

The Fire Mark

The Newsletter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum

JANUARY, 2024

A year in review: 2023

Michelle Haney-Kileeg, Chair

Did you know that a shuttered museum requires considerable attention and work??? The Board and Committees were busy in 2023 and have larger plans for the year ahead. This newsletter, a first in a while, will summarize last year's activities and offer a picture of our 2024 goals.

In this edition, you will hear about the Collections Committee's undertakings. Spoiler alert – the 1941 GMC (aka the parade truck) is back on the road.

A fundraising event was held in October at the Memorial Arena in Cobourg; were you one of the 850+ visitors? And you will read about plans for our first fun run.

The board met ten times in 2023, held its 2022 AGM and made a series of business decisions including updating to an online donation platform, Canada Helps. You can renew your membership, make a donation and sign up for events via the ticket option at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/canadian-fire-fighters-museum-port-hope>.

The board also approved a rolling 5-year strategic plan to guide priorities and activities.

We established four strategic pillars.

- provide and operate appropriate interim and long-term physical facilities for the Museum.
- significantly upgrade the way the Museum engages with its audience both before and after it solves its facility needs.
- improve the way in which it develops and manages the collection; and
- build institutional capacity.

A variety of activities supported these pillars in 2023. We met with the Mayor of Port Hope and Town of Cobourg staff about alternate sites. Our former site on Mill Street has been designated for much needed housing, but Cobourg Council has approved an option to lease the decommissioned Memorial Arena to the Museum pending our further study. Since the summer of 2022, over 30 tours have been undertaken with local architects, contractors, engineers, and accessibility consultants to help re imagine an arena as an affordably renovated, climate-controlled, fully accessible museum. At press time, we have not heard about our application to the Ontario Trillium Fund – specifically, it addressed the need for

creative on-line tools, virtual tours, and social media to improve how members and the collection interact. The grant also included support with revenue generation planning. Both key tenets to a stronger future.

Lastly, we moved part of our collection. We are grateful to the Municipality of Port Hope and Trade Tech for their years of support with artifact storage. However, growth and business expansion to both the Canton Hub and Focused Momentum on Robert Street, had us sourcing new space. 65% of our revenues are now directed to storage, cementing the need for a physical facility.

We were very lucky to attract 3 new Directors in 2023: William Lambert, Sally LeBlanc, and Dennis Waddington. I am grateful to work with such a talented group of volunteers.

And a final word of appreciation goes to the loyal members who continue to believe in the vision of a Canadian Fire Fighters Museum.

Meet our newest board members.

Sally LeBlanc joined the board in the fall of 2023, following a short volunteer stint. She retired in 2023 after 38 years in building maintenance. Sally says, "My experience with day-to-day operations involved all aspects of maintaining 5 Heritage buildings and the Cobourg Public Library. I was project manager for restoration on the heritage buildings. Good preparation for the museum redevelopment."

Will Lambert re-joined the board at the 2022 annual meeting. Will is a well-known supporter of several local volunteer causes, a former director and chair of the CFFM, a retired captain with the Toronto Fire Service, an enthusiastic curator of the CFFM collections and a dealer in antiques and collectibles, including fire-service related articles.

Dennis Waddington joined the board at the 2022 annual meeting. He is a retired geologist with a career in mineral exploration both in project management and in corporate administration in CFO and Corporate Secretary capacities with public companies. He has been involved with the CFFM for several years as a volunteer, helping with book-keeping, regulatory reporting, collections committee and general assistance and labour during the move out of the old museum into storage.

The CFFM Collection in 2023

The CFFM collection stands at the heart of the Museum. Developing and looking after it is a serious proposition. We are fortunate to have had a core of members over the years dedicated to making sure we have one of the finest collections about fire fighting in Canada.

2023 was no different in the variety of tasks we undertook under the umbrella of the Collection Committee, but the intensity of the work picked up a lot. Broadly speaking the tasks fell into projects to develop the collection and those to manage it properly. Developing the collection usually means identifying those gaps in the collection we would like to fill. We also responded to unsolicited offers of material from people wishing to dispose of records, family heirlooms and archives. Sometimes we get lucky and are offered items we need to complete records we already hold. But often we must exercise good judgement and decline offers for a variety of reasons.

