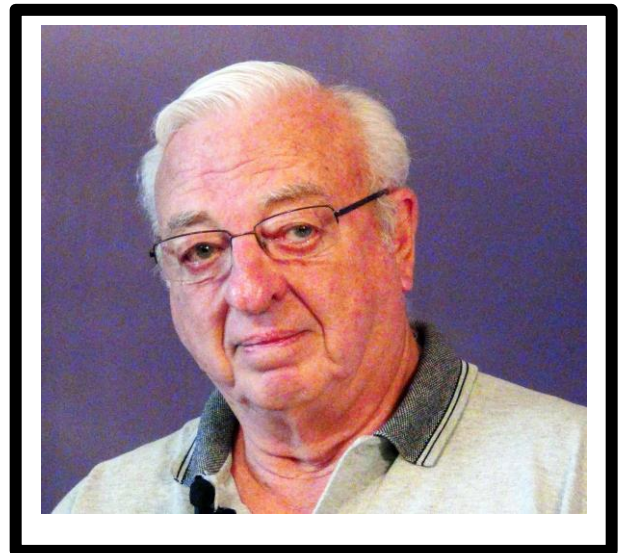
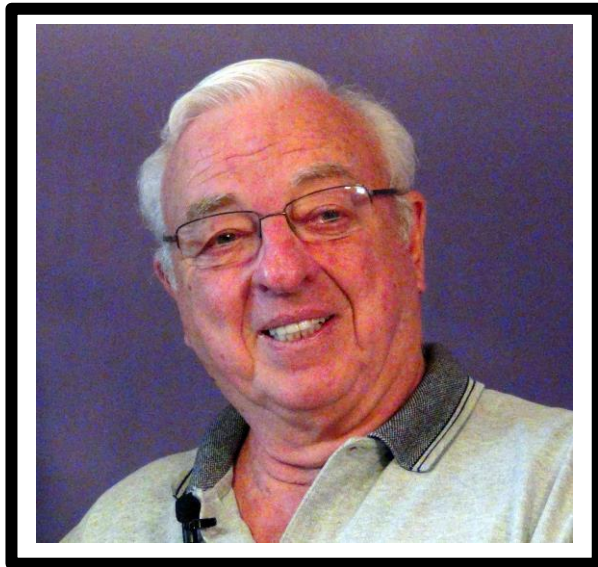


Transcript of oral history interview with

# **Richard Allen Peterson**

**Gladstone Volunteer Fire Department**

1973 to 1997



with Oral Historian Kate Cavett

and Bob Jensen, President, Maplewood Area Historical Society

for the

**Maplewood Area Historical Society**

**November 13, 2013**

at

**HAND in HAND Productions' office in Saint Paul, Minnesota**

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2014

*This project has been made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008. Administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.*

Pictures are from 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 histories 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.

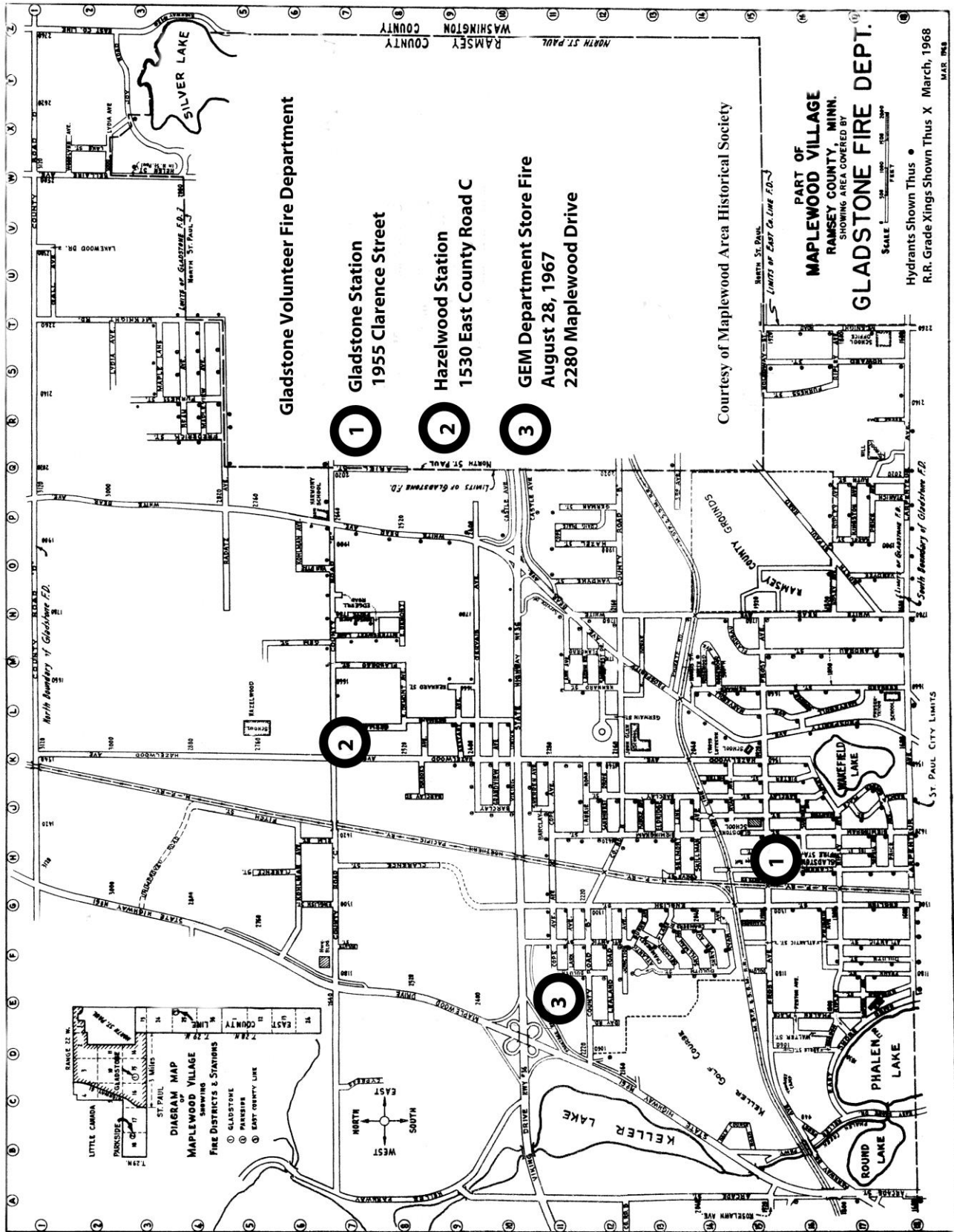
Kate Cavett Oral Historian

HAND in HAND Productions

Saint Paul, Minnesota

651-227-5987

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



Gladstone Volunteer Fire Department

1 Gladstone Station  
1955 Clarence Street

2 Hazelwood Station  
1530 East County Road C

3 GEM Department Store Fire  
August 28, 1967  
2280 Maplewood Drive

Courtesy of Maplewood Area Historical Society

PART OF  
**MAPLEWOOD VILLAGE**  
 RAMSEY COUNTY, MINN.  
 SHOWING AREA COVERED BY  
**GLADSTONE FIRE DEPT.**

Hydrants Shown Thus •  
 R.R. Grade Kings Shown Thus X March, 1968  
 MAR 1968

KC: Kate Cavett  
DP: Richard "Dick" Peterson  
BJ: Bob Jensen

DP: My name is Dick Peterson<sup>1</sup>. I've been retired from the Gladstone Fire Department<sup>2</sup> since 1997. I joined the fire department at the request from a fellow firefighter, Wayne Lindahl<sup>3</sup>, and I enjoyed every minute of it. We had a good time. The camaraderie was great the whole time I was on. I had been a member of the Gladstone community since 1963, when I bought a house on Larpenteur Avenue, and a year later, I—or a couple of years later, I bought a house a block-and-a-half away. And I ended up rolling my refrigerator down the street because I'd let the new owner use it until his refrigerator came. So I've been active in the community. I've been a Cub Scout leader, a Boy Scout leader, I've been on the church council three times. This last time, I was asked to be on the Our Redeemer Lutheran church council for one year, and that was six years ago and I'm still on. That is on the corner of Larpenteur and Clarence. And, like I said, I was a member of the Gladstone Fire Department from 1973 until 1997.

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<sup>1</sup> **Richard "Dick" Peterson** was a Gladstone firefighter 1973 to 1997; was chief 1994 to 1995; with 24 years of service.

<sup>2</sup> **Gladstone Fire Department** chronology Appendix A

<sup>3</sup> **Wayne Lindahl** was a Gladstone firefighter December 8, 1970, to February 1, 1993; with 22 years of service.

KC: What was it like living in suburbia, in the Saint Paul suburban area of Maplewood<sup>4</sup>, Minnesota when you first moved in?

DP: Well, there was a lot—I don't know how to put this. You're going to cut it out anyway.  
[laughs]

KC: I cut very little out. [laughs] Only what you want me—

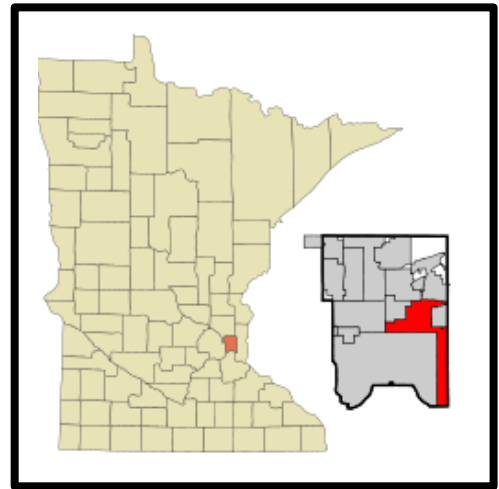
DP: The ethnic group is different now than what it was when I moved in. Right now, or when we bought the house on Price Avenue, the families were all the same age, and right now they are retiring and moving on to assisted living. And Sharon and I are still hanging on. There is quite a few different ethnic groups in the community right now.

