles and shutting down Highway 61 to pump water from nearby Keller Lake.

<sup>19</sup> **Robert “Bob” Finberg** was a Gladstone firefighter February 9, 1955, to September 9, 1975, was chief 1969 to 1975; with 20 years of service.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 1967 ☆☆ THIRTY-SEVEN



THE FLAG STILL WAVED as flames and smoke billowed from the GEM, Inc., store in Maplewood. The building, at 2280 Maplewood Drive, was destroyed in a spectacular blaze Monday afternoon. Nobody was injured. Loss has been estimated at \$1.5 million to \$2 million, but the official amount won't be known until a report is completed on all the merchandise and leased departments of the store. — Staff Photo by Flynn Ell

But the fire had started in the garage area, and they had, I don't know, hundreds and hundreds of tires, new tires. And I think that was probably what was fueling the fire, and then it just moved down, and it burned the whole store. It was a total loss.

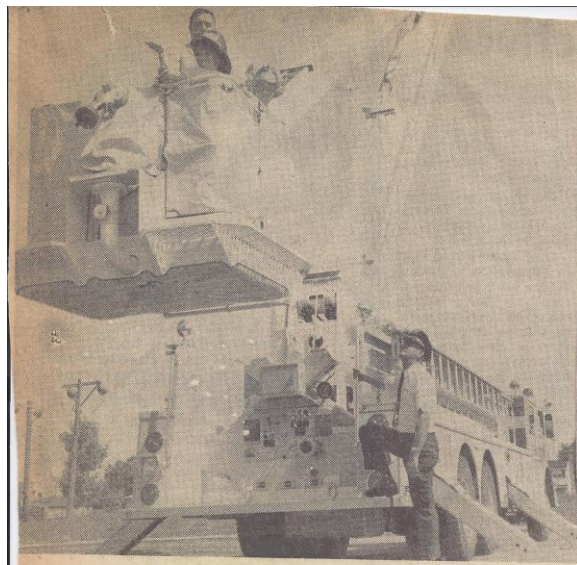
I was there from 4:00, 4:30 [1600/1630] in the afternoon 'til 1100/1200 ' the next day. Right through the night, we were pumping water on it, and not only our truck. There was four or five trucks involved. I know they had set up a hard suction<sup>20</sup> out of Keller Lake<sup>21</sup>, pumping the water across the highway in order to get enough water to put on it, because the hydrants we had—I don't know if we even had hydrants at that time down by the GEM store. So there was a couple of fire trucks that were pumping water out of Keller Lake. But then they relayed the water up to us, and we put the water on the fire, but it just didn't seem to do any good.

That's where they realized that we need something to elevate the water, and I think it was shortly after that that the city bought a snorkel, so we could elevate a platform so we could get up above and dump water on it, because there—when we were squirting water at it, we were just hitting a brick wall right in front of us. I mean, it could go over the top, but you didn't know if it was going on the fire or not, so.

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<sup>20</sup> A **hard suction hose** is a type of fire hose designed for use by a fire engine when it uses vacuum to draw water from a dump tank, pool or other unpressurized water source. It will not collapse under vacuum, unlike hoses designed to operate under pressure.

<sup>21</sup> **Keller Lake** is located southwest of the intersection of highways 61 and 36. Part of a chain of lakes feeding into Lake Phalen and adjacent to the Phalen-Keller Regional Park and the Keller Golf Course.



THE PRIDE AND JOY OF MAPLEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT  
A 'Snorkel' That Can Reach Top of Most Buildings

\*\*\* Sept 17, 1970

## New Snorkel Is Ready To Help Battle Fires

Maplewood has an \$85,000, fully-equipped "snorkel."

"It's going to help us fight fires," said Fire Marshal Al Schadt.

He said the "snorkel," an elevated platform attached to a fire truck, will reach the top of all buildings in Maplewood with

the exception of some in the Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing complex.

"We can go up 75 feet in the snorkel," Schadt pointed out.

He suggested that the new equipment will be especially effective in rescue operations:

"Taking somebody out

of a burning building on an elevated platform is a lot easier than going up and down a ladder," he said.

Schadt described the snorkel as the "pride" of

## New Snorkel Helps To Fight Fires

Continued from Page 1  
the 116-member Maplewood Volunteer Fire Department.

"It really helps morale to know that we have a first-class piece of equipment," he reported.

He said the snorkel places Maplewood in an elite group.

"I know of only two other fire departments in the St. Paul area with that kind of equipment," he noted.

Maplewood also has eight fire engines; two tankers, three jeeps, two rescue trucks and a boat

— all spaced out at three different fire stations.

"Our biggest problem up to now was in assuring ourselves of adequate means of fighting fires in multiple-story buildings," Schadt said.

"We are a rapidly-growing community," he reported, "with many multiple story apartment complexes."

He also pointed to towering school and church buildings!

"And what always worried us most was the Ramsey County Home," Schmidt said. "If we ever had a serious fire there, rescue operations would be important. With the snorkel, we feel more secure."

The snorkel also has a turret through which can be fed 1,250 gallons of water in a minute, the chief reported.

KC: Did they figure out a way to get the water up higher for the GEM store ?

RJJ: Well, they— whoever. I'm sure it was the chief's decision that they got a front end loader in there to knock down the walls on the front so you could get the fire—so you could get at the fire. Again, it was too hot of a fire to go inside. There was no way you could go inside that, because it was a big store. It's where the Menard's is now. And it was—like I say, it was a huge store. They had everything there. They did mechanical work. You could buy clothing. You could buy paint.

I know I ran up a heck of a charge account, because we belonged to it, and like I say, I had my house built at that time, and it was so easy just to go over to GEM store and charge a gallon of paint or a paint brush or whatever, and all of a sudden, we got our bill one day, and I thought, "Oh, my God."

KC: The GEM fire. Now this was a mutual aid<sup>22</sup> fire. You had to call in other departments. Can you talk a little bit about mutual aid, how that worked?

RJJ: Well, the GEM store was in Gladstone area. And anytime you got anything of any consequence size of fire, they call mainly the other two stations in Maplewood, which usually respond with the first one, wherever. If East County Line had a big house fire, Gladstone would respond out there. And then if we had a big fire that we just needed more help, we'd call for mutual aid, which was North Saint Paul, Roseville, Oakdale, Woodbury, and they would send whatever. We'd tell them we just need manpower, so they'd send one unit with six, seven guys on it. And most of the time, that's all we needed was manpower, so. The GEM store, we needed a lot of fire trucks there. Tankers, whatever to get the water there.

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<sup>22</sup> In emergency services, **mutual aid** is an agreement among emergency responders to lend assistance across jurisdictional boundaries. This may occur due to an emergency response that exceeds local resources, such as a disaster or a multiple-alarm fire. Mutual aid may be *ad hoc*, requested only when such an emergency occurs. It may also be a formal standing agreement for cooperative emergency management on a continuing basis.



## GEM DEPARTMENT STORE FIRE

One of the most dramatic fires in Maplewood was at the GEM department store on August 28, 1967. The store was located where Menard's is now situated in the southeast corner of Highway's 61 and 36.



The fire apparently started as an explosion in the paint section of the housewares department at 4:25pm. At least 10 fire departments sent equipment to fight the blaze and continued to pour water until 5pm the next day. The roof collapsed 40 minutes after the first rig from Gladstone arrived at the scene. Thick black smoke could be seen for miles as the merchandise smoldered with limited oxygen beneath the collapsed roof and from burning paint and tires. There was no sprinkler system, no nearby fire hydrants and the merchandise was piled nearly to the ceiling. Firemen used tankers to bring water to the scene and traffic on highway 61 was blocked so water could be pumped 1,600 to 2,000 feet from nearby Keller Lake. At 6:45 pm, a bulldozer driven by Hank Scharffbillig was used to push in several wall sections so firefighters could access the fire under the collapsed roof. He then lifted three firemen in the bulldozer's scoop to pour water from above.



The store had opened in October, 1962 as a discount membership store for government employees and other exclusive employees. [See membership form below] The store was built for \$1.5 million but was a total loss that was expected to exceed \$2 million. [See below photo] Its 130,000 square feet made it one of the largest merchandisers in the Twin Cities area. This was the 26<sup>th</sup> GEM store to open since 1956 and joined another Minnesota store in Bloomington that opened in 1958. Robert Wolfson, chairman of the board said in 1962 "This business is dynamic. Yesterday's assistant managers are tomorrow's vice presidents." He admitted he didn't know whether the membership discount store would still be on the scene 20 years from then. He said the principle of a membership store is it allows the retailer to select his market. GEM focused on those with an annual income of \$6,000 to \$12,000 [\$46,000 - \$93,000 in 2014].



## ELIGIBLE? Register Now Before LIFETIME CHARTER MEMBERSHIP ENDS

Two Dollars is All it Costs For a  
Lifetime of Happy Shopping at G.E.M.

If you are already a GEM Minneapolis member, or if you're employed by any of the groups shown and become a member before midnight on the 13th of Oct., 1962, then your Membership Card is a Lifetime Charter Card and will be honored as such by any GEM store in the U. S. without any annual renewal required. You'll never have to renew your membership (and you'll save the yearly renewal fees). Fill out the application blank and mail with your \$2 registration fee for your membership card that's good for the entire family—for life! If you're not completely satisfied GEM will refund your \$2 fee—any time!