This year we were offered more material to fill out our records of the Canadian fire fighters who served in Britain during the Second World War. We already had some of this material from the same donor and now our holding is more extensive. It will help to tell an even more inclusive story about this little-known Canadian wartime contribution than was possible in our original exhibition.

In 2022 we were offered an extensive archive of a defunct American manufacturer of fire trucks. The archive was in Canada almost by accident resulting from a series of corporate mergers. On examining the collection our conclusion was that there was little Canadian content to the archive and that the responsible course of action for the owner was to donate it to an American fire heritage institution in the area where the

manufacturer was located. We identified a potential recipient, made some initial enquiries, and put the two sides together. The archive was transferred over the summer of 2023 and is now held by a museum that can make best use of its remarkable contents.

Other offers we simply must decline outright. Often the items duplicate what we already hold, or they are of poor quality, would require extensive conservation and add little to the narrative inherent in the collection. The availability of storage space looms large in this equation.

And we make reasoned decisions to dispose of artifacts that no longer fit our collecting mandate. This was the case this summer with a vehicle stored outdoors for many years. It was sold off by public auction after no collecting institutions showed any interest in accepting it.

But we sometimes are presented with opportunities that check many collecting boxes. This happened in 2023 when we took possession of a significant archival collection from a noted, recently deceased Canadian collector.

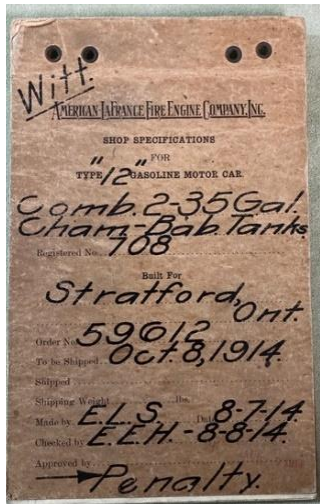


It has taken several months to itemize the material and in doing so the significance of what we have acquired has slowly revealed itself. The gems include many technical documents over a century old from fire vehicle manufacturers. Research shows that these documents exist almost nowhere else.



Prized, rare, customized fire helmet from Baird Collection

Also included are many Bills of Sale from one manufacturer who sold vehicles across Canada a century ago. To our great surprise and delight, among them is the Bill of Sale for the 1914 vehicle donated to us in 2022 by Ingenium. Taken together with material previously collected, this archive will be one of the best in Canada when we can house it properly.



From a collection management perspective, our largest challenge was the move of the collection from the Hub where it had been housed since 2018. We were fortunate to be able to store some of the larger, weather resistant material in barns with the vehicles. The balance found a new home on John Street. After a concerted effort to organize things into coherent groupings

at the Hub, nine stalwarts moved the balance of the collection in a long day in July.

This was preceded in May by the move of large items stored for us for several years by Walter Hillman outside his building on Robertson Street in Port Hope. They all now have a new home with most of our vehicle collection.



Another small victory was that after some trials and tribulations we were able to get our 1941 GMC parade truck back on the road. It has quickly been well used to expose the Museum locally, including taking pride of place at the CFFM Antique Sale held in October. The sale also featured a selection of artifacts for hands-on inspection. Hands-down winner for public interest was the fragment of early 19th century wooden water pipe from Montreal.

The collection makes all this possible. It is fascinating, evocative and conveys real meaning. It deserves to be carefully developed and managed to ensure its continued relevance for decades to come.

Christopher Terry
Chair, Collection Committee

Fundraising Report - 2023

Northumberland Antique/Vintage Show

To raise the museum's profile, showing that we are not dead, and to raise much-needed funds, CFFM decided to host an antique show. My wife Marielle and I deal in antiques as a sideline business and have participated in several shows over the years so we thought "how difficult could this be"? Well, the answer turned out to be quite difficult indeed, yet strangely satisfying when all was said and done.

Because we have an option to lease the Memorial Arena, the Town of Cobourg has generously allowed us unlimited access for the purposes of inspection and planning how we would modify the facility for our own use as a new home for the CFFM. At the same time, they granted us permission to use the facility for the purposes of fundraising. The arena has been closed to the public since 2019 but proved to be ideal for our antique show.