KC: What was the main ethnic group when you moved in?

DP: It was all Norwegians and Swedes, and German, and such.

KC: As one would expect in Minnesota.

DP: Yes. So —and there was quite a few fellows in the area that were on the department. And so that was our social group for 20 years, is with fellow firefighters and—



City of  
Maplewood, Minnesota

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<sup>4</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 post 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.

KC: What inspired you to join initially?

DP: Well, I enjoy helping people and working, being with people and talking with them. And a friend of mine, like I said, Wayne Lindahl, asked me if I would like to be on the fire department. And, right then, it was strictly fires — we did not do any medicals. And we were doing about, oh, maybe 30 runs a month, which was very easy to. There wasn't any protocol on what training you had to have. If we didn't have a drill set up for the day, we took the hoses off, and restacked the hoses. Because they had to be on a certain way so that they could pull off easily — and so there was no regimen as to our training. The guys did their best. Like I said, we only had 30 calls a month at most, and they were mostly grass fires during the spring and summer, and a few house fires. It seems like every Christmas Eve we would have a house fire, because, many a times, my family would have to wait for the firefighters to get back to their homes to open up their presents.

KC: What might have been a routine, like for you, on a day that got interrupted with a fire?

DP: Well, I worked for 3M<sup>5</sup> for my whole—most of my career. And it was mostly one week I would work days from seven to three, and then the next week it would be three o'clock to eleven o'clock at night. And so during the days when I was off, I was over at the fire department and doing things around the fire

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<sup>5</sup> The **3M Company**, formerly known as the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company, is an American multinational conglomerate corporation with headquarters in Maplewood, Minnesota. The company was started in 1902 in Two Harbors before moving to the east side of Saint Paul around 1910. In 1952, they bought land in New Canada Township (later Maplewood) between McKnight Road and Century Avenue to allow expansion for their research laboratories and headquarters. In 2014 the 3M Center of 475 acres has over 50 buildings and the company employs over 88,000 worldwide, produces more than 55,000 products. In 2013, Maplewood and 3M announced a joint decision to locate a Maplewood fire station in the northwest corner of the 3M Center.

department. And in the afternoons when I worked at 3M, I was mostly going over there. And back then, we had a few beers in the fire station, and we would have a beer for an hour or so, we'd just sit there and shoot the breeze, just bring up old times. We fought many fires over and over and over again. [Kate laughs] And the old-timers, that's all they could remember was 20 years ago on the fires and what have you.

KC: How would you get called in to a fire initially?

DP: When I first got on, it was the telephone [that] would ring one solid ring. And we told our kids never to answer that telephone when it was one solid ring, because when we picked it up, the dispatcher would tell us where the fire was and what it was, and so we would respond to the station and go from there. Then it was a box that I had on the back of the bed stand, and that would go off. Later on, we wore pagers. And from then until now, after I retired, each one of them received a phone. I'm not technical on that. I don't know how that works, but right now they are a full-time fire department with part-time employees, and they are required to put in so many hours a month. I don't really know the logistics of how it's going on now.

KC: When you look back at some of your memories, what was one of the harder times?

DP: Well, I'm going to get teared up.

KC: That's okay. That's absolutely okay.



DP: [Long pause] The SIDS deaths<sup>6</sup>, when the little ones were being worked on. It was tough on me and tough on all the firefighters. We had one particular young lady that was jilted by her boyfriend and she tried to commit suicide, and when the fire department got there, the chief had asked me if I would go in and talk to the parents of the girl and tell them what was going on and what we were doing. And so I sat with the parents for quite a while, even after the ambulance had left. And from then on, evidently, the chief decided that was what was going to be my role. If I was on the department's [call] and everything was being taken care of, he would ask me to go out and either sit with the parents or talk with the family, and tell them just what we were doing and why we were doing it. That got to be a tough job for me, but they appreciated it, because they would always send a letter thanking the fire department for what we had done and that they had sent somebody over to tell exactly what the procedure was and what was going to happen.

KC: What was your approach that made you the special person to do that?

DP: That I don't know. I mean, like I said, I'm easy to talk to evidently, and I just go ahead and just tell them why they were doing the things they are. And evidently I can tell it like it is, because one time we were at a medical facility and they had called us for a heart attack. And so we would go in with the stretcher and would go in with the drug box, and at the time, I was in charge of the drug box and my

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<sup>6</sup> **Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)** is marked by the sudden death of an infant that is not predicted by medical history and remains unexplained after a thorough forensic autopsy and detailed death scene investigation.

job would be to hand the drug to the paramedic<sup>7</sup> and write down what it was and what time we administered it. And it was the paramedic's job to check that I did the right thing, and most of the time it was a similar IV and needles and what have you. And so one time, the doctor grabbed me by the back of the shirt and said, "We've got enough people in here already." And I told him, "Sir, I'm no longer taking instructions from you." I said, "I'm taking instructions from the paramedic, and if you would kindly leave the room and let us do our job." And he got kind of red in the face and he turned around and he walked out. And as we were rolling the patient out that had survived, the nurse tugged on my arm and said, "Thank you, sir." She says, "You're the first one that ever talked to him like that." And I think that I gave him a good lesson, so I never heard back from any one— [laughs]

KC: What was the drug box?

DP: Oh, the morphine and the IV solutions and the needles that they used, and it was everything that the paramedic could administer through

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<sup>7</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.

orders from the doctor at Ramsey<sup>8</sup> Hospital.

KC: So the protocol would be that the paramedic would get on the phone with the doctor?

DP: Yes, and the radio would go directly to the emergency room at Ramsey Hospital.

KC: So some of the volunteers were trained as paramedics.

DP: When we got on the fire department, and as we progressed, the whole department progressed — you had to be a Firefighter I and a first responder<sup>9</sup>. And then as the programs progressed, we were required to have Firefighter I, Firefighter II, and an EMT<sup>10</sup>, which is—I believe it's a college course of six

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<sup>8</sup> The City and County Hospital opened in 1872. In 1923, it was renamed Ancker Hospital in honor of its late superintendent Arthur B. Ancker. Over the years it encompassed twelve buildings over several acres with a mailing address at 495 Jefferson. In 1965 it moved to 640 Jackson Street and was renamed **Saint Paul Ramsey Hospital**, renamed again in 1977 Saint Paul-Ramsey Medical Center. In 1986, the hospital becomes a private, nonprofit facility and is no longer county-operated; in 1993 it merges with HealthPartners; and in 1997, renamed Regions Hospital.

<sup>9</sup> **First Responder**, which is a generic term referring to the first medically trained responder to arrive on scene. They have more skill than someone who is trained in basic first aid but they are not a substitute for advanced medical care rendered by emergency medical staff. First responder courses cover cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), automated external defibrillator usage, spinal and bone fracture immobilization, oxygen and, in some cases, emergency childbirth as well as advanced first aid and are often one or two weeks.

<sup>10</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.

months training in classes and passed tests to do that. We were not paramedics. Everybody calls them paramedics, but they are EMT, emergency medical

technicians. A paramedic has years of training, so when they phone, everybody says, "Well, we called the paramedics." They are not paramedics all the time that are responding to your call.

KC: Now this drug box — who maintained that? Who refilled the drugs? Who kept track?

DP: The paramedics would. There was a weekly check, and if we were on a big run, the paramedic would come back after they had gone to the hospital and restock those drugs. Those drugs were kept at the police station.

KC: So about what years was this that you would be the one assigned to take care of the drug box?

DP: Well, we had a bad incident. The paramedics were all trained and ready to go, and the day before that happened — we had a fellow at a local industry there, who was electrocuted. And he had stepped in a puddle of water and was electrocuted. We could not do a single thing for that. Because the next day is when they're training stepped in and, technically, we couldn't administer cardiac shock or anything. That was tough on us firefighters, because we knew the fellow quite well. And I can't remember what year that was. The paramedic program came into — Seattle which the first in the country to put the firefighters in trained as paramedics.

KC: Now are these paramedics or EMTs?

DP: No, they were paramedics in Seattle. We were not EMTs at the time either. And

so Dennis Cusick<sup>11</sup> was a lieutenant on the Maplewood Police Department, and he said why couldn't we train our police officers to be paramedics? And so, at the time, they said that this would only increase our runs by about 20%, between 10 and 20% a year. Well, right now, they're 85 and 90% of the calls are paramedic calls.

KC: So the police lieutenant thought if the firemen were trained...

DP: As EMTs. The police would be trained as paramedics because they were on duty 24/7, and they had a rotation of so many paramedics. And sometimes they would be on call, that if they didn't have two paramedics on duty, one will be on call in each district. And that paramedic was told to either respond to the fire station or in his car or police car to the scene. This may have been about 1975, [but I don't remember for sure.]

KC: So you were trained as a first responder?

DP: At first as a first responder, and then as an EMT for quite a few years. And that was a lot to keep up. Later on, we had to take hazardous material training, and that got to be a drain on the firefighter. Because you had to be a Firefighter I, Firefighter II, an EMT, and hazardous material, and a volunteer with a family and a job, plus the training that you had to go through for every single one. You had to, I think it was every two years, we had to recertify— every EMT had to take classes again and pass another test. And I started out taking the hazardous

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<sup>11</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.

material, and I just couldn't handle it with all of the training and stuff that had to be done and that we had to do. So I was not on the hazardous material team.