### GEM IS EXCLUSIVELY FOR MEMBERS

You are eligible to join GEM if you are:

- 1. An active or retired employee of a Federal, State, County, or City Government office or agency.
- 2. An active or retired member of the Armed Forces; member of an active Reserve unit.
- 3. An employee of a religious, educational, or non-profit charitable organization.
- 4. An employee of a franchised public utility.
- 5. An employee of a firm performing substantial work under Government contract.

\*Subject to approval by GEM Membership Committee

**CHARTER MEMBERSHIP OFFER EXPIRES OCTOBER 13, 1962.**

If I remember right. Like I say, don't quote me, but I don't know if there was fire hydrants down that far. And it seemed to me, like I said, we had tankers. We didn't have a tanker on Gladstone. I think two of our trucks held a thousand gallons, and one, the First Respond [Truck] Number 8, that held five hundred gallons. And you can go through five hundred gallons in, boom, a couple of minutes, especially if you're shooting out two-and-a-half inch hose, so it was a matter of yeah, we had to get trucks in there—or fire departments that had tankers. East County Line had a tanker, Parkside [Fire Department] had a tanker, and I think they carried, I don't know, five, eight thousand gallons of water. And so they would shuttle water back and forth.

KC: Would they go to Gladstone station to fill up with water or—

RJJ: No, usually they went to their own station. But we had dump tanks<sup>23</sup> at that time. It was a canvas tank that we'd set up on the ground. It was—oh, boy, probably 8, 10 foot square, and it was 3 foot high, something like that. It was all portable. Something that you'd set up real fast, and they'd dump water into that and we'd suck water out of that, put it onto the fire. And I don't know if we had them at the GEM store or not. I think usually if the tankers came in, we hooked directly from the tanker into the pumper that was supplying the water onto the fire. But like I say, Parkside, if I remember right, they're—they set up a pumper down by Keller Lake. They set a pumper right there with a hard suction into the lake, and then they pumped water into another pumper, and that pumped water

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<sup>23</sup> A **dump tank** is a collapsible, temporary tank designed for storing water near a fire engine that is supplying water to a fire. It is typically used in rural areas where pressurized water from a fire hydrant is not available and tanker trucks must quickly drop their load of water and return for more.

into another pumper, and they would pump it into us, because it was a long ways. It was a couple of blocks that they had to move water, so.

KC: What's a hard suction, sir?

RJJ: Hard suction? It's a hard hose that you can suck water out of a lake and it don't collapse. A regular fire hose is soft. A hard suction is hard where—I think there's a couple on Old Betsy that I restored. They're either two-and-a-half or four inch, if I remember right. And you can suck water out of a lake or out of a stream or whatever, and it won't collapse, so. To get water into a pump.

KC: So what are the different size hoses that Gladstone would have?

RJJ: Well, we had the attack line<sup>24</sup> was an inch-and-a-half. That was a ready line. That was hooked up to the truck. If we go on a fire call, we had a fire on the scene, you jump up on the back end, there was a belt. The hose was all bundled, and it had a belt on it, with a buckle, and you just grab ahold of that belt buckle and you pull it off and you get—I think we had like 250 feet of hose in that bundle, and you'd throw it on the ground, take the belt off, and the nozzle was right there. Then you'd grab the nozzle and run to the fire, and by that time, hopefully the engineer has got water going through that hose. And you get to the house and you've got the nozzle. Number eight, the last truck that I drove, it had two of them ready lines on. They call them ready lines.

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<sup>24</sup> **Attack Line** or **Initial Attack Line** or Ready Line— A 1 ½" diameter fire hose on the fire truck that is ready to be quickly deployed to attack or spray water on the fire. It is pre-connected to the fire engine pump and can be quickly pulled from the truck and pressurized (charged) with water.

And then that was initial attack hose, and then the two-and-a-half inch [fire hose], which is the next size. That—usually you didn't go into a fire, because it was just too hard to handle. There was just too much there, but that was fighting a fire from the outside, you use a two-and-a-half [fire hose]. And that's pretty much the only two hoses we had, until—well, we got a four inch [fire hose], but a four inch hose was just to move water from one truck to another, from the hydrant to the truck.

Ron Oswald<sup>25</sup> was the one that initiated the four inch hose. He was a captain on the Gladstone fire department. And I know we had converted one of our trucks. We built a big reel on the back end, and we could lay out—boy, I don't remember how many hundred feet he had, like a thousand feet or something like that of four inch hose that we would reel it off from the reel and hook it onto the fire hydrant and onto the truck, and then once the fire was over, you would just back up and reel it right back up on that reel on the back end of the truck. And it worked for a while, but I don't know. Like I say, a lot of that stuff was experimental back then. Ron – Ozzie, we called him – he was great. He was a cabinet maker. In fact, he still lives in the same building that he's been in for eons, right next to the Maplewood Bowl. But he was also a very instrumental guy on the fire department, experimental. He would try this and try that. "I think we should do this." And some of it worked, some of it didn't, but he had good ideas. Like I say, for a cabinet maker, he was a good firefighter, so. [Kate laughs]

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<sup>25</sup> **Ron "Ozzie" Oswald** was a Gladstone firefighter November 11, 1952 to March 11, 1980; with 28 years of service.

And then eventually, he went into fire hose, Ron Oswald fire hose.<sup>26</sup> He initiated—the Germans were the only ones that had this four inch hose, and he

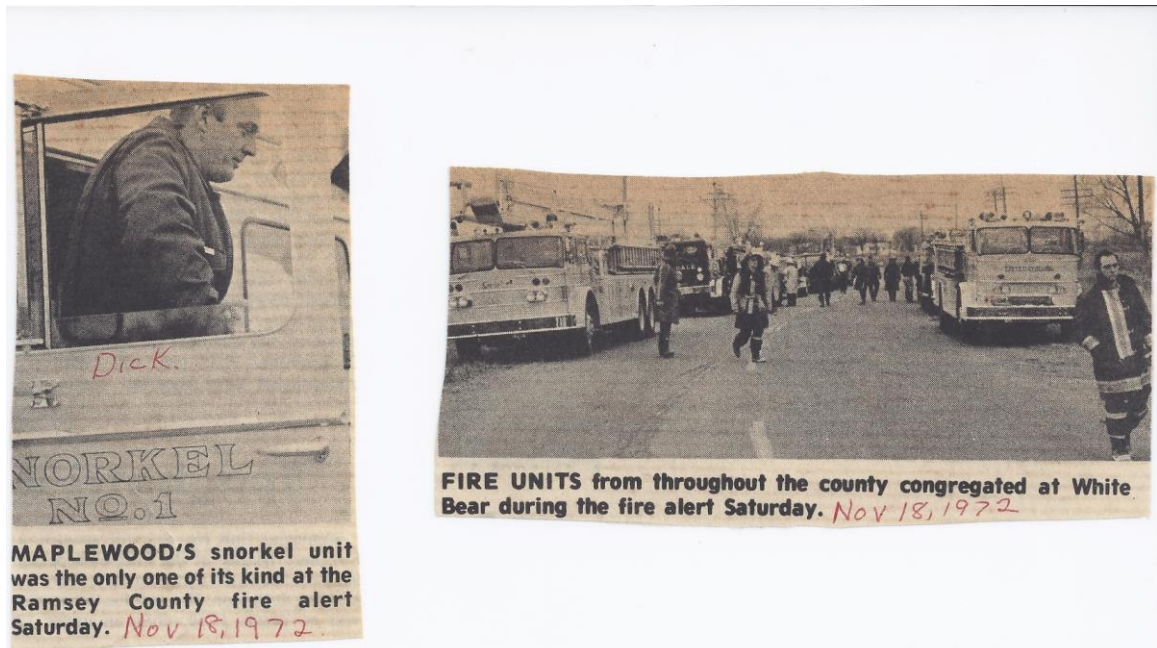


Storz Coupling

brought it over from Germany, and it had Storz coupling that was a quick connect coupling. And then he got into making various valves and various fittings, and he kind of went out of the cabinet business and into the fire hose business. And I think his son is still in it today, selling different hoses and different fittings and gate valves<sup>27</sup> and whatever, so.



Gate Valve



MAPLEWOOD'S snorkel unit was the only one of its kind at the Ramsey County fire alert Saturday. Nov 18, 1972.

FIRE UNITS from throughout the county congregated at White Bear during the fire alert Saturday. Nov 18, 1972

<sup>26</sup> Oswald Fire Hose became Oswald Hose and Adapters in 1987, and is located in Maplewood, MN.

<sup>27</sup> The gate valve, also known as a sluice valve, is a valve that opens by lifting a round or rectangular gate/wedge out of the path of the fluid. The distinct feature of a gate valve is the sealing surfaces between the gate and seats are planar, so gate valves are often used when a straight-line flow of fluid and minimum restriction is desired.

KC: We talked about how mutual aid helped Gladstone fight the GEM fire. Gladstone was called to the West Saint Paul fire. And you went to that fire. Can you talk a little bit about that fire?

