

4-H NEWS

The local members who attended 4-H camp at McClure lake from the 20th to the 23rd of July were: Patricia Hapner, Rosie Smith, Dina Jane Mench, Donna Darr and Jack Darr. Each year "star campers" and alternates are chosen for outstanding leadership ability, willingness to work, cooperation and personality. The "star campers" for the year were as follows:

Lois Mishler, Sidney; Bill Ayres, Sidney. Alternates: Susie Knoop, Claypool; Jack Darr, Syracuse.

These winning campers will go next year with all their expenses paid. The retaining "star campers" are Donna Darr, of Syracuse and Lee Norris of Beaver Dam.

Let's Review The Volunteer System

(Editorial)

In the early summer of 1941, a fire developed at the Wilt factory here. We do not recall just what happened, but something prevented the Syracuse volunteer fire department from giving aid—and the Milford department was called, arrived and put out the fire. This was the FIRST open instance that something was wrong with the way the fire department was being handled.

Since that time right up through numerous home fires,

the Pickwick fire, The Coach company fire, Grieger fire—absolutely nothing was done by the town board or the fire chief to improve the service.

Thursday night of last week at a meeting of business men, it was learned that only three men were members of the fire department. No drills were held, no inspections made, no fire schools attended, no one in charge at a fire. If it were not so tragic, it would be "funny."

Right now, there is definite sign of improvement. The group of business men seem to have a movement started which will give some relief. Drills have been initiated, and a full crew of volunteers taken on.

The Journal is still advocating the "paid fire force" plan. Citizens may be interested in the following:

The taxable wealth of this township is approximately that of the city of Warsaw, yet a fire force here has many more difficulties to contend with than does Warsaw. The community is scattered over a far greater area.

The town of Syracuse and Turkey Creek township together have at least \$25,000 worth of equipment. That point alone would normally point toward some one paid to take care of it. There isn't a citizen in this community who would allow \$25,000 worth of intricate machinery to be taken care of by volunteers.

The office of the State Fire Marshall has sent a booklet which contains the state laws pertaining to fire protection in towns and townships. Right now, opponents of the "paid" fire force plan are stating that this community cannot legally hire a full time fireman. The State Fire Marshall assures us that it can—and that far smaller communities are now doing it. We have this information at our office.

Opponents of a paid fire force point toward Milford as an example of what a volunteer outfit can do. Milford is O. K. and doing a swell job. But this community has two to three times the population and wealth, with a corresponding problem.

The volunteer system depends upon a great deal of enthusiasm to keep it going. Enthusiasm runs out after a time and neglect and slip shod methods creep in. Syracuse at one time had a first class volunteer system, too.

The "paid" fire force plan as advocated would have two full-time firemen, one of whom would be on duty at all times. These two would, of course, keep all equipment in shape and ready to go, conduct regular fire inspection trips to all factories and stores, and be in charge at fires. A live volunteer group would be necessary to aid them. The pay for volunteers should be doubled at least, and they should be paid for regular fire drills. Fire coats, hats, smoke masks should be ready for use. Damage to clothing should be paid for. It should be an honor to belong to the volunteer fire company. The state fire marshal's office will be glad to conduct fire schools here.

The "volunteer" method, here



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has produced the following: A million dollar loss in 18 months (and unless you have yourself been burned out, you can have no idea what that means), one man burned to death, firehose burned up, damage to our new fire truck, 150 families out of a good job, loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars per year in wages in this community, a definite drop in real estate values, from 20 to 25 thousand dollars direct loss in taxes in 2-year period, and insurance rates going sky high, with wholesale cancellations a possibility.

Opponents of the paid fire force plan continuously state that: "Fort Wayne had a big fire last week... or Chicago... or South Bend." Other methods used in sniping at any changes here in the fire department, are to intimate that "the boys just had some bad breaks and are not to blame." The present town attorney had the effrontery to state to the editor Tuesday that "If I had a fire I would stay there and take care of it and not leave it to anyone else." Our answer is that the Syracuse fire chief himself and the president of the town board assured us at the time our equipment was burned up that they would take care of everything. We asked about a watchman to take care of any outbreak, and were assured a watchman would be on the job. Had we known then what we know now, we would not, of course, trusted this statement. The fire truck was taken away, hose rolled up, and firemen failed to come out when called by the watchman. Plant burned up.