And that never materialized though. The Ramsey County Fire Chiefs Association got together with the Saint Paul Fire Department, Saint Paul Fire Department took the hazardous material. It's a team that does the Saint Paul metropolitan area.

KC: Because I would imagine that it's important that somebody's covering your area, because of 3M being in Maplewood.

DP: I don't want to get into that political mess. [both laugh]

KC: What's the difference between a Firefighter I<sup>12</sup> and a Firefighter II?

DP: Oh, you're talking back 30-some years ago [both laugh], and I can't remember what I had for supper.

KC: Just more training?

DP: Just a different level of training and more experience on how to enter a fire and what OSHA<sup>13</sup> regulations were. Once we got to the Firefighter II, there was more classes above that, but we weren't required to do any more than that.

KC: You're volunteers, so who requires you to do this? Is this state law or—

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<sup>12</sup> **Firefighting I and II** classes were taught at several technical colleges in the metro area. Starting in 1972, ISD 287 Vo-Tech (since 1995 called Hennepin Technical College) sent instructors to local fire departments (including Maplewood's volunteer departments) for training in basic firefighting procedures that had been established by the National Fire Protection Association. In the early 1980's, 916 Vo-Tech (in 1996 became Century College) began teaching these procedures which eventually became Firefighting I. Firefighting II was later established for more advanced firefighting skills.

<sup>13</sup> **OSHA** Occupational Safety and Health Administration, a federal agency of the United States that regulates workplace safety and health created by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

DP: No, there were three independent fire departments that contracted with the City of Maplewood, and they had five fire stations. There was Parkside <sup>15</sup> [at 2001 McMenemy Street], Gladstone [Fire Department] had the Gladstone station at 1900 Clarence and Frost, and the Hazelwood station at 1530 East County Road C. And East County Road [Fire Department<sup>16</sup>] was another department [East County Line which had a station at 1177 North Century Avenue], and a second station, which was at 2501 London Lane.

Gladstone was founded in 1943. We had competition between the fellows on County Line and Gladstone — saying that we were the first department in Maplewood, and they say they were the first. So it was around '43, '42 when the fire departments established themselves strictly as volunteers. And nothing to do with the city, just got together as a fire department. And then the city, and I don't want to get into that political — [both laugh] But eventually, the city took over all five fire stations, and, right now, they have closed two. So we just have Gladstone, which is a new station [Station 2 is located at 1955 Clarence Street], and East County Line [Station 1 is located at 1177 North Century Avenue], and the old Hazelwood Station [Station 3 is located at 1530 E County Road C].

KC: Let's go back to your early years. What was it like? What would be the procedure? You get the call — what happened in your early years in the 1970s?

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<sup>15</sup> **Parkside Fire Department** chronology Appendix B

<sup>16</sup> **East County Line Fire Department** chronology Appendix C

DP: Well, like I said, the phone would ring one steady ring. And when we got called in the evening, the phone would ring steady, and the wife and I would both wake up, and she would jump out of bed. I get my clothes on, and she would meet me at the door sometimes with the glass of orange juice and my coat. By the time I retired, she didn't even know I left the bedroom when the alarm went off.

KC: The TLC ended after enough calls. [both laugh]

DP: Yes. And that only went on maybe for about a year. But the wives were very active in the Auxiliary when I first started up, We'd have parties and retirement parties and our annual dance that we raised money to buy equipment with. But, like I said, there were quite a few wives that would do the same until they caught on that they could just roll over and go back to sleep. Because a lot of times, it would be an hour, two hours, maybe three hours that [I would be gone].

I don't know if you want to put this on record, but one day, I was on a [fire] call at 3M. Somebody had lit a 3M office on fire<sup>17</sup> up on Conway up there, and we had fought the fire all night long.

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<sup>17</sup> **3M Fire** on July 25, 1979 at 3M Company, 6<sup>th</sup> floor of building 220 in 3M Center, I-94 and McKnight Road, noted as the only 3M building that had no sprinklers and that a snorkel truck could approach building from only one end.





And so I had gone to work at seven o'clock in the morning, and I guess it was around nine o'clock. I was setting my type on my press at 3M, and I fell asleep over the roller that I was setting up. And so the superintendent saw me, and he called me up to the office and he says, "Dick, I'm going to give you three days off, because you fell asleep on the job." So I said, "Okay." I said, "I'm sorry. I could sure use the sleep." So I went downstairs. On my way down, I called the fire marshal [Al Schadt<sup>18</sup>] and said that I had just been suspended for three days at 3M because I was fighting the fire at 3M. He said, "Dick, go home and go to sleep."

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<sup>18</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.

The fire in 3M's main administration building, Building 220, occurred in the early morning hours of July 25. Fire fighters from Maplewood, St. Paul and surrounding suburbs responded quickly to the call. Above, fire fighters work in an office in the badly-charred sixth floor after extinguishing the fire. Below, broken windows in the building give no clue to the kind of damage to the inside offices (lower right) that occurred.

## 3M building's sixth floor gutted in July 25th fire

A fire in Building 220, the main administration building at 3M Center, in the early morning hours of July 25 caused extensive damage to the building's sixth floor and less serious damage to the fifth and seventh floors. An early estimate of the damage was \$1.5 million.

No one was injured in the fire, which was discovered by a security guard about 2:30 a.m. About 25 fire fighting and support units from Maplewood, St. Paul and surrounding suburbs were called to the scene and brought the fire under control about an hour later.

The building was closed for the day and employees who work in the building were informed over local radio stations not to report to work.

Many other 3M employees worked hard during the day and on into the

evening to prepare the building, with the exception of the heavily-damaged sixth floor, for safe occupancy by employees the following day. Supervisors and managers from Building 220 called their employees to tell them when and where to report to work.

Sixth floor employees were at work the next day also, but were relocated into temporary working quarters.

Investigators were called in to determine the cause of the fire, but that information was not available at publication time.

Clair R. Larson, vice president of Engineering, said it was estimated that the sixth floor of the building would not be ready for occupancy by employees for three or four months.



Photo by Bob Randall



Photo by Bob Will

So I went downstairs and was changing my clothes in the locker room, and I get another telephone call from over the intercom saying, "Dick, come on up to my office." So I went up, but before I went up, I got my union steward because I didn't know what was going to happen. And the first question out of his mouth was "Dick," he says, "who in the hell do you know?" The fire marshal had called [3M Chief Executive Officer] Lou Lehr<sup>19</sup> and told him I had been suspended.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis W. Lehr was Chief Executive Officer of 3M from 1979 - 1986 and Chairman of the Board from 1980-1986.

And so he said — he told me to go home and sleep and come back the next day and none of this would be on my record.

From then on, 3M was very good to us, the volunteer firefighters. And we had many volunteers from the areas. And we were told that if we were within an hour, we would not be docked any time, providing we called in beforehand and let them know that they were on. Because I would say that there were six or eight in other departments that were volunteers. And if I knew that one of the other firefighters was on a call, I would stay over and cover, and they would do the same thing for me.

And so—but as we went on, like I said, when I started, we were having 30 calls a month during the summer, and if we went over 200 calls in a year, we were busy. The last year I was on department we were averaging over 100 calls at the Gladstone station and 85 calls at the Hazelwood Station, so it grew. And like I said, being a Firefighter I, Firefighter II, and EMT, and a hazmat [hazardous material], and 100 calls a month that you had to make at least 25% — you were busy and you didn't have too much time for T-ball or hockey or baseball for your kids.

KC: How did it affect your family, you being a volunteer firefighter?

DP: The wife was very good.

KC: What's your wife's name?

DP: Sharon. And she was on the Auxiliary, along with quite a few other ladies, and they all talked and what have you. And they were very good.

KC: It sounds like it was a family commitment to have you be a volunteer firefighter.

DP: Yes

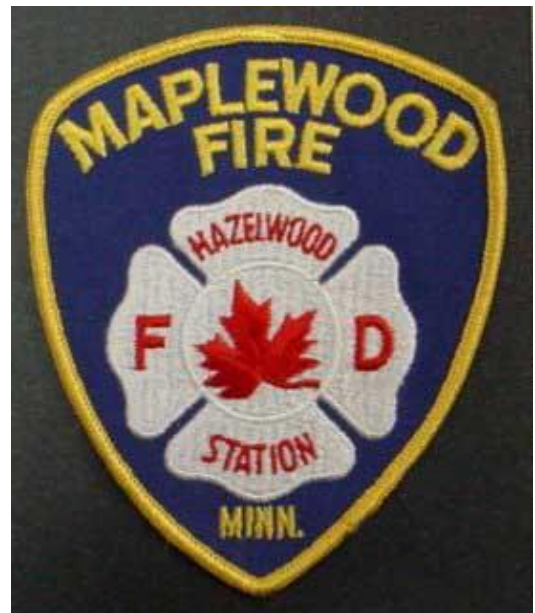
KC: Tell me about the Halloween tradition.

DP: Well, I don't know how exactly it started. Invariably we would have a run around the time that the kids were out trick-or-treating, so one day we decided why don't we give out hot dogs. And so it started out that we gave maybe 40 or 50 hotdogs that we gave out at first, and by the time we left, we were close to 300 hotdogs that we would go through. I remember the Halloween blizzard<sup>20</sup> [in 1991] that we had, and the kids would come in and warm up and dry off. And a lot of times they would just sit there and eat their hotdog and eat the candy that they had collected so far and then go home.