RJJ: Well, I was—it was kind of weird that night, because they'd called us. I didn't know nothing about it other than, like I say, the alarm went off, you went down to station, and Dick Schaller<sup>28</sup> was chief of police in Maplewood and a good chief of police and a good friend. He lived a block from me down on Barclay Street. But he was—he drove the snorkel, which scared the living gee whiz out of me, because I don't think he ever drove anything bigger than a squad car.

KC: That was the first time he drove the snorkel?

RJJ: I don't know if it was the first. I think he trained on it, but he was excited, which I thought was kind of funny, because he's the chief of police, he should be used to the whatever, you know. But this was a big fire. When I came down to the station, he was already sitting behind the steering wheel. And he yelled at me: "Come on, Dick. Get in, get in, get in! You be captain!" So whoever sat in the front seat was captain until somebody relieved him, until a captain relieved you. So on that, all they wanted was a snorkel down there. They didn't want any manpower, just a snorkel and somebody to operate the snorkel. And the snorkel didn't have a pump on it, so we always sent number seven pumper along with the snorkel to supply the water for it. And I don't know if the city was trying to save money or we felt we didn't need to have a pump on that snorkel. I don't know the reasoning behind that, but everything since has had a pump on it.

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<sup>28</sup> **Richard Schaller** was appointed police officer July 7, 1956; promoted sergeant in 1958; captain July 1, 1960; chief October 1961; and retired April 29, 1982.

KC: How large was number seven's water tank?

RJJ: Oh, that was a thousand gallons, but there again, they hooked up to a hydrant out in West Saint Paul, and then they pumped the water into the snorkel, because all it was a telescoping water platform. And you could get up above it and squirt water on it. Anyway, going down there, Dick Schaller, he went over curbs, around corners, over curbs, and I thought, "Boy, we ain't gonna make it. We ain't gonna make it." But he got us there. And there again, we set up the snorkel. They told us where to go, and there was—it was like a bomb hit down there. It was two apartment buildings. One here, one here. And this tank in the middle had blevied, blew out like a rocket ship on both sides, just devastated the buildings. And they just told us, "Go over here and dump water on this building until you get the fire out." And I don't remember—I know we spent most of the night there, just—there was nothing else you could do but dump water on it.

KC: It was winter, wasn't it?

RJJ: Yeah. I thought it was in January.

KC: Because I remember that fire, and I remember the pictures in the paper, and it looked like it was cold and that there was a lot of ice.

RJJ: Yeah, here. Charlton Park building at 120 West Thompson and Bellows Court apartment buildings. January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1974, so yep, it was right after Christmas.

KC: Did you have to go up in the snorkel?

RJJ: Yeah, we went up in the snorkel and that's where I spent the better part of the night, just Dick Schaller and I up in the snorkel dumping water. There's not much else you can do but hell, move the hose back and forth and try to put out that fire. It was—just everything was burning. I mean, it just—

Jan-11-1974-

# Many Feared Dead In W. St. Paul Blast

Several huge fuel storage tanks in an apartment complex in West St. Paul exploded at 12:30 a.m. today blowing walls out of buildings, setting fire to two nearby buildings and injuring dozens of residents.

One policeman told a Pioneer Press reporter at least two firemen were killed. Another officer reported many people were killed in the blast.

Police were evacuating a four-block area because a 45,000 gallon propane storage tank nearby was being threatened by blasts and fire.

St. Paul sent five fire engines, one chief and five ambulances to the scene.

Nearby churches were thrown open and command posts set up to aid residents evacuated from the four-block area.

One eye-witness report said a tanker truck was apparently filling the above-ground storage tanks when fire broke out.

Fire engines arrived shortly after and firemen began pouring water on the flames. Within seconds a blinding flash of light and a huge explosion shook the entire area, a w a k e n i n g people far away as the Midway area and Mendota Heights.

A half-hour after the blast St. Paul fire officials were asking for more fire fighting equipment and warning about the possibility of additional explosions.

Eyewitness reports said Bellows Court Apartments on Bellows Street was burning, along with several other apartment buildings on the site.

Flames spread to a nearby garage housing autos and gas tanks exploded as the flames leaped from one end to the other.

St. Paul police officials sent 18 squad cars to the scene in an effort to control traffic, and keep relatives of apartment dwellers from trying to reach the burning buildings. Emergency vehicles carrying injured to area hospitals were having difficulty getting through congested traffic.

An employe at the Northern States Power Co. (NSP) High Bridge Plant witnessed the explosion, describing it as worse than any B52 bomber raids he's seen.

A nearby resident said he thought an airplane was involved because "something was burning high in the air over the buildings."

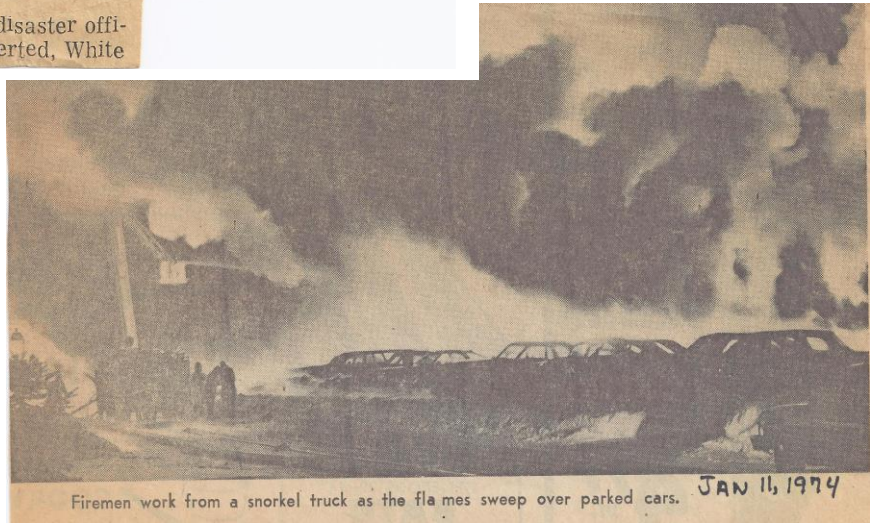
Red Cross disaster officials were alerted, White

Bear Lake sent squads to the scene and the Metropolitan Transit Commission sent buses to evacuate residents from the area.

Early reports said the Charlton Park and Bellows Court apartment buildings were burning and firemen feared more explosions would spread flames to two nearby buildings.

Shortly before 2 a.m. two St. Paul fire squads were ordered back to their stations because they were no longer needed.

The 1 a.m. relief crew was kept on overtime duty in St. Paul in order to maintain the city's police patrolling.



Firemen work from a snorkel truck as the flames sweep over parked cars. JAN 11, 1974





KC: Did they relieve you with other people's department or you just two of you had to stay up there all night in the cold?



Turnout gear

RJJ: No, just the two of us. Yep. Yeah, yeah. We had our gear with us. You know, you had—your helmets have liners in it and you have gloves and you got your turnout equipment. Actually, it's pretty warm. Summertime, you'd sweat like crazy [Kate laughs], because depending on how hard you were working. Boy, you had to wear that gear, you know, so it was a protection, so.

KC: Can you talk a little bit about the culture of the Gladstone fire department and the involvement of families?

RJJ: Well, we had—like I say, all in all, I think it was a great bunch of guys. There was a few guys that you didn't exactly think the way they thought, but we'd have

different functions. Our firemen's dance was a big thing, but we always had, you know, the women's auxiliary. All the wives belonged to the auxiliary, or they wanted them to belong to it. And they would set up parties where we'd put the trucks out on the apron, and we'd have a Halloween party, a dress up party. You'd come down there and the fire department would—a couple of the gals, we had some Italians on there, and they made terrific hot dagos. And they'd make up a pan of hot dagos and maybe a coleslaw salad or something like that, and we'd go down there and we'd have just a get together of all the wives and husbands and that, and like I say, it was a lot of fun. We had a lot of fun also. Picnics. In summertime, we'd always have a picnic at Gladstone, at Wakefield Park.



Dick Juker is behind the wheel of Old Betsy—the fire truck.

KC: So your wife was involved in the auxiliary.

RJJ: Yeah, yeah, she was on the auxiliary all the time I was on the department. All the kids at that time. The kids were small, various ages, and a lot of friendships. My oldest daughter Pamala, she became friends with Jody Franzen who Jim Franzen lived down on Larpenteur and Clarence, and we lived over on Barclay, which was quite a distance between the two kids. But they went to school together, and they were in the same grade, and they found out that, "Oh, your dad's on the fire department. So is mine." So one day, they got to be nine, ten, eleven years old, they'd get together, and they'd call each other, "Well, I'll meet you down at the station." So that was their meeting—the fire station was their meeting spot. And they're very close friends today. Pam and my son-in-law Tim and Jody and her husband Bob are very good friends. They go out a lot together and do different things. So they've—their friendship has lasted all these years.



c. 1956



c. 1978 - 1997

KC: Probably the most important question I have for you, sir, is can you talk about the history of Old Betsy and getting Old Betsy?