A lot of work was required to clean the place top to bottom, get the bathrooms up and running, make the ice pad accessible and so on, but with a little grit and many volunteer hours the job was accomplished, and we had a ready venue. The response from local vendors was brilliant, and we are very thankful to the 27 who signed up. We were

similarly appreciative of the food vendors who had tasty fare for hungry attendees.

To say that this show was a success would be to sell it truly short. Our many vendors brought an amazing array of antique and vintage offerings and the public responded in droves. We had nearly 900 paying customers and pass-holders in attendance. Business was brisk and many walked away with cherished purchases.



Our twin goals of raising funds and the museum's profile could not have been achieved without the assistance of many, many generous individuals, and businesses. Henderson Construction donated the construction barrier fencing that we used to separate the booths and Cobourg Firefighters helped set them up. Over 50 tables were loaned to us by organizations including the Cobourg Fire Department, Cobourg Town Hall, Jeff Lees, Karen O'Hara, and the West Northumberland Curling Club. Cobourg Home Hardware generously donated the materials we needed to build the accessibility ramp.

Big thanks to member John Matthew for lending his construction expertise and muscle to get the ramp built and installed. Bosley Realty donated airtime for commercials on Classical 103 FM, and Small Town Radio 89.7 FM did an on-air interview

to help promote the show. Blooms Grove Antiques donated 1,250 save the date cards and AT Signs gave us a great discount on our way-finding lawn signs. The Cobourg Concert Band came out and played 2 marvelous sets (brass and woodwinds) at no charge. Kendra Simmons, Brian Buttery and David Simmons provided their expertise at our appraisal table, new member Chris Lane and many member volunteers came forward to manage the reception table, the

Fundraising Event – 2024

By Rod Simpson, Board member, Secretary and lifelong supporter of running for fun.

CFFM Run/Walk Sunday, June 23rd.



Hottest Run In Town!

[Sign-up today](#) to support the museum in a fun way.

1st annual

Canadian Fire Fighters Museum Run/Walk hosted along the beautiful shores of Lake Ontario in Cobourg, Ontario.

Can't make it to Cobourg?

No problem. Sign-up for our [Virtual Run](#).

Add a challenge and do the Full Bunker Gear version of the run.

Visit us at

<https://raceroster.com/events/2024/78016/canadian-fire-fighters-museum-runwalk> to sign up today.

kids' area and to help the vendors load in and out, before and after the show. The result was happy vendors, satisfied customers, new friends, and a ground swell of demand to repeat the event soon. To that end we are now strongly considering a Spring 2024 show. Our net profits were \$6K.

Will Lambert (CFFM Curator and Director)

What colour is your hydrant? And why?

Fire hydrants are a common sight in villages, towns, and cities and even some rural areas. They are an essential component for providing enough water to support fire protection. The CFFM has a collection of about fifty, mostly intact, of many ages that have been collected over the years.

The collection is presently in storage awaiting an opportunity to be displayed in a future museum. They are of many colours and combinations thereof and during the earlier Adopt-a-Hydrant program adopters could dedicate their chosen hydrant to some person or persons and choose a colour scheme to re-finish it.

But hydrants "in the wild" are coloured too, and you may even have heard cases in the news of property owners who tried painting the chipped and rusting hydrants outside their homes more creatively. Usually, the news articles emphasize the trouble they got into with the municipality that owned the hydrants and provided fire protection services with them.

The colours are chosen not only for visibility when the fire fighters are trying to catch a

hydrant on their way to a nearby fire, but also to communicate immediately the flow and pressure capabilities of that hydrant so appropriate equipment can be connected. While many municipalities might have chosen their own colour schemes, The National Fire Protection Association, a US-based, self-funded nonprofit that, in its own words, “has grown to become the leading global advocate for the elimination of death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire, electrical, and related hazards”, develops standards that are observed around the world to create certainty and efficiency in many areas of fire protection, including standardized colour-coding of public fire service hydrants across many jurisdictions.

The Ontario Fire Code, for example, specifies compliance with NFPA 291, “Recommended Practice for Water Flow Testing and Marking of Hydrants”. The colour schemes are summarized in the 2022 Fire Master Plan of the Municipality of Port Hope, prepared by The Loomex Group.