### Gladstone Fire Department Patches



c. 1956



1985 - 1996

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<sup>20</sup> The **Halloween Blizzard** was a period of heavy snowfall and ice accumulation that affected parts of the Upper Midwest of the United States, from October 31 to November 3, 1991. Over the last week of October 1991 a large storm system over the Atlantic Ocean blocked most of the weather patterns over the eastern half of the United States, and in turn moisture from the Gulf of Mexico was funneled straight northward over the affected region. By the time the precipitation stopped falling many cities in the eastern half of Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin had witnessed record early-season snowfall accumulations.

KC: So what innovations did you see over the years?

DP: Well, one of them, the size of the trucks. At Gladstone the station was built in 1943, and they sold advertisement on cement blocks for five Dollars. And now we're talking—Clarence and Frost where the fire department was and we had sponsors on Payne Avenue [in Saint Paul] and quite a few different businesses quite away from the fire department. And they were painted on the block as a reminder that they had contributed to the fire department. It was [September 1970] we got a snorkel, which was a bucket. There was no ladder to the bucket. You had to get in the bucket on the ground and be lifted up to fight the fire. But they could not fit it in the garage, so we had to build a separate wing onto our fire station, so that we could get in the door.

Then we ended up having to order special size trucks to get them in the other doors that we had had. Gladstone was a very fortunate and frugal fire department. Since 1965 until the city took over, we always paid cash for our trucks. We were contracted by the city, and we would set aside money for all of our equipment, and we were not paid very well. I think one year, my runs and all the runs that I had had, I was at about \$100 for the year.



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: How did they figure out how you were going to get paid?

DP: We set aside a budget at the beginning of the year, and every time somebody answered a call, there was one point, and then we added up all the points that they had or all the runs that they had and divided it into the money that we had set aside to be paid. Sometimes—most of the times, we got paid in December,

because it wasn't worth getting paid every month out of it. And so we would use that as my kids' Christmas present money for every year that I was on the department. That it would come at the end of the year, in December for Christmas.

KC: So was it usually about \$100?

DP: No, oh, it would go up. One time it was \$2000. When I left from being chief — the chief was paid \$2000 extra for being chief and going to all the other meetings.

KC: So how did the department make money?

DP: The department, like I said, was contracted by the City of Maplewood, and we had a dance every fall that we would mail out tickets to the residents in the area, and then we'd go door to door. We'd divide up into sections that we had, and we would go door to door and ask them if they wanted to buy the tickets. Now, they could keep the tickets and come to the dance or give us a donation, or whatever. So we had a dance at Aldrich Arena<sup>21</sup>. We got a liquor license, or bar license that we could sell drinks at, and it was an annual affair. You know, quite a few of the residents came, and it was a fun time. They had donated prizes and drawings from the different establishments. And the money that we took from there went to buying equipment, but we didn't have any other fundraisers at all.

The money that we had contracted from the city was what we got.

Sometimes, you know, we would get a certain amount for the year that we had set aside in our budget, and the next year we'd have more calls and less money

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<sup>21</sup> **Aldrich Arena** at 1850 White Bear Avenue, Maplewood, MN 55109 is a multi-purpose arena built in 1962 by Ramsey County and can be rented year round. During winter months, it's indoor ice rink is for skating and hockey events. During summer, it has seating up to 4,100 for parties, graduations, concerts and trade shows.

because that's all the money we allocated for the year. And the chiefs and the treasure a couple of other firefighters would sit down and work out a budget for the next year.

KC: So the management team would figure out the budget and all of the firefighters had to just accept it?

DP: Right. So, like I said, every single truck that Gladstone owned from 1965 on was paid for in cash by the time we got the truck, and there's a lot of things that had to be done. We had to replace fire hoses, and we had to replace turnout gear<sup>22</sup>. Every five years, we had to hydro test our SCBA<sup>23</sup>s, the breathing apparatus, the tanks.



And so we would stagger our purchases of these tanks so that we didn't have to do every single one every single year, because it put a great big hole in our budget. And there were times that we had to take money out and buy hoses that we didn't expect to, because there were holes, the hoses got holes in them.

KC: You talked about in the very early years having just kind of a raincoat. What was the equipment like when you first came on?

DP: Well, it was hip-waders that you would have to pull up and put your raincoat on, and an old black hat that had been handed down from one firefighter to the other. And it wasn't warm at all, and you had to get one that was big enough to

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<sup>22</sup> **Turnout gear** or bunker gear --- The outer protective gear worn by firefighters and so-named because they are kept beside a firefighters bunk at the fire station to be readily available when they turnout for a fire.

<sup>23</sup> A **self-contained breathing apparatus**, or **SCBA**, is a device worn by rescue workers, firefighters, and others to provide breathable air in an IDLH (immediate danger to life and health) atmosphere.



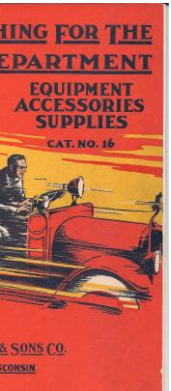
cover your jacket in the winter and a T-shirt in the summer, so I mean, you weren't really classified as a well-dressed firefighter.

Ad from Peter Pirsch & Sons Co Catalog:

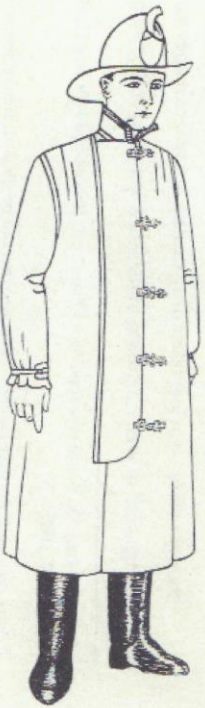
**EVERYTHING FOR THE FIRE DEPT.** 49

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## Firemen's Coats and Boots



EVERYTHING FOR THE  
FIRE DEPARTMENT  
EQUIPMENT  
ACCESSORIES  
SUPPLIES  
CAT. NO. 16  
  
PETER PIRSCH & SONS CO.  
KENOSHA WISCONSIN



and cemented. Has a corduroy collar, fly storm front, and is fastened with snaps and rings.

The coat is 48 inches long, which is the correct length for the service for which it is intended. Longer lengths made to order, at extra cost.

The regular sizes of our firemen's coats are as follows:

No. 3, 38-inch bust.	No. 6, 44-inch bust.
No. 4, 40-inch bust.	No. 7, 46-inch bust.
No. 5, 42-inch bust.	No. 8, 48-inch bust.

The measurements given above are based upon the regular bust measurements for street coats; that is, sufficient allowance is made in making up the rubber coats so that they will be large enough to go over the regular coat.

The sleeve measurements are made according to the size of the coats. A size 3 coat will have sleeves measuring 32½ to 33 inches. The sleeves will increase in length as the size of the coat increases, a No. 7 coat having 34½-inch sleeves.

Be sure to give the bust measurement when ordering.

No. 3 to No. 7 (black), each.....	\$15.00
No. 8 (black), each.....	15.50
Fire Chief's White Coat, each.....	20.00

We can also furnish all-red coats. Prices upon application.

Made of the very best jeans cloth and double-coated with para rubber. Seams are all sewed

KC: Was there any trouble ever with the equipment not being firefighter quality?

DP: Well, at that time, that was not standard. And at that time, OSHA was not around, and after that, we purchased a lot better equipment.

KC: At one time, did you have a raincoat that actually caught fire?

DP: It didn't catch fire, it just melted. It would just crinkle up from the heat.

KC: Who purchased those? [laughs]

DP: [laughs ] It was a committee that got together, and everybody in the area was wearing the same stuff. You'd go into a catalog and look at the stuff and say, "Well, this is what we want," and how many.

KC: Now Gladstone had yellow fire trucks.



DP: Yes. Al Schadt was a member of our fire department, and he was also the fire marshal of Maplewood. You can see yellow at dusk and dawn a lot better than you can see red. Well now, every time we went to a fire conference or what have you, that question got brought up about what color you want to paint your fire trucks, and Al would push the yellow and everybody else would push the red. Well, now you go to conference and there's purple ones, there's orange ones, there's yellow ones, there's red ones, there's green ones — fire trucks — black — you know. And whatever suits your fancy is what they are buying now.

KC: How long did Gladstone have yellow fire trucks?

RT: Up until the city took over. [laughs] And County Line and Parkside all had red all the time.

KC: Did they repaint then?

DP: They repainted the yellow-trucks.

KC: So how many years would that have been that Gladstone had yellow, because the first truck was red, wasn't it?

DP: The first truck, Old Betsy, was red. They bought it back from Excelsior, I believe it was, and that truck was found in the field by Dick Juker<sup>24</sup>. And he was the one that restored. He and his wife restored that truck, Old Betsy<sup>25</sup>. And it got to the point where, evidently, Dick didn't have time to keep it up and what have you, so it sat in different fire stations in the area, and finally the Historical Society<sup>26</sup> took it and put it up in the barn.

KC: What awards did Gladstone get while you are on the department? Or what awards did you personally get?

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<sup>24</sup> **Richard "Dick" Juker** was a Gladstone firefighter December 14, 1965, to March 30, 1994; with 28 years of service.

<sup>25</sup> **Old Betsy** is the first fire engine for the Gladstone Volunteer Fire Department. It was built in 1923 by Pirsch and purchased for \$1,000 in 1943 from the Excelsior Fire Department and used until 1951 when it was sold to the Saint Paul Clown Club. In 1977, Fran and Dick Juker purchased the rusted hulk and restored it to a fully-operable condition. It was sold to the City of Maplewood in 2003 and donated to the Maplewood Area Historical Society where it is on display.

<sup>26</sup> **Maplewood Area Historical Society** was started in 1995 to preserve and interpret Maplewood history. In 1999, the Bruentrup family donated five buildings from their dairy farm near Maplewood Mall to the Society. The City of Maplewood allowed the buildings to be relocated to nearby open space and leased the land to the Society for a headquarters and interpretive space. Today the Society's exhibits include "Old Betsy", the first Gladstone fire engine.