RJJ: Well, this Mike Sanko, the owner, the fellow that I bought it from, he was living over in, I think, Golden Valley. And he found out his job was moving or something like that, and he couldn't bring Old Betsy with him. He wanted to restore it. He couldn't bring it with him, so he found out that on the hood of the truck, it said Excelsior Fire Department, but it also said—on the other side, it said Gladstone Fire Department. And the paint was all worn off, you know, hard to read, but he figured out Gladstone Fire Department owned it at one time, so. And then he found out that Gladstone was just a department in Maplewood. So he contacted Al Schadt at the time was—I think Al was the fire marshal at that time, and he contacted Al and told him his story that he's got Old Betsy, and he wanted to know if we were interested in buying it.



And Al says, “Well,” he says, he had to bring it up to the membership of the fire department, because everything was voted on in the fire department. You pay the bills, everybody voted. “Aye.” If you objected, they wanted to know why you’re objecting. But anyway, it was brought up to the membership of the fire department. It was like five or six of us guys that went over and looked at it. He had it in his garage. And we went over and looked at it. And of course, we were all, “Oh, yeah. Oh, we gotta buy this thing and restore it.” And so we went back—we had monthly meetings. Every month, we’d have a meeting on, I think it was like the first Tuesday of the month. And that was the meeting for the month where you pay all the bills and anything new coming up, whatever. So then we brought it up under “new business” that we wanted to buy this Old Betsy. And everybody: “What do we want with an old piece of junk like that?”

“Well, we thought it would be a good thing to get all the guys involved and various guys could do various, different things on it.” So anyway, it was brought up on the floor to buy it, and it lost by one vote to buy it, so I made the comment: “Well, if the fire department don’t buy it, I’m going to.” Of course, my wife didn’t know about it. [Kate laughs]

So I went home, and of course, she knew that was being brought up to vote on that night, because like I say, we were all gung-ho about buying this thing. And she says, “Well, what happened?” I said, “Well, it lost by one vote.” “Really?” “Yep,” I says. “They don’t want to buy it.” She says, “Well, what are you going to do?” I says, “Well, I’m going to buy it.” And of course, she just rolled her eyes, you know. “What are we going to do with this thing?” “I don’t know, but we’re going to buy it.” So we wound up buying it and bringing it home. Several friends on the fire department – Al Schadt’s son, Jeff Schadt<sup>29</sup>, he worked at Art’s Towing at the time, and he got a flatbed truck, and we went over and picked it up and brought it home and dropped it in my driveway. And it was restoration from then on. It was tear it all apart and try to put it all back together. It took quite a few years.

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<sup>29</sup> **Jeff Schadt** was a firefighter January 13, 1974, to March 30, 1994, and April 1, 1998, to May 1, 2008, with 30 years of service.

Old Betsey  
On Art's Towing  
Flatbed  
March 1977



Like I say, my son Greg was the one that was really interested. The rest of the kids, oh, they'd like to ride on it and that, but they didn't care about whether it got fixed up or not, just—but Greg was always the one that, you know, any kids came around: "Oh, no. Stay away. You can't step on that." So. And in fact, I asked him if he—when I decided to sell it, I asked him if he was interested, and he said "Very much so." But he lives in White Bear, and he said he didn't have any place for it, so he was kind of sad that I sold it, but he could go to the Historical Society and visit it whenever he wants to, and he's been there a couple times already, so.

# 'Old Betsy' returns to Gladstone area

by Melinda Hawley-Falteisek

The story "Lassie Come Home" has brought tears into the eyes of many nostalgic dog-lovers and non-lovers alike, as man's best friend makes it back home through trials and treachery. The scene has now shifted to Maplewood — with "Old Betsy," the first Gladstone fire truck, returning home after hours of hard work, to Richard and Frances Juker, 1965 Barclay St.

It all began in 1920, when the Peter Pirsch and Co. firm wrote a purchase order in September for a Pirsch fire truck. The firm, based in Kenosha, Wis., built the chassis for the truck in 1919, it's estimated, and the body was added in 1923 to complete the 1923 Pirsch. Excelsior, Minn. was the truck's first home, eight firemen from Gladstone buying the truck for \$1,000 from the Excelsior Fire Dept. in 1943 or 1944, Juker, a Gladstone Volunteer Fire Dept. member, said.

"Then they sold it to the St. Paul Clown Club in 1951," Fran said, "and then the Clown Club eventually sold it to a guy in Rochester — and then the guy in Rochester sold it to a man someplace in Minneapolis, who sold it to Mike Sanko in Golden Valley — and we bought it from him," she concluded with a smile.

Sanko did extensive research into "Old Betsy," (as the Gladstone crew back in '44 dubbed her) and her past, obtaining photostats of the original purchase order (dated September, 1920) and pictures of similar trucks. He made out the words "Gladstone Fire Department" on the vehicle's hood, and through research found that Gladstone was in Maplewood.

"He contacted Al Schadt, the Maplewood Fire Marshal, and wanted to

know if Gladstone wanted it," Fran said. "Al brought it up to the fire department membership."

"About eight of us from the fire department wanted to restore it," Juker explained. "We brought it up at our monthly meeting, but the membership voted it down — it lost by one vote."

"I made the statement that if the department didn't buy it, I would," Juker added. Dick said he had always wanted to restore an old car because his boss (at Metcalf Mayflower, Highway 36, Maplewood where Juker has worked 10 years) is an avid antique-car collector. Dick's boss interested him in restoring an old car.

"I never dreamt I'd be buying a fire truck and restoring that," Juker said. He has worked for Gladstone Volunteer Fire Dept., 1900 Clarence, for more than 11 years, and said the department has several Pirsch trucks in use now. He plans to tear the vehicle completely apart, sandblast and paint the frame, replace parts, and put the truck back together to mirror its 1923 past.

"I want to restore it and have some fun on it," he said. "I'm a machinist by trade and can make parts for it if I need to. We rebuilt a school bus into a mobile home."

"I enjoy putzing around with things," Dick pointed out. With help from firemen and friends, Juker went to Golden Valley to pick up the truck March 20. Jeff Schadt, Al's son, who previously worked at Art's Towing, asked if the men could borrow a truck to bring "Old Betsy" back to Gladstone.

"They loaned us a flat-bed truck," Juker said, getting out one of his many pictures of Betsy, perched on the flat-bed. "It looked like a little Tonka toy." Help

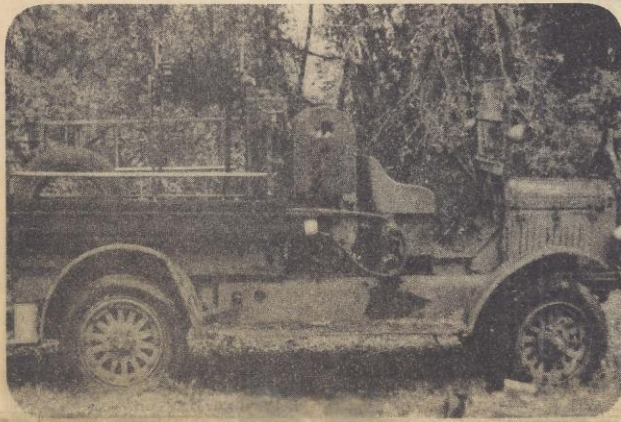
was needed at that time and will be needed in Betsy's future, as well, Juker said. He termed the restoration a good investment — and a costly one.

The bell for the front of the vehicle, \$36 when new, Juker approximated, sold for \$250 ten years ago — and although he doesn't know the current price, he said it could be over \$300. Juker will have help, however, in some of the financing.

"I have already from a few retired firemen who have ridden on this truck," he said. Donations of \$1 here, 50 cents there have been appreciated by Juker, and Al Schadt donated a fire extinguisher for it as well. A brass nozzle was yet another donation and others have pledged donations, Dick said.

