

# Onslow Belmont Fire Department • Start Inspired Others

By Maurice Rees

When Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade was started in fall of 1961 it inspired others according to newspaper stories published 60 years ago. Area residents living in fear of a fire in the community with protection of any kind.

Under the guidance of the first chief, Keith Hamilton to who worked hard to bring four zones - Central Onslow, Lower Onslow, Onslow-Belmont and Crowes Mill-Onslow Mountain within a few months there were 65 members, including founding members, signed up at the end of 1961. (See photo of names, elsewhere in this issue).

The new 27 x 30 hall cost in the vicinity of \$1,000 and within a short time it was half paid for. An organizing fund raising campaign raised \$2,000 from 350 local residents and businesses. The first harvest sale, which has become an iconic annual event netted \$750.00. Working hard to raise money for the hall and equipment an additional \$300 was raised from concerts and a street dance.

The newspaper account said that in addition to providing fire protection, another benefit was "a sense of local pride" which permitted local efforts be directed to the fire department, rather than Truro-based or agricultural organizations.

A picture published locally on November 17, 1961 referenced the official opening celebrations including a dance. Pictured in front of the new hall, valued at \$2,500, but costing \$1,000 with the remainder coming from donations of materials and labour, was the departments two vehicles. The vehicles were a

500-gallon tank truck and a civil defense truck which was used for training purposes.

Another newspaper account following the Friday opening mentioned the department served 425 households and had a roster of 85 members. The Masstown district, containing 25 homes, was quickly added to the fire protection area. A photo taken in early 1962, which still proudly hangs in the hall contained a list of 102 Founding Members and others who joined in 1961.

Kenneth Crowe, Onslow district representative to Colchester Municipal Council conducted the ribbon cutting ceremonies. K.A. Hamilton, the 28 year old chief, was quoted as saying it was just the beginning as there were many things in the planning stages.

The fire tanker was purchased from the Sydney fire Department and was equipped to draw water from any source close to the scene of the fire. The civil defense vehicle could pump 500 gallons of water per minute, but itself contained only a 300 gallon tank.

A telephone alarm system was designed with five drivers, who lived close to the fire hall, plus the chief were connected to a special fire alarm number. Other residents were responsible to ensure the message was passed along to other members, who lived farther away from the hall. Not leaving anything to chance and to keep costs down, several members were qualified to service the vehicles and equipment.

Realizing formation of a fire department was in the offing several people commenced training in February



**NEW FIREHALL**—Shown is the new Onslow-Belmont Fire Brigade's Fire Hall at Lower Onslow which will be officially opened at a dance tonight. The hall valued at \$2,500 was built mainly through generous donations of labor and materials. In front of the building is shown the brigade's 500-gallon tank truck purchased with funds raised among the residents of the communities served. The civil defense fire truck, used for training purposes and also shown in the picture, is presently located at Onslow.

1961, so they would be ready to respond when necessary. Truro Fire Chief, C. A. Lane conducted the training. Each of the zones had a minimum of 20 members in each zone.

*This article was prepared by Maurice Rees with the assistance of Clair Peers and other members from Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade*

## Cow Patty Bingo - \$10,000

A uniquely rural fundraiser, "Cow Patty Bingo", in support of the Londonderry Hall will be held on May 8, 2021 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 4058 Mines Bass River Road, Londonderry. A poster circulated by Victoria Lomond representing the organizing group listed a prize of \$10,000.

Tickets are \$10 each with a limited number of tickets being sold. The event is being conducted under License #AGO-306782-20.

Tickets are available at: Dominion Chair, Glenholme Petrocan/Angel's Diner, Debert Legion and Double "C" Truckstop. For more information or tickets contact: Victoria Lomond, 902 890 4242 or [victoria.lomond@hotmail.ca](mailto:victoria.lomond@hotmail.ca)

Founding Members Of The Onslow - Belmont Fire Brigade Who joined in 1961		
Danny Andrews	Charlie Fiddes	Clem McInnon
Herman Armsworth	Herb Fiddes	Bob McCellan
Ivan Armsworth	Lin Fiddes	Lou McCellan
Page Baird	Ellis Flemming	Fred McMasters
Jack Barley	Ira Flemming	Sylvan Mingo
Fred Barnhill	Rev. James Fraser	Neil Moraash
Narl Barnhill	Ron Gaddes	Doug Morris
Lewis Barnhill	Allison Groves	Bill Murray
Logan Barnhill	Stan Groves	George Murray
Ritchie Barnhill	Fern Hamilton	Robert Murray
Wesley Bennell	Neil Hamilton	Graham Parker
Jim Benson	Lee Higgins	Edwin Parnham
John Berkleaar	Grant Higgins	Bob Patterson
Ritchie Boop	Ray Height	Howard Pierce
Rupert Clark	Ross Hill	Don Porter
Darrell Clarke	Charles Irving	Art Pratt
Lester Clarke	Cecil Jennings	Lee Pratt
Ray Clarke	Carl Jennings	Sidon Priest
Trueman Crosby	Frank Jennings	Lorne Putnam
Ira Crowe	George Jennings	Jacob Robben
Ralph Crowe	Gerald Jennings	Elmer Roode
Robert Crowe	Lloyd Jennings	Kenneth Roode
Eugene Culgin	Russell Jennings	George Seamore
Stewart Currie	Carl King	Arnold Staples
George Davidson	Bad Langille	Douglas Stewart
Cecil Delaney	Edward Lynds	Ron Tattrie
Reg Delaney	Frank Lynds	Murray Teed
Kenneth Dickie	Aubrey McInnes	Russell Teed
Vaughan Dickie	Earl McLeod	Willard Teed
Nielor Dickie	Harold McLeod	Richard Vance
Roy Dryden	Ross Main	Gordon Weatherbee
Harry Elliott	Chesley Mathews	Arnold Wilson
Alister Ferguson	Arthur McShinney	Maynard Wilson
Bill Fiddes	Donnie McRay	Cecil Yorke

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