DP: Well, I was chosen Firefighter of the Year<sup>27</sup> three times during my career.

KC: How does one get chosen firefighter of the year?

DP: Just the activities and the amount of time that I had put in, the effort that I had put in. I was in fire education for the kids. I would go with second graders at Gladstone School<sup>28</sup>, or Weaver School<sup>29</sup> now, and we would teach fire safety. At one time, I built them a plywood house with 4 foot high walls and different rooms in it. The kids would crawl in it, from one room to the other and out the window, and we would set it up on the gym floor or in the fire station. And the kids would come over, and we would teach them how, and tell them to look for a second exit, and then it went from there.

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<sup>27</sup> **Gladstone Firefighter of the Year** was an award or honor for one year. Initially the process was for everyone to nominate who they thought should be rewarded with criteria of whoever did something good for the department or was the most dedicated or did an outstanding job. Then a committee would select one individual. In the end the award became a popularity contest.

<sup>28</sup> **Gladstone School** is located at Frost Avenue and Manton Street in Maplewood. A 4-classroom building was constructed in 1889 and replaced by the current building in 1952. Today it is used for Early Childhood, Family Education and seniors programs. It has also been a meeting place for many community organizations in the Gladstone area.

<sup>29</sup> **Weaver Elementary School** at 2135 Birmingham Street in Maplewood was opened in 1967 with classes for kindergarten - 5th grade. It was named for Madeline Weaver who was a first grade teacher at Gladstone schools since 1950.



Old Betsy in 1946

A friend of mine's wife worked for 3M, and she saw in a catalog a fire safety house that was built by Scotty, an RV in Irwin, Pennsylvania. So she said, "Why don't you go ahead and see what you can do and look into that, Dick?" So I got together with Scott Duddeck from North Saint Paul and we decided that that would be a good — something that both departments could use. So we solicited money from Lutheran Brotherhood and other agencies around, and they would give matching funds. Well, we—I don't know if we should put this down, [laughs] but whatever we made at this particular pancake breakfast or whatever. Well, it started out that Gladstone bought all of the stuff for the first pancake breakfast, and then we turned in the profits. Well now, the profits was the whole thing, because Gladstone had purchased all of the materials. So the next one that we had, we didn't count the price we only paid for the pancake mix and the what have you, and so we just counted everything that we made. So we

went from there, and it snowballed, and we raised, I believe \$2,500 for the first one.

It was a trailer like an RV camping trailer. And the kids would come in, and we would teach them fire safety in the kitchen, and then we would teach them fire safety in the living room or in the living area. They had an upstairs crawlspace that we couldn't stand up in. A lot of the kids could. And we would teach them fire safety in the bedroom. And then it was equipped so that you could put smoke in the bedroom. And so they would go over and touch the door that they'd just come in, and we would tell them that it was hot, and then they would crawl out the window and down a rope ladder. The first one was a rope ladder. The second one was a metal ladder attached to the trailer. And so then they would go to their meeting place and stay there until the fire department came. And then the fire department — they would tell the fire department what was going on, whether it was a fire in the bedroom or the living room or whatever.

So as years went on, that trailer got used quite a bit, so we decided that we'd better replace it. So we did another fundraiser, and we ended up driving to Irwin, Pennsylvania and picking up a much larger trailer. And Ken Collins<sup>30</sup> was the Director of Public Safety at the time, and so he went with us out there. Well, I sat in the back seat, and Ken and Scott Duddeck were in the front seat of this three-quarter ton pickup, and we started out for Irwin, Pennsylvania. Well, we got to Irwin, Pennsylvania, and Ken Collins was still driving. [laughs] And so we got to the motel, and it was, I don't know, nine or ten o'clock at night. The next

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<sup>30</sup> **Kenneth Collins** was appointed Maplewood police officer August 1, 1966; promoted sergeant January 1, 1971; chief and Director of Public Safety August 26, 1982; returned to sergeant August 1996; and retired January 31, 1998, with 32 years of service.

morning, we went up to the manufacturer and picked up the trailer again, or picked up the trailer and got the instructions and headed up. Well, Scott says, "Well, I'll drive for a little while." So he drove for about 100 miles, and Ken says, "I can drive for a while," he says, "until I get tired." Well, we drove until Wisconsin Dells from Irwin, Pennsylvania. We went through rush-hour traffic in Chicago with a 23-foot pickup truck and a 30-three foot trailer and had no idea where were going, except for the road signs. And we were changing lanes and whatever, and Ken was still driving. We got to Wisconsin Dells. We were going to get a motel. The motel is \$150 a night, and we said, "We don't want to pay that." So we slept in the trailer in the back of a pickup truck, or the backseat. And about two hours later, we got up and started home. We got over to Scott Duddeck's house and put the trailer in his yard. I got in the car, and I drove from Scott's house to Ken's house. And Ken's house back, and that's the extent of my driving from Maplewood to Irwin, Pennsylvania. [both laugh] But I did drive up to Scott's house with the pickup truck to start the whole ordeal. Ken loved to drive. He drives all the time.

KC: I hear you had strong camaraderie—a lot of activity outside of just fighting fires.

DP: Yes. Well, one thing was that years ago, everybody —all departments— thought, “We can handle what we have.” And we—well, Maplewood would call—or Gladstone would call Parkside and East County Line, but White Bear Lake — there was very little mutual aid<sup>31</sup> given. And we had the Northwood—I believe it was the Northwood Country Club fire<sup>32</sup>, and one of the dispatchers from Maplewood dispatched for North Saint Paul also at the time. They got a call that the Northwood Country Club was on fire. And it was at night, and we had just got the snorkel. And so anyway, the dispatcher rang North Saint Paul, and they were responding, and then he called Gladstone.

KC: What city was this fire in?

DP: The original fire was in North Saint Paul, and it was a big country club with dances and meals and restaurant type of deal. And then Gladstone was called, and eventually Parkside was there and County Line and Woodbury and Oakdale. And it was a humongous fire. They had a nursing home next door to this, and so they were worried about evacuating the nursing home. We used our hoses on one side of the building to keep the smoke away from the area, plus fight the fire on that end.

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<sup>31</sup> **Mutual Aid:** Maplewood fire departments signed an agreement in January, 1966 with approximately 25 other departments around the Saint Paul area to create the Capitol City Mutual Aid Association. When a fire department required additional firemen or equipment in an emergency—such as a disaster or a multiple-alarm fire—they could call upon the other departments to provide that support.

<sup>32</sup>**Northwood Country Club fire** at 2409 East Skillman Avenue in North Saint Paul on June 1, 1976, with 10 rigs and 50 to 60 firefighters from North Saint Paul Gladstone, East Co Line, Parkside, Oakdale fought the fire from midnight till 0400. The fire is remembered because of lack of communication between the different departments responding to mutual aid.



## Northwood Country Club burns

A fire destroyed the Northwood Country Club, 2409 E. Skillman Ave., North St. Paul, early today and nearly forced authorities to evacuate a nearby nursing home.

Firemen from the North St. Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale, Gladstone and East County Line fire departments battled the blaze which was reported about midnight, bringing it under control about 4 a.m. Ten fire rigs and about 50 or 60 fire fighters were at the scene.

**FIFTY PATIENTS** in the North St. Paul Nursing Home, 2375 E. Skillman Ave., next door to the country club, were moved to the west end of the home when smoke filled the structure, and firemen cleared the building of smoke with fans. Other firemen sprayed the roof and walls of the home with water to keep it from catching fire.

The elderly patients were returned to their rooms by 8 a.m. No injuries were reported.

Capt. William Weber of the North St. Paul Fire Department said damage was estimated at between \$300,000 and \$500,000. The club, which recently changed owners, was newly remodeled, he said. It was purchased by Gerald Murphy from John Heimel, who retained ownership of the building, Weber said.



Firemen battling a blaze that destroyed the Northwood Country Club are shown as they worked through the night to try to save the building and keep the fire from spreading to a nearby nursing home.—Photo for the Dispatch by Dave Bade

Well, like I said, it was probably the first time that all the fire departments in the area got together, so one company was pushing the fire one way and the other was pushing it another way. And we were—I don't remember if we were on north, south, east, or west of the place, but we were on the part where the garage—I was, rather, and Chief [Jerry] Kasmirski<sup>33</sup> at the time, he and I went to the building with the new hose that we got, a lightweight hose, and so we

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<sup>33</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.

turned—started the hose up in the room and were knocking down the fire, and we turned around and looked, and we didn't have too much water pressure. We look, and this new hose looked like a soaker hose because we were dragging it through all the nails and stuff that it just sprung holes in all of it, so we ended up throwing that hose away at the end of the night. But as Chief Kasmirski and I came out of the building, the roof collapsed right behind us —so three, four minutes behind us. And so we were lucky that the hose did not hold up.

But the amount of water that we had used washed the earth out, or the ground out from underneath the pods of the legs of the snorkel, and we could not retract the snorkel or these pods up to get the snorkel out of the way. And so that's when everything came to a head and found out that hey, we were pushing the fire from this end to that end. And so the chiefs got together and we worked on jacking up the pods so they would retract so we could move the aerial ladder away from the building. But eventually we did get it out. But it was a set fire, because, when the fire was out, there were gasoline cans found in quite a few spots in the area. It was an intentionally set fire.

KC: So what I'm hearing is that initially mutual aid wasn't about everybody working together.