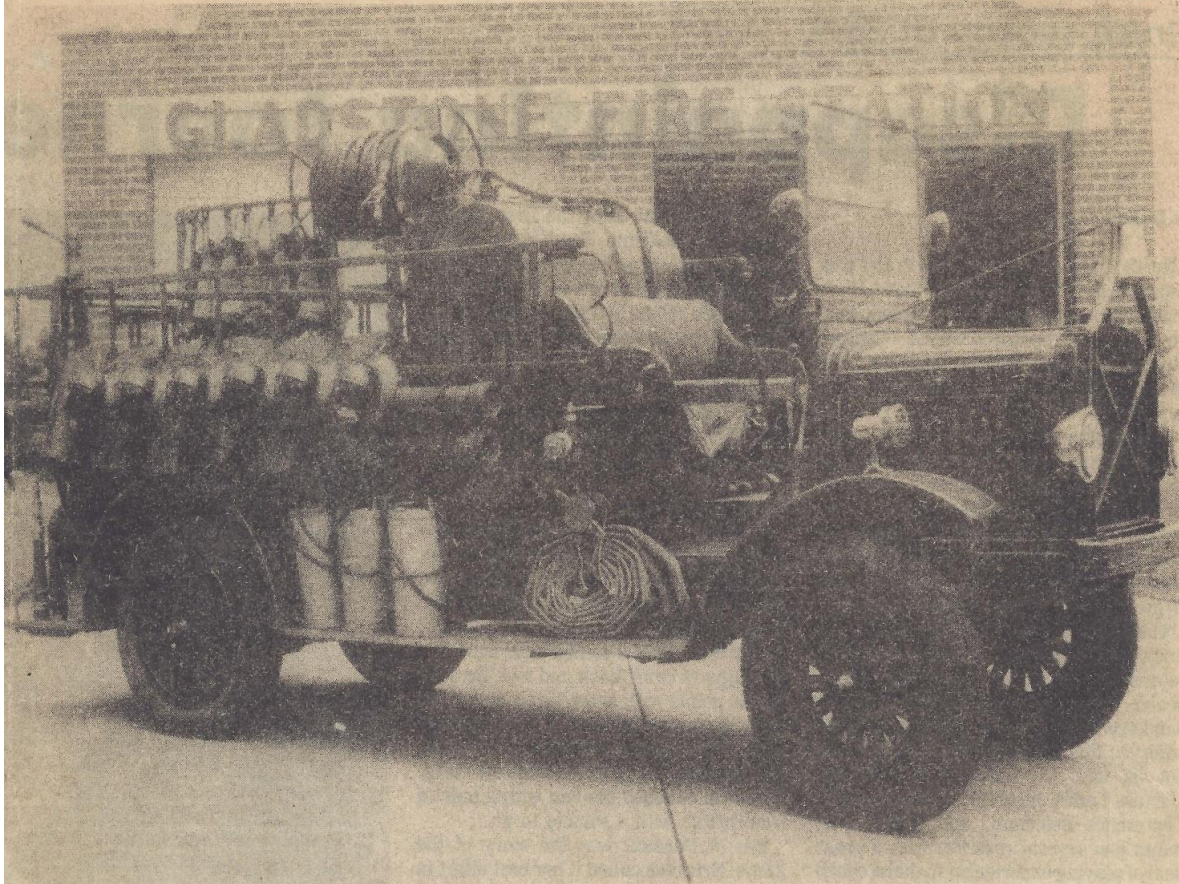
Fran said many of the retired firemen who originally worked "Old Betsy" are pleased at her return and have organized a group, working out who will fill what position. Juker noted his main reason behind bringing Betsy back was for the fun of it and the fact that she's a good investment, but Frances has another explanation.

"We felt it should be back in Gladstone," she said nostalgically. Old Betsy, like Lassie, has come home.



OLD BETSY has a long way to go before becoming her snappy, 1923 self, but Dick Juker of Maplewood has got the will, the support and the way.





GLADSTONE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT proudly sported its 1923 Pirsch fire truck in 1944 — and the truck has returned in 1977 to Gladstone.

KC: What year did you buy it?

RJJ: March 1977.

KC: And what year did you sell it? [pause] Who did you sell it to?

RJJ: The City of Maplewood. The City of Maplewood bought it with the intent that it was going to the Historical Society. In fact, I got a letter in here somewhere stating that.



KC: Did—was it hard negotiations with the City of Maplewood to get them to buy it?

RJJ: No. At the time, my wife was—she knew a lot of the city council, because she wasn't off of the council that long, and they—the City of Excelsior was the original owner of the truck, and we bought—Gladstone bought it from Excelsior. And Excelsior showed a lot of interest in buying it, and I had really mixed feelings about selling it to Excelsior. I wanted them to have it, and yet, it was our first fire truck, too. And so we kind of—I don't know if we played the sob story to the city council, but we told the city council that this was—we told them the history of the truck and that it was—Excelsior really wanted it. Robert Cardinal<sup>30</sup> was the mayor at the time. And he was really instrumental in buying the truck. He was—I remember him coming over to the house, and he rode on the truck as we drove it up to the Historical Society and put it in the barn. And he was just like a kid with a brand new toy. He sat up there just so proud, you know. And I

<sup>30</sup> Robert Cardinal was Mayor of Maplewood 2000- 2005.

think there as a couple other councilmen who came, too, and rode on the back end, but yeah, they were in agreeance.

Like I said, we didn't have any idea price at all. Back then, you'd go on the computer. My wife was just learning the computer world, and she'd go on and she'd see some fire trucks were \$100,000, you know, and some of them were \$10,000. So we set a price, if I remember right, at \$20,000. And the city said, "Yeah, fine, we'll buy it." And we both—wow, you know? And I—I got an approximate idea of how much I put into the truck, which I ain't going to say, but I kind of got a rough idea, but I put endless hours of labor into it, which—it's immaterial, I guess, but if you want to look at it that way, I got a lot of money involved in it. 2003 we sold it to the City.

KC: 2003 you sold it to the city.

RJJ: Yeah.

KC: And they—so do you remember how much you paid for the truck originally?

RJJ: \$1800.

KC: You paid \$1800. Do you have a guesstimate of how much you paid for materials? And labor is worth a lot.

**ASSIGNMENT OF PURCHASE AGREEMENT**

This document is executed and entered into this 17<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2003, by and between Richard J. Juker and Frances L. Juker, husband and wife (Seller) and the City of Maplewood Historical Society (Buyer).

WHEREAS Sellers and Buyers entered into a Purchase Agreement for the sale of property (Property) consisting of the following:

One (1) 1923 Peter Pirsch Fire Truck (fire truck), along with good and marketable title thereto, identified in part by Pioneer Licence Plate 6414, said fire truck to be sold equipped with the following:

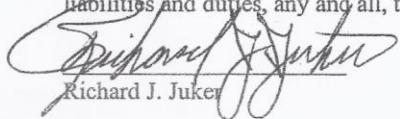
- i. one (1) Dietz lantern;
- ii. three (3) fire extinguishers;
- iii. three (3) sections of hard suction hose, each ten (10) (approximate) feet in length;
- iv. one (1) extension ladder;
- v. one (1) hose reel with one(1) twenty-five (25) (approximate) foot long hose;
- vi. one (1) chrome bell; and
- vii. one (1) breathing apparatus.

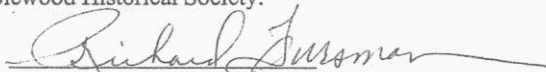
WHEREAS Buyers executed said Purchase Agreement as the City of Maplewood, a municipal corporation, by its City Manager; and

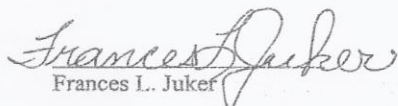
WHEREAS Buyers now wish to assign said Purchase Agreement to the Maplewood Historical Society; and

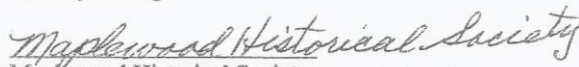
WHEREAS Seller and Buyer agree to assign said Purchase Agreement to the Maplewood Historical Society as Buyer.

THEREFORE Seller and Buyer hereby agree to assign the Buyer's rights, privileges, liabilities and duties, any and all, to the Maplewood Historical Society.

  
Richard J. Juker

  
City of Maplewood  
By: Richard Fursman  
Its: City Manager

  
Frances L. Juker

  
Maplewood Historical Society  
Maplewood Historical Society  
By: Lois M. Bekon  
Its: Treasurer

A lot of the work was volunteer or donated. Like the bell, the chrome bell on the front end, the Gladstone Fire Department donated that to me, because I looked and I looked and I looked for a bell to fit on that tower, and we had one right on the front end of old number seven in the station. So I went to the membership and I, you know, "If we ever sell this truck, can I buy the bell for my fire truck?" And well, everybody sat there and well, I don't know who it was, but somebody



says, "Well, why don't we donate the bell to you?" "Well, that's even better." So when they finally wound up selling old number seven, all that left was a two holes in the top of the front fender, where that bell was. Because that was a symbol of a fire truck, that you could sit in there and clang the bell, and when we sold it, they took the bell off and gave it to me. It's a brass bell. I would say that thing is probably worth, five, seven, eight hundred dollars right now, and I looked and looked and looked and

couldn't find one. I could buy one, but very expensive, so. That's why I never put one on there until they donated that one to me.

The fire department helped me a lot on it. I know at one time they said that if I ever got it to the stage where I wanted the pin-striping put on it, the gold leaf, that they would pay for that, too. Never did get around to that, because it—I don't know. It was too expensive. Gold leafing, it's a fine art and, you know, it looks pretty, but it's expensive, very expensive.

KC: Expensive to have somebody do it, or expensive to buy the gold leaf?

RJJ: Both. It takes a guy that really knows what he's doing to put it on, and it's gold. It's actual gold that they're doing it.

KC: Was that on Old Betsy originally, gold leafing?

RJJ: Yep, yep.

KC: Where does the name "Old Betsy" come from?

RJJ: [Sighs] I don't know. I think it was just somebody that was on the fire department way back that they just named it that, you know. I don't know. Like I say, when we found the truck, it was brought up at the meeting, Old Betsy. And everybody knew what it was; I mean, anybody that was interested. And I guess being the first fire truck. They had a fire truck before that, but it was an old wrecker that they converted into a so-called fire truck. I don't even know if it held any water. It was an old wrecker with the hook on the back end that they used to go around and pick up cars with, and they took the hook off and they put some cabinetry on it and called it a fire truck.

KC: How much water does Old Betsy hold?