If Fort Wayne, Chicago, South Bend had experienced a fire loss like the past 18 months in the same proportion that this community has, more than one-half their manufacturing plants and one-eighth their business district would be in ruins.

Let us set down the known facts about the "bad breaks of the present system. In 1941, the Milford fire department had to be called to put out a fire at the Wilt factory. The night watchman stated at the Pickwick fire the blaze was only three or four feet high when he found it—\$300,000 loss. We have already stated what happened at the Journal office fire. We have a procession of fires at which hose was laid wrong end to and other boners made—the Frazier house, Firestone house, Byrd house, were among those where inefficiency caused complete or almost destruction. A competent fire fighting outfit would have put out the Liberty Coach company fire. The new fire truck almost burned up. Two fire trucks at the Grieger fire and no one one able to operate either of them—Failure to order replacement and repair of equipment—No drills, no one in charge at fires. The Journal will be happy to retract any statement made here that is wrong.

All this is a product of the "Volunteer" system. The fire chief has been in absolute authority, backed by the town board. We say that system is wrong and has been proven so.

The state law allows a town and township to join together in any manner to jointly afford fire protection. A 1947 law allows a full time department outside any town, if necessary. More than 50 percent of property owners can force this action if they desire.

It is on record that the town board itself agreed 18 months ago to adopt the "paid" plan; the township trustee has always been willing; the volunteer force six months ago urged the adoption of the plan; the Chamber of Commerce has approved the plan; NO ONE has ever openly spoken against it to our knowledge. Yet, today we still are planning to use the volunteer system under the same leadership. W. E. Long and his plans to build a new and better town was "stopped" by this same kind of a deal. Now we see the Coach company plant in ruins, and plans announced by the company to build a \$250,000 plant in Bremen; the company has also asked that the local drive to raise \$100,000 be stopped, and the office force is moving to Bremen very soon. The Liberty Coach company will have a statement in this paper next week.

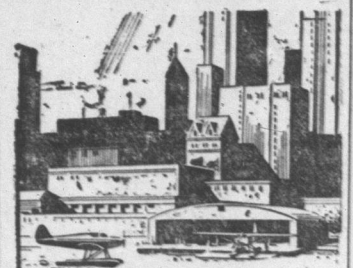
There is no doubt what the majority of people in this community think of all this. However, the majority can't seem to get together. Bickerings, love of the immediate dollar, back biting, etc., on the part of a few have again won out.

No man in this community is able to GIVE the time needed to make sure we have a first-class fire department. It takes work

every day, and lots of it after a fire, to keep equipment in shape. The refusal of two men on the volunteer department to accept this responsibility as the new chief, illustrates this very well.

The ONLY way a volunteer system will be dropped here and a paid fire force department set up, is for a large majority of the people to demand it. You MUST see the town councilmen (they meet next Tuesday night) and the township trustee and advisory board. Unless there is definite action, the town board will continue to try to "save face" by continuing a volunteer system.

Mrs. Ray Fleischauer is ill in her home.



FLOAT PLANES

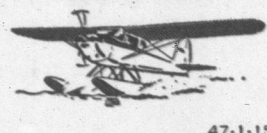
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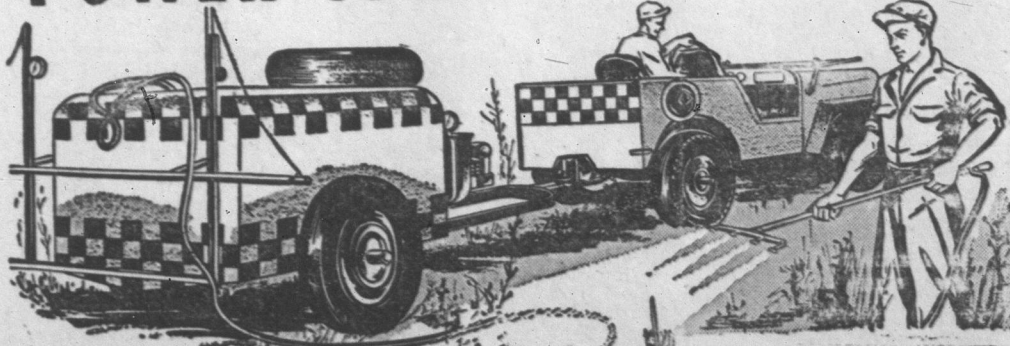
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