DP: When it first started, you know —“Oh, we need help, and we need manpower.” And it was talked about at different meetings, but it was never really—and no we're talking way back when it was the good old boy syndromes. You know, you could have beer at the station— [in 1994 beer was no longer allowed at Gladstone stations.] This was in the 1970s, early 70s.

KC: After this fire experience what was learned?

DP: That's when they started it — the Ramsey Chiefs Association got together, and the Ramsey chief eventually even asked Oakdale to come in and work with them. The chief of Oakdale would attend some of the Ramsey chiefs' meetings.

KC: Because that's Washington County. So then, after that if you went into a fire, did one chief take over, kind of lead everybody?

DP: The first one on the scene was in charge of the fire, whether it was a captain or a firefighter or whoever. The first truck in was in charge. Then when they came in after that, then the senior officer took over. And then, from there it went to the chief of that department, whoever was in jurisdiction. And it has happened where a chief of Oakdale or another chief of the three departments — if it was a Gladstone fire and there was a chief from Parkside there, and he was a senior officer, he would take charge of that fire. So I mean, it went to the senior officer. And they would all work together. I mean, they would sit there. If we had a barn burner, everybody worked together and said, "Do you think we ought to do this, this, or that?" So I mean, it wasn't just a podunk fire department. And, you know, when Ramsey Chiefs really got going back in the 70s, that helped a lot from all of them, how the firefighters — and that's when the hazardous material started coming in to getting organized, and the Firefighter I and II, so that everybody was on the same page fighting fires.

KC: Now you were a captain, a deputy chief, and the chief.

DP: And then [back to] deputy chief.

KC: And then a deputy chief. How do you — is this an election that you get elected?

DP: It was an election at the time. The captains were chosen by the chiefs, and then we had the elections. And when the city was trying to take over, I didn't like the politics that was going on, and so I said that I would much rather help Steve

[Lukin]<sup>34</sup>. If Steve was elected chief, I would help Steve with what I could do, but I was not about to face City Hall with the politics.

KC: Do you want to talk about the politics in those times?

DP: No, I do not want to talk about politics. I mean, you would put that on the record. [both laugh]

KC: Well, if we're not going to talk about the politics of that time, then let's back up and let's talk about some specific memories that you have of fires that are memorable for you.

DP: Well, starting from the first part of it. Wayne Lindahl had asked me to be on the fire department, and they took members on at their monthly meetings. And so they had their annual meeting — it used to be in January. I was not brought up at the January meeting, because they had quite a bit of business to do at the annual meeting, and so they did not bring my name up. So my name wasn't brought up until the February meeting, but that is probably the luckiest part of my career, because in, I believe it was January [1974], they had the West Saint Paul fire<sup>35</sup>. And they called all the departments from all over the city to go to West Saint Paul.

KC: This was a big apartment fire.

DP: A big apartment fire and a gas explosion. And so we did not have covered cabs in our fire department, and so they had to hang on to the back of their truck. And it was colder than old Billy Hell that day, or that night, and they were holding on to the back of the bar strap on from Maplewood to West Saint Paul. And I could

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<sup>34</sup> **Steve Lukin** was a firefighter November 15, 1977 to present; chief in 1996 and 2000 to present, with over 37 years of service.

<sup>35</sup> **West Saint Paul fire** was at an apartment building at 120 West Thompson on January 11, 1974.

hear one fire truck after another going down Clarence Street — and I don't know how they got there, but, like I said, I was not voted on in the fire department. I was voted on in February and started in March of that year. [both laugh] So that had to be in 1973.

My proudest moment was when I was nominated and got to be firefighter—Fire Educator of the Year for the State of Minnesota. They gave me a plaque for my efforts to get this safety trailer organized. And so one or the others, somebody on the other fire department, nominated me for this award, and I was chosen as Firefighter of the Year.

KC: That's a big deal.

DP: So that's the proudest moment. I still have contact with—not contact, but every time I see the second-grade teacher from Weaver School, Mrs. Palke, we get a big hug out of each other, and she asks about my kids and I ask about her kids. And she was one of the mainstays in fire education for Weaver School. As a matter of fact, we even sponsored her to come to one of our conferences, the fire education conferences for the State of Minnesota. And I'll never forget that conference either, because the main speaker was talking like a drunken sailor, and Mrs. Palke [laughs] wrote the comment out and the fellow apologized to her later, and it was straightened out in a hurry after that and how these presentations were given.

KC: Was that a change from the good old boys club to—

DP: Yes. And, you know, it was starting in there. And back then, there was just guys on the fire department. Very, very few women, ladies.

KC: When did Gladstone have its first woman?

DP: Oh, gosh, I don't know. But the whole department would be down on charges right now because of the harassment that was given when it started out. And we were—we were bad, and every fire department was bad, at harassing the young ladies. They said things like, "They're not strong enough, and they're not man enough to go into a fire," and all kinds of things."

KC: Who were some of the first women that attempted to join you?

DP: Well, there was Helen Jane [Zane]<sup>36</sup>, Gail Bergeron<sup>37</sup>. Joey Bergeron<sup>38</sup> was a police officer that was killed — that was Joey's wife. They were single at the time when they—and both of them were on the fire department.

DP: And we had Kate Sharpelli<sup>39</sup>, I believe her name was. And there was a couple that, fought through it and they'd give it back to us, but if it happened today, they'd own the city. [laughs]

KC: So it sounds like it wasn't—there wasn't humor in it. It was pretty mean.

DP: Well, you know, at the time — I don't know if it burnt on them, but they would give it back to us, you know? And tease us about it and what have you. But, you know, it was uncalled for, strictly uncalled for.

KC: From the male perspective, from a senior male perspective, do you think that there were people trying to drive them off the department?

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<sup>36</sup> **Helen Jane Zane** was a Gladstone Firefighter.

<sup>37</sup> **Gail Bergeron** was a Gladstone firefighter December 14, 1986 to August 1, 1999, with 12 years of service.

<sup>38</sup> **Joseph Bergeron** was a Gladstone firefighter December 14, 1986, to August 1, 1999; with 12 years of service. And was appointed as a Maplewood police officer September 17, 1984; promoted sergeant May 30, 1998; and killed in the line of duty May 1, 2010, after 26 years of service.

<sup>39</sup> **Kate Sharpelli** was a Gladstone firefighter.

DP: I don't know if they were trying to drive them off, but they were—well, maybe so, but there were comments made that should not have been tolerated. Like I said, at the time I was not chief —I was captain— but I mean I still had responsibility for it. You know, I wish I had said something about it, but at the time I did not. If I had said something about it, then I would have been chastised.

It was the same way with the beer in the station. I mean, it was a long time that they fought that we deserved to have beer at the station; we deserved this and we deserved that. Finally, it got to the point that, at that time I was chief, and I said, "No, we are not going to have it anymore."

KC: Were you chastised when you took the beer?

DP: Very much so.

KC: Because I'm sure if there was beer in the station, and you got a call...

DP: Well, I mean, they weren't mean about it, but they were mad about it, you know? I was never threatened anything. "We've had beer in the station all these years [until 1983], and now you take it away from us." If you come to the station or come to a medical run and somebody's got one beer on their breath, that's a bad mark for the whole department, saying, "Hey, they all came drunk." And so that was it. I said that's it. It was decision made by the chief officers, but I was chief at the time that it was taken out.

DP: And I have talked to other chiefs around the area — outlying departments, not locally. And as of about a year ago, there were some departments that still had beer in the stations.

KC: Wow.

DP: But I don't know how they regulate it, you know. We're not against drinking beer, but leave it home and don't come. And, we first started saying that if you

had a beer at the station or you had a beer in your house, do not come to the station or you will not get credit for that run that we were on. And so there was still some there in the station for a while, and then finally we said that there would be no beer at all.

KC: And you couldn't even have been drinking before you went on a run.

DP: Right.

KC: Wow. What other—talk more about the cultural changes from the 1970s to 90s.

DP: Well, you had the fellows that were on the department when I first got there, and they would put in 30 years. Now, granted, you're talking maybe 30, 40 calls. Well, not even that, but maybe 40 calls a year when they first started out. So now, when it gets up to be 100 calls a month—a month and not a year—it got to be a long haul, and so these older fellows just didn't want to do the EMTs and the Firefighter I and the Firefighter II. All they wanted to do was to fight fires. Well, [those with] that culture's [attitudes] finally retired. [They] got old enough. We didn't keep them off the fire, tell them they had to leave. They left on their own.

Then it got to be the younger—I say younger. Well, I was 26 when I got on. And that's when there was the Ladies Auxiliary that kind of held the whole thing together. Whole families were involved. We had picnics, and we had parties. At our annual party, we would hire the other station—like we'd hire Parkside to come in and stand by our station while we had our party, so that nobody would be leaving from the party to go on a run that had been drinking.

And, like I said, it was the good old boy syndrome that we could—you know, everyone in the neighborhood knew we were on the fire department, and they, I don't know, didn't look up to us, but they appreciated us. And now it's



more of a job. I think. That's my personal opinion of being more of a job than the firefighter volunteer.

KC: So it sounds like in those earlier years, it was a commitment, a family commitment, and not just you went and did it and went home and then had your life.

DP: Yes. We had the firefighters that would work the system. When you got a call, they'd kind of lay back and wait for fire truck to go. If they knew there was going to be one fire truck going out or the ambulance going out, they'd get there just as the truck was moving out the door and they'd get credit. And they'd stay there 20 minutes and get the same pay as this firefighter that was on the rig for an hour, hour-and-a-half. Most of the runs were over an hour when you were on a medic run.

KC: How did you, as chief, handle those people that wanted to work the system?

DP: Nothing you could do about it.

KC: It was just the way the system was set up?

DP: Yes.

KC: Talk more about that. How was it determined? Who got paid for a run?