RJJ: I think it was 250 gallons, if I remember right, because this truck originally was a foam truck, and I think Excelsior took the foam unit off and put a fuel oil tank. And I don't know what fuel oil tanks. I don't know if you remember them? They're two hundred gallons, something like that, and that's what it was, was a fuel oil tank on it, in these pictures here. And that was put on by Excelsior.

Of course, when I got it, the tank was all rotten. I threw it away, and Jerry Kasmirski<sup>31</sup> was chief on the fire department at the time, and he says, "I'll make you a tank." He worked at Whirlpool down on Arcade Street. He says, "I'll make you a tank for it, a water tank with a gas tank on top." And he's the one that made that tank for me, donated it, you know. And all he did was take a tape measure and measure this off here and there, and "Okay," he says. "I'll make it for you." And I had no idea what he was doing. All of a sudden, one day there's a tank, you know. "There's a tank for Old Betsy." "Well, what's the deal?" "There's no deal." He says, "I did it on my own time."

Well, you see, a lot of that stuff, guys helped me out. I had it—when I had it stripped down, I brought it down to George Hirsch —the body shop on Frost Avenue. He painted it for me. So he donated—I bought the paint and he donated his time to paint the truck. Just things like that. Like I say, these are all guys that I knew from the area. They all got all rarin' to go and helped me out on this thing, so. If I would have had to pay for all that, it would have cost a lot of money so it—it worked out.



KC: Is there any estimate of what the truck is worth at this point in time in 2013?

RJJ: Today? Well, it ain't running right now. I know it always had problems with the distributor cap on that thing. Anytime it got wet or anytime it looked like it

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<sup>31</sup> R.J. "Jerry" Kasmirski was a Gladstone firefighter November 24, 1956, to November 13, 1981; was chief 1978 to 1980; with 25 years of service.

might rain within the next couple of hours, that thing would just quit. It just—it didn't like wet.

And many times I got caught. White Bear Avenue Parade. Every year, I'd have it in the White Bear Avenue Parade, and it seemed like every year, it rained. I don't know why, but White Bear Avenue Parade, it always rained. I'd just about—I'd get halfway home and it would downpour, and there I'm sitting. I didn't have nothing. I didn't have a raincoat on. All I had was my uniform on and dripping wet. And I know my wife was with me several times. Same



White Bear Avenue Parade 1982

thing. She got wet. The kids were in the back end. Tell the kids, "Well, go on home." Give them the key to the house and "Go on home and get dried off, and we'll be home." I'd have to go down to the station. I'd walk down to the station, and I'd get somebody to help me pull it back, and we'd always push it in in the station and leave it to dry off in there. Next day, I'd go down there and start it up and away we go. [Kate chuckles] It—I don't know. Like I said, that thing was just a dry weather truck.

KC: It had a personality of its own.

RJJ: Yeah, there you go. It had its own personality, so. But it was a lot of fun. Like I say, it's a young man's—a young man's truck, because I—the main reason I got rid of it is the steering. It was so hard to steer. And you go in the parade and you



go around corners and that, and it's all right if you're moving, but if you're sitting still and you try to inch up a little bit and try to turn the wheel, it was just unbelievable. And it was just so hard to handle, and I told my wife: "I can't do it anymore. My arms are just—" After driving for an hour or a couple of hours in a parade or whatever, and I had a shed alongside of my garage at home that I kept it in, and to get it into that shed, it was really a job to get it in there, because it had to go in just perfect, because I built the shed just to fit the truck, and I didn't give it any six inches to spare. So it had to go in there perfect. By the time I got it in there, I was just totally worn out, so that's—we made the decision that it's got to go.

Like I say, I felt sorry for Excelsior. In fact, they came over and had got it. They wanted it in a parade. I don't know if it was there 150<sup>th</sup> year parade or hundred year parade that they wanted to have the truck in the parade, and I said, "Well, it ain't running." They said, "It doesn't matter. We'll put it on a flatbed." So they came over with just a gigantic flatbed truck. And it was brand new. The truck that we put the fire truck on was brand new. We had cleaned it all up for them. It was dusty and dirty from sitting, and we pushed it out into the driveway onto this flatbed truck, and they had it in the parade, and one of their chiefs and his wife rode on top of the fire truck on top of this flatbed truck in this parade, and they were so proud of this being their first fire truck, the Excelsior, and like I said, that's what got us going on "Do we want to sell it to them or do we want to sell it to Maplewood."

And I'm sitting there, well, hey, I got to show a little allegiance to Maplewood, because after all, we've lived here for most of our life, and I was on the fire department and so we contacted the city and they—of course, they—the fire departments didn't want the truck, so it would have to be—well, what do we

# Memo

Agenda No. \_\_\_\_\_

## AGENDA REPORT

**To:** Richard Fursman, City Manager  
**From:** Steve Lukin, Fire Chief  
**CC:** City Clerk  
**Date:** 8/18/2003  
**Re:** Antique Fire Truck for Sale

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### BACKGROUND

Retired Gladstone Firefighter Dick Juker and his wife, former Councilperson Fran Juker, approached the Maplewood Fire Department asking us if we were interested in purchasing their antique 1923 fire truck. This truck was the first fire truck ever purchased by the Gladstone Fire Department and it was purchased used from Excelsior Fire Department. This truck was in use by the Gladstone Fire Department for many years and was eventually sold to another fire department. Many years later, Dick and Fran purchased the truck and spent countless hours of time rebuilding it to its original look during the time Gladstone Fire Department owned it. Dick and Fran would like to see this vehicle stay within the city of Maplewood. They have, however, had an offer from Excelsior Fire Department to purchase it.

The Maplewood Fire Department has looked into purchasing the antique fire truck and would love to have it, but at this time, we feel it would not be in our best interest for the following reasons:

1. We do not have the necessary funds to purchase the truck.
2. We do not have storage space available.
3. Additional costs will be needed to purchase a flatbed to haul the truck to different events.
4. The unavailability of people to operate the truck at different events, as well as upkeep and maintenance costs.

I spoke with former Mayor Rossbach in regards to having the Maplewood Historical Society purchase this vehicle and have it on display at the Bruentrup Farm. After speaking with him, he was in complete agreement that this truck would be an outstanding addition to the Historical Society.

The Maplewood Fire Department would be more than willing to assist the Historical Society in showing off the fire truck at events within our City. Therefore, I would encourage the City Council to assist the Historical Society in purchasing this vehicle anyway possible. At this time, I do believe that there is some money left in the charitable gambling fund that could be put to good use in our attempt to purchase the antique fire truck for the Historical Society.

If you have any further questions or need any more information, please don't hesitate to give me a call at 651-775-7316. I hope to have the truck available for you to see at the August 25 Council Meeting.

do with it? Well, I don't know who came up on the city council that said, "Well, we'll give it to the Historical Society." So we got an agreement there that the city council would buy it and give it to the Historical Society. And that was it, and that—I think we got it in there that they're supposed to have a plaque with our names on it and our kids' names, and you know. That was my wife's deal. She just thought that our names should be on that truck or on a plaque somewhere by the truck that—I think we were the longest owners. We owned it for like twenty-seven years. Everybody else was four years here, five years there, whatever, so.

Because when Gladstone sold it, it went to the Saint Paul Clown Club, and they used it in parades, I guess. I don't know, the history was real sketchy, what happened to it, but they used it for their parades in Saint Paul and that, and whether they ever did or not, I don't know. I don't know if anybody has ever really come up with—you'd have to find somebody that was on the Clown Club back at that time.

KC: Any other stories that you have about Old Betsy?

RJJ: We used it for campaigning. My wife ran for city council, and I got a picture of the truck here with signs on the side: "Vote for Fran Juker." And we'd go around campaigning. It was just primed at the time. And we'd drive up and down the streets knocking on doors and say, "Vote for Fran Juker." And we had that silly fire truck. [Kate laughs] Doing that with that. It ran really pretty good back at that time.

Oh, boy. Oh, it was June of 1980. I brought it up to St. Cloud, and I—every year, they would have the state fire school, they'd have different town every year where they'd have the convention, the state fire convention. And St. Cloud had

it. It seemed to me it was their hundredth—the hundredth year of the Minnesota Fire Conventions. And I brought it, and here’s a picture of—I was driving for Mayflower at the time, and we—my boss at Mayflower agreed to let me use one of the trucks, and the fire truck fit right inside, and I brought it up to St. Cloud.

And of course, up there, there was just fire trucks all over the place. And I forget where we unloaded it, and the—everything was fine and dandy. We were going to go in the parade, and I had a flat tire on the truck.

Of course, everybody from the Gladstone Fire Department was going to pile on the truck, and there was the husbands and the wives. There was, I think, like four or six people that went to the convention and their wives. And so anyway, we drove the truck to the

beginning of the parade, and all of a sudden, like I say, I had a flat tire on the back end. So Jeff Schadt was one of the members that went with us up there. And I don’t know how he high-balled this guy in an ambulance. And he says, “Hey.” He says, “Take me over



to wherever.” He says, “There’s a Mayflower truck parked over there. It’s got a spare tire in there.” He says, “Can you take me over there to get that spare tire?” And the guy says, “Sure.” He says, “You want to go red lights and siren?” And he said, “Well, heck, yeah.” So he went red lights and siren. [Kate laughs] Of course, like I say, the whole city of St. Cloud was all wound up with fire trucks, so. Went over and got the spare tire and brought it back, and we jacked up the truck right there and put it on, and we went in the parade, and everything turned out all right.