Additionally, many hydrants on commercial or industrial properties are privately owned but still must be maintained in compliance with the Ontario Fire Code by their owners. These are usually painted red indicating their lower flow rate compared to municipal systems.

Dennis Waddington

Class	Top and Nozzle Colour Code	Barrel Colour	Fire Flow	Pressure
AA	Light Blue	Chrome Yellow	1,500 gpm (5,680 L/min) or greater	20 psi (140 kPa)
A	Green		1,000 – 1,499 gpm (3,785 – 5,675 L/min)	20 psi (140 kPa)
B	Orange		500 – 999 gpm (1,900 – 3,780 L/min)	20 psi (140 kPa)
C	Red		500 gpm (1,900 L/min) or less	20 psi (140 kPa)

Colour schemes specified by NFPA 291



Some of CFFM’s fire hydrant collection

Long life of a familiar truck

Many of you have seen CFFM's 1941 GMC-LaFrance parade truck, informally known as '41, at special occasions over the years. It's been relatively invisible for some time while it was in storage and awaiting repairs for a starting issue. Most recently it was rolling at several Santa Claus parades and as a static display at our very successful Antique and Vintage Show in November. It has been great to see it back in action.



But what do we really know of this truck's past life? Until some recent research by Will Lambert, what we knew was it was a 1941 GMC truck fitted out as a pumper by LaFrance-Foamite. We knew it had been in service with the Napanee, Ontario fire department, then at some point it was restored by The Farmers' Mutual Insurance Company of Lindsay, Ontario before coming to the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum. With the help of friends at the Canadian Automotive Museum in Oshawa we determined the engine is a Chevy 216 or 235, in-line six cylinder (90 or 93 hp respectively). And that was about it for early history.

But in early 2023 Will reached out to the Greater Napanee Emergency Services, successor to Greater Napanee Fire Service, in turn successor to the original Napanee Fire Department, for historical information. An enthusiastic response was received from retired Deputy Chief Bill Pierson who got together with several other retired veterans who were familiar with '41 in its final years in Napanee. Thanks to their memories of the truck, and the department at the time, we can now fill out more of '41's life story.

Napanee acquired the vehicle during WWII. As is often the case, the political decision was supported by hypothetical fear. In this case it was concerns over sabotage because Fort Henry was not too far away and was being used to house German prisoners of war and what if they broke out and sought to wreak havoc? On top of which, the Kingston area in general hosted several federal penitentiaries and they apparently worried about potential anti-social activity should there be a jailbreak by people seeking to cause trouble. Whatever the real risks, the decision was made, and the truck was purchased to protect the citizens of Napanee. They paid \$4,200 for it in 1941, which would approximately equate to \$75,000 today.



Sometime after it was purchased a superstructure was added to carry a 60-foot Bangor Ladder so it could be used to fight structure fires in the absence of any aerial truck in their fleet. Judging from these early photos, the booster hose reel also seems to have been added, behind the cab.



As reported by Bill Pierson, *"The '41 had a 500-gpm pump in her. It carried 600 ft of old "cartwheel" 2½ inch canvas hose with real brass fittings. In the two trays at the back of the main hose bed and at about shoulder height, it carried 4 rolls of canvas 1½ inch in each tray. Of course, you had to roll each length out and then join each length the next to make up your working hose line. OMG that hose was heavy."*

He also noted that, in contrast to modern equipment standards, there was never any consideration given to providing any air packs on the '41. As the Napanee fleet expanded, '41 served as the 2nd run town pumper truck from 1952 onwards.

Bill and his colleagues recalled *"The last working fire ... that the '41 was used as part of the suppression efforts was in 1974 when the CN freight sheds burned. Of course, there was no radio in the '41 and no portables to use. The driver parked the truck near the burning sheds. There were no instructions from a captain or the chief to the contrary and, you guessed it, the nearest hydrant was a block back down the street. You can guess what's coming: being the relative newbie I was assigned to drag the 2½ [inch line] back down the street and hook it to the hydrant. I thought OK, I can do that. I was able to stretch out about 3 lengths of the 2½ cartwheel hose. I was short by a good 2 lengths. Another lad came along and brought 2 separate lengths of that 2½ and together we did get water to the '41. Thank the Good Lord we've come a long, long, long way from those days!"*