DP: Like I said, we were an independent fire department so, when the alarm went off, we would go to the station and the first four to five firefighters would get on the rig, whether it was a medic rig or a fire truck. And it depended upon whether it was a house fire, then every truck we had would go. And that's when we didn't have the lay backs<sup>40</sup>, you know, because by the time everybody got there,

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<sup>40</sup> **Lay-backs** referred to firefighters who intentionally arrived late to the fire station so they missed getting on the fire truck. They would receive pay for responding to the call, but they did not have to work the fire. There were also other terms used for such volunteers.

they needed five more on the last truck or the ambulance. It was protocol if we had a house fire. Then everything went. If it was a grass fire, then we would get to the scene and see if we needed more or whatever, so that we did not have all the trucks on the road. And so, if you responded to the station, you were given credit for the run. There were some people that worked the system and some that were on the fire rig every single time.

KC: If you had a house fire, all of your trucks are out. Does somebody call Parkside and say, "Will you stand in for us because we're really busy?"

DP: No. Then there would be the officer on the scene. A lot of times, if we had something going big and we had our trucks there, they would bring the truck over to our station and sit in our station until we got back, and we would do the same for them. Or they would stand by at their station — that was up to the chief officer on the scene.

KC: The chief, deputy chief, or whoever.

DP: Or it could be a firefighter — whoever's in command and he thought that we needed mutual aid or standby crew, because, like I said, the captain often — most of the time, the chiefs were working days, and if we had a day fire, then [the firefighter in charge might not be top command personnel]. And the dispatchers knew too. [They might say,] "I'm going to ring Parkside." And we'd say, "Go ahead."

KC: How do you think this family commitment affected your children? They didn't choose to be committed to the fire department.

DP: I have three boys. Well, they're all grown now. They realized that this was something that Dad did. I get it thrown in my face now by the wife. She says, "I stood by you all the years that you were on the fire department, and I've got

something to do and you don't want to do it." [both laugh] "Yes, dear." But I'm in a family where I have the last word, so it's "Yes, dear."

So the kids, they all got their merit badge — firefighter merit badge. The two of them did. The youngest did not go into scouts. The oldest one was an Eagle Scout, and the middle one was a life scout and just decided that was enough.

KC: Do you remember a time when you were afraid?

DP: Yes.

KC: Can you talk about it?

DP: When—as a matter of fact, it was not at an actual fire. It was at the Ramsey County nursing home, and we had a simulated fire. And it was smoke, a machine that was put in—well, we're talking a few years ago with the chemical smoke that they had. And it was part of the drill to shut off somebody's air and use the buddy breathing. Well, I knew something was going on, but I didn't see anybody around me, and I was supposed to have taken my hose off and stuck it in my coat. And it just didn't dawn on me, and knowing—I coughed like the devil. But anyway, I panicked and from then on, I practiced doing that thing. But I never had to do it again. I mean, it was just something that I just panicked and took off running.

KC: How did that make you a better firefighter, a better person — from that experience?

DP: Well, just that I had done—I had gone up to the station, and I had put on the air pack and did it up by myself at the station, just to see just how long I could go with breathing. You know, I did it three or four times, and I was comfortable with doing it. But thank goodness I never had to do it again.

KC: Can you talk about when you were disappointed with someone within the department?

DP: Well, I was disappointed with the city. We had a grass fire, and quite a few departments were on it, and — I can't remember who it was. But we did not have the ambulance at the time. They would just put them in a station wagon and haul them down to the hospital. And so anyway, there was Mike Franzen<sup>41</sup> and me were fighting this grass fire, and we were both overcome with smoke, and heat. And so anyway, like I said, the fire department had their own station wagon as a chief's car or utility vehicle. So anyway, both Mike and I were coughing and hacking, and so they decided to take us down to Ramsey Hospital in the back of this station wagon. Well, we were both laying down there in the back of the station wagon when we got there. And at that time, the only way they could tell, or one of the ways they could tell, how much O2 you'd taken in, was an artery stick in the arm. Well they stuck me, I don't know, four or five times, could not—now this is not a regular blood vein. You had to go in to see the pulsing. So they tried and they tried and they tried. I was stuck in the arms, you know, and then finally they called an anesthetist in, and they got an ephemeral one in, and by this time, I was on oxygen all the time and I was getting better all the time. So then I called back up to the police department, and they sent a squad down to pick me up and take me home.

Well, I got a bill from the city for an ambulance ride. Well, they had nothing to do with the ambulance ride. It was a firefighter that drove me down there, and it was a firefighter truck that was there, and we were contacted by the city to do this, and so it was just one of us that was doing it.

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<sup>41</sup> **Mike Franzen** was a Gladstone firefighter.

So I went to the city council, and I did not have to pay the ambulance bill. But I was disappointed in that they would even think that. And I don't know whose fault it was or who it was. And I believe Mike Franzen had the same thing, and neither of us had to pay.

KC: With other stories you have to tell me, sir?

DP: Well, we had a SIDS death one time, and, at the time, we didn't have the regular ambulance that everybody sees. It was just a van, a Dodge van, and it had snowed. I don't know — we had fourteen, fifteen inches snow on the ground, so we had put chains on our vehicle. Well, I don't want to say exactly where this house was, but we were driving down Highway-36 and they were working on this little one, and I don't even remember if we—I imagine we had paramedics at the time. And they said, "Can you go any faster, Dick? And so I was doing sixty miles an hour. Now 36 is clear of snow because it had been plowed, and so I've got chains. So I looked in my rearview mirror and I see one chain flying over the top of the car behind me, following me. And I just heard the clunking of the other chain. And we get down to the hospital, and one of the chains that was left, cut the gas filling pipe right off of the filler tank. And so that was an experience that I never want to go through again.

And another time, we were with an accident victim, a car accident victim. And Chief [Dick] Schaller<sup>42</sup> was saying "Dick, can you go faster, faster?" Well, I had the ambulance clocked at 85 miles an hour, and we had traffic on Highway-36, and we're heading to Ramsey [Hospital], and that's another time I was scared, because, like I said, we were doing eighty-five miles an hour, and a lot of

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<sup>42</sup> **Dick Schaller** was a Gladstone firefighter May 11, 1954, to January 11, 1982; with 27 years of service.

times we were out running our siren, and some of these would not pull over. I mean, everybody got out of our way. That fellow didn't make it again.

These were was the toughest ones. The SIDS death and the younger teenagers that were my kids' age at the time. If something happened, that's the toughest for me, you know.

There was times — getting back to who comes on the run and who doesn't. If we had a car fire or car accident or a house fire, say at twelve o'clock night, we would have guys coming out of the woodwork. And we got back in and went to sleep again, and 20 minutes later we had a G.I. bleed<sup>43</sup> at the Ramsey County nursing home. You have to look for firefighters to come out of bed to go up to Ramsey County, because they didn't want anything to do with the G.I. bleed. And that's when we were talked to, if we did not answer the second call — "You were on the first one, and it's 20 minutes later, or half an hour later, or an hour later, and you did not respond. Why? Why didn't you?"

KC: Did you ever get talked to?

DP: No. the only times I got talked to is when I was suspended for three days and they wanted to know why I fell asleep.

KC: What was the expectation of how many calls you would go on a month?

DP: You had to maintain at least 25% of the calls. And there were quite a few that got talked to. If you went on vacation for two weeks, that was a legitimate excuse, but if you just said that "Well, I slept through this one," well, that doesn't count.

KC: What was the roster number for Gladstone?

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<sup>43</sup> **GI Bleed:** Gastrointestinal bleeding or gastrointestinal hemorrhage describes every form of hemorrhage (loss of blood) in the gastrointestinal tract, from the pharynx to the rectum.

DP: Well, at one time we were allowed, I believe it was 40. Now we are talking a long time ago. [laughs] 40-some firefighters, and at times we had 30. At times we were down into the 20, trying to get recruits.

KC: At the end and in the 90s?

DP: Yeah. So, you know, they say that was the reason why they went to the city, but I don't want to get into that.

KC: And I'm letting you off the hook. We will make someone else take it. What other stories do you have to tell me, sir?

DP: Well, like the lady whose husband died on the corner of—on Lake Phelan. And, like I said, the chief says, "Dick, go talk to the guy's wife over there. I believe she's sitting in the car." So I went over there and was talking to her and telling her what was happening. And when we ran into—I don't know if it was right or not, but if we knew the person was straight-lined<sup>44</sup> or whatever, we would not tell the wife or whoever. We would make an effort to do the run and take them to the hospital and let them be pronounced dead in the hospital, because we did not want to subject them in a strange place and what have you. I knew what was happening, and I just told her that they were going to take him down to Ramsey Hospital. And so I ended up driving this lady home, because she didn't know how to drive and her husband was the only one that drove. So I drove her home and she got out of the car in the driveway, and I put the car in the garage and I walked out. Now the neighbor comes running after me: "What are you doing in the garage?" And so I said, "Well, I should go in and talk to the lady." Well, I

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<sup>44</sup> To **straight line** is a euphemism for when a patient dies and their heart monitor shows a straight line (no heart activity) instead of the pulsing line for an active heart.

went to the neighbor, and I called back down to the station: "Somebody come pick me up?" Because I have 3 miles to walk back to the station.