Like I say, Jeff Schadt, who is really popular in Maplewood right now today with all his fire trucks. But his dad, like I say, he was the chief when I got on, and I can remember Jeff this size [ holding hands about waist high] when I

got on the fire department, and now all of a sudden, Jeff owns I don't know how many fire trucks, but he's never—well, he showed interest in Old Betsy, but he knew it was mine, so he never approached me to buy it or anything, so.



KC: Okay. The—what would you like to be remembered for, for your involvement with Gladstone Fire Department?

RJJ: That I hope I saved the city some money. [both laugh]

KC: By being a volunteer?

RJJ: By being a volunteer. It is—times have changed so much over the years. Like I say, I think the big thing was when they opened up this schooling. To be a volunteer, you had to go through this Firefighting I, II, and III, if I remember right. And I don't know how many hours it involved, but I know if I would have done that, or if I would have had to do that, I don't think I'd probably ever be a volunteer either. And they're asking a whole lot for a young fellow to go through, to be away from his family. I think that kind of ruined a volunteer fire department. I don't know. I don't know if that was it or not, but it just—volunteering was a lot of fun before that, and I think between that and the medic calls that we got, we—I can remember [Dennis] <sup>\*32</sup>, he was also Lieutenant Cusick on the police department. They wanted to have a paramedic<sup>33</sup> program. The police wanted to be paramedics, and they wanted the fire department to back them up with bringing the ambulance and assisting them on various scenes

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<sup>32</sup>**Dennis Cusick** was a Gladstone firefighter 1969 to 1984; was chief 1981 to 1984 with 15 years of service. And was appointed as a Maplewood police officer May 1, 1965; promoted sergeant April 1, 1968; lieutenant August 1, 1969; resigned September 30, 1982, to become Chief of Cottage Grove Police until 1998, with 33 years of public service.

<sup>33</sup>**Paramedics** are advanced providers of emergency medical services and are highly educated in topics such as anatomy and physiology, cardiology, medications, and medical procedures. Their skills include administering medications, starting intravenous lines, providing advanced airway management for patients, and learning to resuscitate and support patients with significant problems such as heart attacks and traumas. Paramedics complete a two year degree program (between 1,200 to 1,800 hours), and are required to hold additional certifications such as Basic Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support from the American Heart Association, and are required to attend a minimum of 24 hours of continuing medical education annually for their state certification and 36 hours of continuing medical education annually for their national certification. Paramedic education is accredited by the Commission on Allied Health Education Accreditation. Paramedics work primarily in urban and suburban communities. About 95% of paramedics are fully compensated employees.

or whatever. Heart attacks, accidents, whatever. And we were involved somewhat in accident runs. If there was a serious accident, they always called the fire department along with the police department to excavate passengers or whatever.

So when Maplewood wanted to go to this paramedic program, they wanted the fire department to bring the ambulance to the scene, which they said—I think at the time, it was only going to be like—they estimated like 25% of our calls would be medic calls. Well, after the first couple, three years, it was like 74% of our calls were medic calls, and only 25% were fire calls. And I voted for it only because I thought it would save the community money by us doing it. You know, Saint Paul at the time came in with paramedics on the fire department. Their paramedics were firemen. Maplewood was a little unique where it was the police department was the medics, but the fire department backed them up with the ambulance to transport.

And like I say, I thought it would save the city. I had it in my mind. I'm a tightwad. My dad taught me that from year one, you know. Try to save a couple of pennies every day, no matter what, so. And I thought it would help the city save money by us running with the police department. But it just—it got to be too much to ask for a [fire] volunteer. I mean, yes, we're a volunteer; yes, we got paid, and we got paid—I mean, you could go out and find—at the time, you could go out and find a part time job for eight, ten bucks an hour and make more money than you were on the fire department being a volunteer. So you had to have a little bit of this fire in your blood.

And my thing is, the reason I retired, because they—not required, but they wanted you to be a EMT<sup>34</sup>. And I joined the fire department to be a fireman, not to be a EMT or a medical technician or whatever. And so I kind of decided that maybe it's time for me to leave. That's pretty much what made up my mind to get off of there, because it just—and the fact that they were requiring you to make so many calls a month, so many calls a year, and with my job at Mayflower. When I first went there, I was running the warehouse over at Highway 36. I was driving locally and running the warehouse. And my last fifteen years, I guess, at Metcalf, I drove over the road from shore to shore. Wherever they sent me, I had to go. And so I wasn't around as much, and that hurt my average as far as maintaining my calls, so.

I retired from Gladstone in 1994. And I retired from my job [at Metcalf] in 1997.

KC: What do you see your legacy as to Gladstone, sir?

RJJ: What is my legacy? I don't know if I have a legacy. I'm glad that I served. I hope I served well. Like I say, it was a good time. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and it's a way of meeting your neighbors. Like I say, Dick Schaller, I had no idea who he was. He's chief of police, first chief of police in Maplewood. He just lived a block from me down the street, but I got to know him through the fire department.

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<sup>34</sup>**Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)** can serve in the patient compartment of an ambulance. EMTs use medical equipment such as automatic defibrillators, deliver trauma care and are educated in a simple way over all injuries and diseases. EMTs form the backbone of EMS—Emergency Medical Services delivery in the United States. Most work in a team with more advanced providers. EMTs usually complete a course that is about 150 hours in length for 9 college credits, are required to hold a Basic Life Support certification from the American Heart Association, and are required to attend a minimum of 12 hours a year of continuing medical education.

Gladstone strongly encouraged all firefighters to become trained as EMTs between 1978-1984.



Same with Tom Hagen<sup>35</sup>. He was assistant chief. Norm Green<sup>36</sup> was, I think, a lieutenant on the police department. There was a lot of police in Maplewood that also belonged to the fire department. And so it was a good intermingle between the police and fire. We had a good time together.

KC: Mr. Juker, thank you so much. This has been an honor.

RJJ: Well, I hope I can help something in the City of Maplewood.

KC: It sounds like you've helped the City of Maplewood a lot over the years.

RJJ: I enjoyed it. Like I say, I feel like I helped save the city.

KC: Thank you, sir. I appreciate it.

RJJ: You're welcome.

The Juker family is dedicated to firefighting. Their home has many symbols of this dedication, including their Front Door Bell.



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<sup>35</sup> **Tom Hagen** was a Gladstone firefighter February 8, 1955, to May 8, 1981; with 26 years of fire service; and was appointed Maplewood police officer June 1, 1957; promoted sergeant in 1958; lieutenant July 1, 1960; deputy Chief October 1961; and retired July 1, 1984, with 29 years of police service.

<sup>36</sup> **Norman Green** was appointed as a Maplewood police officer March 1, 1963; promoted sergeant June 1, 1969; and retired June 30, 1987, with 24 years of service.

## APPENDIX A

### Chronology of Gladstone Fire Department

Gladstone Station: 1900 Clarence Street  
and  
Hazelwood Station: 1530 East County Road C

- December 11, 1942 First meeting to discuss starting a volunteer fire department held at the Gladstone school. 16 men attended.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- November 23, 1943 An organizational meeting was held. Six officers were appointed so training could begin by the North Saint Paul Fire Department.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- February 8 & 12, 1944 The department was incorporated with 27 volunteers and Leonard Foeller elected as the first chief.  
Source: Document, MAHS 2013.0004.0035
- May 7, 1944 Open house held in Gladstone for their first fire engine - a 1923 Pirsch fire engine that was purchased for \$1,000 from the Excelsior Fire Department.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- August 12, 1944 First fire run to a grass fire at 1794 Flandrau Street. Three men extinguished the fire in 30 minutes.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- September 16, 1944 Construction was started on a station with donations from local citizens.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- October, 1944 The department began charging New Canada Township for fire calls at \$35 for the first hour and \$25 each additional hour.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.0006.0017



- 1970 Station was enlarged with a 4<sup>th</sup> stall to accommodate the new snorkel truck and a meeting room, small kitchen and restrooms.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- July 25, 1972 An organizational meeting was held at Holy Redeemer Parish Center to consider improving fire service to the rapidly growing north end of Maplewood and the Maplewood Mall. This led to creating Hazelwood Fire Station as a substation to Gladstone.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- October 3, 1972 Bill Mikiska was elected as the first district chief of Hazelwood Fire Station.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- September 15, 1974 Hazelwood Fire Station's 2-stall building was completed for \$192,000. Fire truck #124 was transferred to Hazelwood from the Gladstone Fire Station and a second truck was rented from Parkside Fire Department.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001 and 2006.0006.0017
- 1974 Firefighters were asked to drive ambulances to assist policemen who were trained as paramedics.  
Source: Oral interview of Dick Juker and Joe Waters
- 1975 Maplewood police officers were trained as paramedics by Regions Hospital with Dennis Cusick, both a Maplewood police officer and a Gladstone firefighter, as champion. Later, training was done through 916 Vo-Tech.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.0006.0017 and verbal from Chief Steve Lukin
- 1977 Pagers were given to members to alert them to fire calls.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001