Bill added *"In 1975 the Napanee council decided to purchase a new 75-foot Thibault aerial truck, delivered in July of 1976 just in time for the downtown fire at Gibbard Furniture. ... The chief put it in service for that fire; he had parked it a tad too close to the front of the building and she was singed somewhat when the front of the building was consumed with a large ball of fire that burst from the show windows. The lad up on the ladder was singed somewhat too. It was quite an introduction to using an aerial truck!"*



After the Thibault aerial was repaired, in October 1976, the '41 was retired to parade and

ceremonial duty and appeared in Napanee, Deseronto and Gananoque. It initially resided at the back of the Market Square fire hall until it was displaced by a new rescue van (converted from a bread delivery truck). From there *"the grand old girl was relegated to a back corner of the Town Barns out in Selby until about 1988 when she was bought by an insurance company"* [for \$5,000].

Picking up the more recent story from there, the Farmers Mutual Insurance Company Ltd. had the truck restored, including removing the Bangor Ladder and its superstructure, before it came to CFFM.



Before going into storage when the old museum building in Port Hope closed, '41 had a brief film career in which it played the part of a fire truck in the City of Derry, for the Stephen King movie *"It"* during filming in Port Hope (below).



For now, '41 is running again and with further maintenance and TLC from CFFM volunteers is looking forward to more outings to meet its public.

Dennis Waddington

Greetings from the Board's Fire Fighter Liaison

Hi, my name is John.

I am on the board of directors of the CFFM. My key role is to facilitate closer relationships with fire related organizations and expand our membership through awareness and communication. I also am a retired Captain of the Toronto Fire Services. My career as a firefighter began as a volunteer with the Ilderton Fire Department in southwestern Ontario. From there I progressed to the Military as a firefighter doing both structural and aviation fire fighting. My career as a city firefighter began in 1990 with the Scarborough Fire Department which amalgamated with other municipalities to form Toronto Fire Services. I retired in 2021 having spent my entire career as an operational firefighter on the "trucks".

With this background visiting a fire museum can be profound experience. I am intimately familiar with many of the artifacts. I know how to use them "in anger" as we used to say. I know how heavy they are and what it feels like when they kick back the force that is applied to them. I remember recently seeing a firetruck that I had operated in the military in a museum. At one time it was my responsibility to operate and

maintain this truck in its critical role. Lives depended on it. Now we are both free from this responsibility. This informs how I approach any museum. Go beyond the aesthetics and think about the artifact during its service life. The noise and speed of an aircraft or the violence of a tank.

A good example is the tailboard of an old fire truck. To a museum visitor it is just part of a cool old truck, for a firefighter a lot can happen on a tailboard. Not many decades ago we rode them to a fire. Often meetings or training sessions are held sitting on a tailboard. I have seen boxes of donuts or pizza's set there during a prolonged fire operation. Firefighter's often rest on tailboards and change their air cylinders there. A tailboard is where you stand to load hose into the hose bed, and it is a good place to try and revive a cat or dog you found in a burning house. Many of the artifacts belonging to the CFFM are still serviceable. Recently while moving artifacts to a new storage, I rolled some hose to be stored in the compartments of one of the trucks. A retired firefighter rolling retired hose into a retired fire truck. I felt that we could go put out a dumpster fire for old times sake.

Hopefully soon you can come and experience the collection at the Museum. In the meantime, send me an email at cfirefightersmuseum@gmail.com and invite me to speak with your organization, union or even classroom.

Memberships Renewals

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/canadian-fire-fighters-museum-port-hope>
or cfirefightersmuseum@gmail.com or cheque
to CFFM PO Box 325, Port Hope L1A 3W4

Individual \$25 Fire Fighter \$15 Family \$40

(Please speak to us about a Corporate Membership.)

Memberships are annual, rolling from your date of purchase.

You must be an active member to attend the AGM, TBC Spring 2024.

Welcome to our newest members -

Chris and Nicole Lane

Anna Tucka

Appeal to readers: Does anyone know of a wheelwright who could assist in completing restoration of the spoked wooden wheels on our 1866 Amoskeag steam pumper engine?

We are also seeking new board members and/or volunteers skilled in social media and marketing.



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