So that was one time, and another time we had a call, and it was a couple. They were both—I don't know if they were divorced at the time, but I know that man was not fully divorced at the time, and he and his lady friend were at the motel and he had a heart attack. And so they took him down to Ramsey Hospital. Well, she didn't know how to drive and it was his car, and on the way down to the hospital, she told me that all the money that she had was in his wallet. And she's now going down to the hospital, thinking that he's still alive. Well, when we got down there—I had been told that he wasn't going to make it. And so we get down to the hospital, and I go ask for the nurse in the emergency room — I said, "Would you come out and talk to her?" Well, that's when I left, and they had already taken him to the morgue. I called and they had them stop by the hospital and pick me up and take me back home again. But, from my understanding, if all of that money is still his and he's not divorced, his ex-wife, or his wife, gets that money. She's left with nothing. And they were both out of town. So, you know, that was—

KC: [laughs] You weren't going to play the judge?

DP: No, I was not going to get any farther into that story or talk to her about anything, you know. Just that I drove it down to the hospital because she could not drive and it was his car.

KC: Interesting human relations experiences.



BJ: What other stories do you remember about a fire? You weren't at the GEM Store fire<sup>45</sup>, were you?

DP: No, no, I sat there and watched it in my backyard, the black billowing smoke.

They had called for Saint Paul at the G. E. M. fire. They had called Saint Paul to see if they would bring a snorkel out or an aerial ladder truck out. And evidently back then, the

Pioneer Press reported :

"At 6:45pm, a bulldozer driven by Hank Scharffbillig, 1893 Phalen Place, Maplewood pushed in several sections of the wall on the northwest corner where flames were burning stubbornly. Scharffbillig also lifted three firemen in the bulldozer's scoop so they could pour water on the fire from above."

politics were going on and they said no, they could not come out to the GEM fire. So I believe it was Hank Scharffbillig,<sup>46</sup> that had a piece of heavy equipment, so the firefighters got into the bucket of this piece of equipment, and they raised them up so they could fight the roof fire. That was the only piece of aerial equipment that they had. And after that, they got Saint Paul and the surrounding area — Ramsey Chiefs were starting to communicate back and forth, you know. We were the volunteers and they were the professionals, and that's what—now we're talking back in the 60s, and so the full timers—it was just a different feeling between a full-time and a volunteer that we were taking the job away from them,

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<sup>45</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>46</sup> **Hank Scharffbillig**, was located at 1893 Phalen Place, Maplewood.

or whatever they thought. You know, the city could not afford to have full-time firefighters back then.



And the biggest fire — well, I can remember going up to — they weren't actually fires. They were calls from the Maplewood Mall when they first got under construction. It was the people that designed — the buildings were from Texas, and it was built on a design from Texas so all of the water lines were in the ceiling. And when it got to be -20 degrees below zero, all these pipes froze and then burst, and we had calls night after night after night going up to the

Maplewood Mall — nowhere to put the water. I mean, we would squeegee it down into the elevator shafts and out the doors, and it would take a while for them to get in to turn the sprinklers off. And so we had quite a bit of water that we had to work with, and that got to be old hat when you had so many calls.

One other little funny thing that I remember is that we had a call at—I can't remember. It was at four o'clock in the morning at the same residence for the same apartment building every single day at the same time for a couple of weeks at a time. And so we tried to figure out who was doing it, pulling the alarm or setting the alarm off, and the alarm boxes were not pulled or anything, and there was no call. And we couldn't figure it out, couldn't figure it out. Finally, they put up a camera, and it happened to be a woman that came out with a real strong perfume, and the fumes set off the fire alarm at the bend [in the hall]. And she was just going to work, you know. And so, you know, it wasn't all fires. And it was house fires that—I don't remember. Well, the 3M fire that we went to was probably the biggest one that I've ever been on.

KC: The one that you stayed up all day and fell asleep?

DP: Yes. But, you know, we've had quite a few alarms that would take quite a long time, to just burst the water and pick it up and clean it up. Where the Menard's store is now, and it was after the GEM store, and — I can't remember the company that was in there — anyway, we would have quite a few alarms in the building, and time after time, they'd come in and we'd have to wait for a key holder to come. And it was a half an hour and we would sit down there waiting, and the fire alarm would have gone off, and we didn't know if there was water or if there was anything. And so I bet you we were there four or five times in a two-week period. Finally we called and he says, "I'll be a half an hour late." He

says, "Wait." We said, "We are tired of waiting." So we took the door out — big glass door. After that we had a key box to get in.

I remember one time we were at Highway-36 and English St., and a drunk woman had come across the meridian and plowed into a car, killing both of the occupants, and there was glass all over everywhere. And up on the hill, there was a woman sitting there and just laughing and talking and what have you. And it turned out—it was her that was driving the car that killed these two people, and they were coming home from work and they were ride-sharing and they were going to one of their houses to pick up the other car. And the other was going to travel on, but the other lived in Maplewood. Well, Highway Patrol evidently put two and two together and found this woman, and so he took her down and walked her down to the highway and said, "Look at what you have done." And all she could talk about was her feet were cold and they were walking on glass and she could care less if she had killed two people.

KC: Was she drunk?

DP: Yes. You know, those things stick in your mind.

And then the first fatality that I saw, that young lady. When I'm having [long pause]—that was when drinking age was down to 18, and she celebrated her 18th birthday, and I had just gotten on the fire department. And that was when you drive all the way around Lake Phalen, and they had come around and hit the tree so hard that universal joints [in the car] flipped and stuck in the ground, and the car was sitting up at an angle. And this young lady was hit so hard that the window came down, her hair went out through the window, and the window rolled back up again. And she was hurt quite badly. Like I said, I was the first one on—I was on the fire truck, not on the ambulance, and so my job along with the fire truck was to just stand by in case the car caught fire. But

this young lady made it to Wheelock Parkway and Arcade and passed away, and that's another drunk that—you know, she wasn't driving. It was her friends. But I don't remember what happened to the other ones, but I know she passed away, and I can see that young girl at night.

KC: Hard memories.

DP: Yep. Especially the little ones.

KC: Yeah. Any other memories you have about fires, sir?

DP: It was Chief Schaller's last run, and when—just because I was really fond of Chief [crying]. He had a memory on him that I could not imagine. One of the deals was that my wife was driving up Frost Avenue, and she got a flat tire going across the railroad tracks, so you know how long that was ago. And so my wife didn't even know that she had a flat tire. Anyway, Chief Schaller saw the car and he knew who she was and my car and everything else, so he went out and changed the tire, or the guys did, on the car. And in the meantime, he's calling up the railroad and telling them that we had gotten a flat tire going over there, and that it had been called in before to have it fixed and that it should be taken care of. Well, somehow, I got a new tire out of the deal.

Another time, Chief Schaller was driving down and —Aldrich Arena had been put up, and there was a sign on the Aldrich Arena. And he said that he remembered that ten years ago, something had to be done with the sign, either take it down or there was no more advertisement or something or other. But he was within a day of ten years of remembering that something had to be done with that sign on Aldrich Arena, so that's the memory that he had. And Dick would always talk to me and talk to my kids and was really a good man.

We come back from a fire one time. We went to Embers on [Highway]-36, years ago, and he sat next to us and we were all having breakfast and all he had was coffee. And I said, "Put that on the bill." He says, "No, no, you're not going to pay for my coffee." He would not take anything like that from anybody, ever. So I mean, that's the type of fellow that Chief Schaller was.

KC: Sounds like he was one of your heroes.

DP: Yes.

KC: What would you like to be remembered—what would you like people to remember about you as a Gladstone firefighter?

DP: Well, just that I cared for everybody. I enjoyed helping if I could and when I could. I enjoy the camaraderie that I had with the firefighters. I still have a good camaraderie with Chief Lukin and—but I don't know hardly any of the firefighters back at the station. Somebody that was—well, they call me the "go to guy." I'm still the one that calls everybody for the annual parties, the chief parties and what have you, so every time there's something going on, they say, "Well, ask Dick." So evidently they got a trust in me that they can do it and I will help them out if I can.

KC: Sounds like a strong legacy, sir.

DP: But I do tell it like it is. [both laugh] And that's why I won't get into the politics.

KC: Thank you very, very much.

DP: I'll tell it like it is if we turn the camera off, but I won't tell it now. [both laugh]

KC: Thank you much.

## APPENDIX A

### Chronology of Gladstone Fire Department

Gladstone Station: 1955 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

- November 10, 1944 The Women's Auxiliary was founded.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- December, 1944 The 2-stall, 26' x32', concrete block fire station was completed, except there was no money for doors and windows. Windows were covered in tarpaper. Canvas that could be rolled up and down on a roller were installed over the doors. Windows and doors were installed in Spring after another fundraising effort.  
Source: History, MAHS 2013.0001.0103
- May 20, 1945 Open house for the completed 2-stall (26' x 32') fire station. Cost was less than \$2,500. A siren was located on the roof and could be activated from Pfeiffer's Grocery Store – which received all fire calls. Firemen hearing the siren would race to the Store to get the address and run across Frost Avenue to the fire station.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- c. 1945 There were only 14 fire hydrants in Gladstone located along Flandrau Street and White Bear Avenue. Rent was collected from residents on the street to pay Saint Paul. These were the only locations where the fire truck could be refilled with water.  
Source: History, MAHS 2013.0001.0103
- 1948 They had 32 members.  
Source: Letter, MAHS 2013.0001.0104
- 1951 Station was enlarged to 3 stalls.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.1424.0001
- 1957 New Canada Township residents voted to incorporate as the Village of Maplewood. Village Council Meetings were held in the Gladstone Fire Station until a new city hall was constructed in 1965.  
Source: History, MAHS 2006.0006.0017
- 1958 Gladstone Fire Station had 40 men and 4 pieces of equipment.  
Source: Newspaper, MAHS 2006.1430.0001



- 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 Parkside 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

## APPENDIX C

### 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 – Building enlarged to add offices and meeting spaces, a hose drying tower and additional bays with higher doors.  
Early-1970's  
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



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