- 1978 New Advanced Life Support vans were purchased by Maplewood and housed at the fire stations and driven by the firefighters to assist the police paramedics. Gladstone firefighters were required to become EMT's and Parkside and East County Line firefighters could become either an EMT or a First Responder.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.0006.0017 and verbal from Chief Steve Lukin, Dick Peterson and Dick Juker.
- 1979 Gladstone and Hazelwood stations had a combined membership of 58 men. Hazelwood had two pumpers, a rescue squad and a boat with motor.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- ca. 1981 – 1982 Firefighting classes were started at 916 Vo-Tech. Previously, ISD 287 Vo-Tech instructors from Hennepin County would conduct classes at local fire stations, including Gladstone, Parkside and East County Line, as early as 1976 on basic firefighting. These classes became Firefighting I. Firefighting II was added later.  
Source: Oral interview with Chief Steve Lukin and Dave Klocek.
- 1993 Gladstone Fire station had 29 members.  
Hazelwood Fire Station had 24 members.
- January 1, 1997 Gladstone, Parkside and East County Line Volunteer Fire Departments merged to create the Maplewood Fire Department and all firefighters were required to become EMT's.  
Source: Oral interview with Steve Lukin
- 2001 A new fire station constructed at 1955 Clarence Street and the department is relocated.  
Source: Report, MAHS 2012.0009.0391
- July, 2005 The Gladstone Volunteer Fire station is demolished.  
Source: Maple Leaves, MAHS 2011.0010.0021

**Gladstone Fire Chiefs:**

|                 |           |  |
|-----------------|-----------|--|
| 1944 – 1947     | -4 years  | Leonard Foeller  |
| 1948 – 1951     | -4 years  | John Cottrell  |
| 1952 – 1964     | -13 years | Alwin (Al) Schilla   |
| 1965 – 1968     | -4 years  | Al Schadt became City Fire Marshal 1968 to 1985.                                     |
| 1969 – 1975     | -7 years  | Robert Finberg   |
| 1976 – 1979     | -3 years  | Tom Kansier  |
| 1979 – 1980     | -2 years  | Jerry Kasmirski  |
| 1982            | -1 year   | William Mikiska  |
| 1983 – 1984     | -4 years  | Dennis Cusick  |
| 1985 – 1991     | -7 years  | Jim Franzen  |
| 1992 – 1993     | -2 years  | Howard (Howie) Weber   |
| 1994 – 1995     | -2 years  | Richard “Dick” Peterson  |
| 1996 – 1997     | -1 year   | Steve Lukin  |
| January 1, 1997 |           | Gladstone joined the Maplewood Fire Department with Joel Hewitt as their first Chief |

## APPENDIX B

### Chronology of East County Line Volunteer Fire Department

East County Line Station - 1177 Century Avenue

Londin Lane substation - 2501 Londin Lane

Noted for their annual Halloween parties for children and families of the community.

- October, 1942      First meeting at the home of Frank Kass to discuss creating a volunteer fire department.  
Source: Newsletter, MAHS 2012.0009.0564
- November, 1942      At a second meeting, Ruggles Sanders was elected fire chief with 14 charter members. The first homemade equipment was a 1929 Dodge truck chassis with a soda acid water tank purchased for \$250 from Lindstrom, MN. Later, a portable fire pump was added.  
Source: Newsletter, MAHS 2012.0009.0564  
and History, MAHS 2013.0001.0115  
and Newspaper of June 30, 1982
- 1946      Chief Sanders went to Merchants State Bank to get the department's first loan of \$3,500 to purchase the first pumper truck.  
Source: Newspaper of June 30, 1982
- 1946      They purchased a 1946 Ford pumper with a 500 gallon tank built by Flour City Fire Equipment Company.  
Source, MAHS 2013.0001.0115
- April 12, 1947      The department was incorporated.  
Source: Newsletter, MAHS 2012.0009.0564
- December, 1947      A 2-bay station was constructed on land purchased from John Geisinger.  
Source: Newsletter, MAHS 2012.0009.0564
- c. 1952      Building enlarged to 4-bays.  
Source, MAHS 2013.0001.0115

- Early to mid- 1950's They began contracting with townships for fire protection, including today's southern Maplewood, Oakdale and Woodbury. These areas included the 3M Center and Landfall Village.  
Source, MAHS 2013.0001.0115
- 1954 Fire station was expanded with another 40' x 60' addition.  
Source: Newspaper of June 30, 1982
- 1957 The fire district included Landfall, Woodbury, Oakdale and the southern leg of Maplewood that was south of North Saint Paul and east of McKnight Road. Oakdale and Woodbury eventually started their own departments. He's not certain what happened to Landfall.  
Source: Verbal from Bob Bade, former fire chief of East County Line.
- Late-1960's –  
Early-1970's Building enlarged to add offices and meeting spaces, a hose drying tower and additional bays with higher doors.  
Source, MAHS 2013.0001.0115
- 1975 Maplewood police officers were trained as paramedics by Saint Paul-Ramsey Medical Center (later known as Regions Hospital) with Dennis Cusick (both a Maplewood police officer and a Gladstone firefighter) as champion. Later, training was done through 916 Vo-Tech.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.0006.0017 and verbal from Chief Steve Lukin
- October, 1977 Firefighters were asked to drive ambulances (station wagons converted to hold a stretcher) to assist the police paramedics.  
Source: Strategic Plan for Maplewood Fire Department
- October 1977 A substation of East County Line was planned and built on Londin Lane and Lower Afton Road. 5 ½ acres were purchased by Maplewood to provide faster response in southern Maplewood and keep insurance premiums low. It's estimated that \$260,000 is needed to construct a building.  
Source: Letter, MAHS 2011.0010.0172



- 1978 Four new Advanced Life Support vans were purchased by Maplewood and housed at Parkside, Gladstone, Hazelwood and East County Line fire stations. They were driven by firefighters to assist the police paramedics. All new firefighters were required to become EMT's but a few old-timers were allowed to remain with their First Responder training.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.0006.0017 and verbal from Chief Steve Lukin, Dick Peterson, Bob Bade and Dick Juker.
- November 6, 1979 Maplewood voters pass a bond issue to construct a new station on Londin Lane.  
Source: Newspaper, MAHS 2014.0001.0311
- ca. 1981 – 1982 Firefighting classes were started at 916 Vo-Tech. Previously, ISD 287 Vo-Tech instructors from Hennepin County conducted some classes at local fire stations as early as 1976. Also, John Rukavina of Roseville fire was instrumental in starting classes at local stations by local firefighters. These all evolved into Firefighting I class at 916. Firefighting II was added later.  
Source: Oral interview with Chief Steve Lukin, Dave Klocek and Bob Bade.
- June 30, 1982 The equipment used by the department includes: three pumpers, one rescue squad, a city owned Snorkel truck, a tank truck, a grass fire unit, a utility van with cascade air and salvage equipment, one basic life support ambulance and two advanced life support ambulances.  
Source: Newspaper of June 30, 1982
- 1986-1988 Additional remodeling of the station.  
Source, MAHS 2013.0001.0115
- 1995 Most firefighters were required to be EMTS-- Emergency Medical Technician.  
Source: Oral interview with Steve Lukin

June 1996 Tentative agreement to consolidate with Gladstone and Parkside volunteer fire Departments Into Maplewood Fire Department.  
Source: Letter, MAHS 2013.0001.0109

January 1, 1997 Gladstone, Parkside and East County Line Volunteer Fire Departments merged to create the Maplewood Fire Department and all firefighters were required to become EMT's.  
Source: Oral interview with Steve Lukin

### CHIEFS

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1942 - 1964 | Ruggles Sanders                                   |
| 1964 - 1965 | Harvey Brockman                                   |
| 1965 - 1972 | Herb Johnson                                      |
| 1972 - 1972 | Don Hove  |
| 1972 - 1976 | Bob Bade  |
| 1976 - 1978 | Bob Murray  |
| 1978 - 1979 | Bob Bade (2 <sup>nd</sup> time for 7 years total) |
| 1980 - 1985 | Duane Williams                                    |
| 1986        | Dave Selbitschka                                  |
| 1987        | Bob Miller  |
| 1988        | Dave Selbitschka                                  |
| 1989 - 1996 | Larry Bush  |

## APPENDIX C

### Chronology of Parkside Volunteer Fire Department

2001 McMenemy Street

- June 1958                      First meeting with 14 men. Bob Westbrook elected first chief and their first engine was a 1947 pumper purchased from Gladstone Fire Department.  
Source: History, MAHS 2013.0001.0117
- January, 1959                They went under contract with Village of Maplewood for fire service.  
Source: History, MAHS 2013.0001.0117
- May, 1959                    Completed construction of 3-stall building on a 9 ½ acre site.  
Source: Newspaper, MAHS 2013.0001.0117
- 1962                            There were 40 members.  
Source: Newspaper, MAHS 2013.0001.0117
- 1988                            There were 42 firefighters and 3 multi-purpose fire response vehicles.  
Source: History, MAHS 2013.0001.0116
- 1995                            Negotiations to consolidate all three volunteer fire departments into Maplewood Department.  
Source: Letter, MAHS 2013.0003.0093

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