

Fire engine fantasy turns into dream-come-true

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

It was love at first siren for Al Judge.

Four years ago, he saw it standing in a driveway. The gold letter proclaiming it the property of the Helena, Ohio, Volunteer Fire Department was faded but fetching.

At 33, the red fire engine was the right age for Judge — old enough to be an antique, young enough to be in a fair state of repair.

So Judge plopped down \$1,200 and bought it from a banker who once entertained his grandchildren with rides on the fire engine.

After three years of restoration work, the shiny red fire engine could command between \$5,000-\$10,000.

For Judge, a social studies teacher at Farmington High School, the fire engine is part of a lifelong fascination with firefighting.

As a high school student in Chatham, N.J., Judge was a mascot for the local fire department. Besides polishing the equipment and cleaning up around the fire house, he was allowed to take life saving courses with the regular crew.

He learned to use the equipment mounted on top of the fire trucks. But he wasn't allowed to face active duty.

HE ALMOST REMEDIED THAT

SITUATION by later applying for active duty but was passed over because he has bronchial asthma.

So the Livonia resident turned to teaching. He sees many sim's' rities between the two occupations.

"It means saving lives and property. It gets in your blood, just like teaching school. Both of those jobs involve serving people.

"There's no glory in either job for the most part," he said.

The lure of the shiny red trucks and the lifestyle they symbolize was still a part of Judge. He joined the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Fire Apparatus in America as well as the Greenfield Village International Antique Fire Apparatus Association.

The Greenfield Village group, which has members from Indiana, Ohio, Michigan and Ontario, Canada, conducts musters at the Village in Dearborn during the summer.

They demonstrate the different capacities each of the members' antique fire trucks has for putting out a blaze.

Before Judge could show his truck at the Village he invested "many, many months of TLC (tender loving care)."

THE TRUCK HAS BEEN sandblasted, painted and refurbished. It went out

of service in 1968, with 5,500 miles on it.

Besides a new paint job, Judge removed decals from under each headlight and replaced it with gold and white striped trim along the edges of the truck body and tool box.

Judge's truck is perhaps one of a kind since each fire department adds its own specifications to a vehicle when it is first ordered.

The hard suction hose trays on the side of the truck are usually placed at an angle. But on Judge's truck, they are attached horizontally. This is slightly unusual since the angled tray allowed the hoses to drain.

Since the truck didn't have many miles on it, the engine didn't need a major overhaul.

A popular conception of a fire truck portrays it as a speedy vehicle, but Judge says that this isn't necessarily so.

"It's a Chevrolet truck which means it's slow. Ford's were relatively speedy. But Chevy are more frequently used in rural areas, where time isn't a factor in firefighting."

Since fire trucks are forced to struggle over unpaved rural roads, they are built to be sturdy rather than breeze along a paved city street, according to Judge.

IT'S FRONT-MOUNTED pump holds 300 gallons of water and an additional 500 gallons in a booster pump.

In order to show the truck properly, Judge has gear which matches the truck's era. He managed to obtain some Civil Defense coats used in Livonia during that time which were scheduled to see the trash bin.

For \$25 he purchased a firefighter's coat used in the '30s. The coat is too

heavy and too warm to be worn during the summer musters of the Greenfield Village group.

Judge's outfit is finished off with modern steel toe boots.

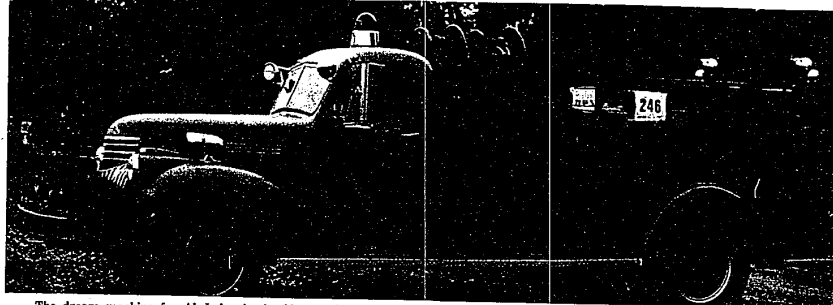
During the winter months, he doesn't neglect his hobby. He collects fire marks and engine models as well as books on the subject and tire clips which bear replicas of antique engines.

Fire marks once adorned the outside walls of homes which contributed money to the volunteer fire department. If a family didn't pay and didn't have a plaque on its wall, the department could watch the structure burn.

Also during the winter months, Judge has several reminders of his fire truck with the line six engine. Several color photos of the prized possessions are hung on the walls in different rooms of his home.



Al Judge



The dream machine for Al Judge is the 33-year-old fire engine which he bought for \$1,200. Judge believes, after three years of restoration, that he could get between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for it.

Economic impact studies called for

Economic impact statements would routinely accompany all state agency reports and recommendations on proposed legislation. . . if a bill sponsored by State Representative (Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington, becomes law.

Brotherton's bill would require agencies to detail the effects a piece of legislation might have on employment or other economic activity in the state.

"This bill would ensure that members of the legislature receive a realistic

estimate of the cost of implementing new programs or complying with the procedures laid out in a bill or resolution," Brotherton said.

"We have reached a point in government where we must work within limited resources. The Headlee amendment restricts our spending ceiling and prohibits the state from mandating new programs that local communities pay for.

"We can't make informed decisions

if we don't know what those actions and decisions will cost. People of this state are no longer willing to tolerate ill-conceived government programs."

Brotherton said the economic impact statements would include information concerning the curtailment of existing or impending potential employment during the two-year period immediately following the effective date of a new law.

An agency impact statement could not be released or made available to

the Legislature or the public unless it included a separate statement by the director of commerce regarding adequacy of the economic impact statement.

"This bill would permit us to evaluate the cost efficiency and long-range results of the proposals we consider before we take any action on them," Brotherton said.

"It's a common sense approach that would certainly benefit the citizens of Michigan."

School election is today

It's voting day in the Farmington school district.

Two school board candidates will be elected to one-and four-year terms today.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the following sites: Precinct 1 voters should go to Farmington Junior High, 3300 Thomas; Precinct 2 voters should go to Dunkel Junior High at 32800 Twelve Mile; Precinct 3 voters can vote at Warner Junior High, 30303 Fourteen Mile; East Junior High, 25000 Middlebelt, is the designated polling place for voters in Precinct 4.

Running for a one-year term on the school board are Michael Breckenridge, William Gravus, James McGillicy and Megan Saunders.

Michael Shipice is running unopposed for a four-year term.

If voters have questions about the election or where to vote, call the Farmington School Offices at 477-1300.

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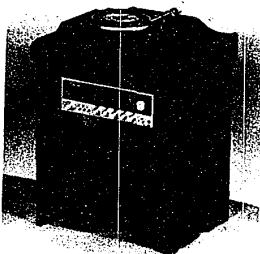
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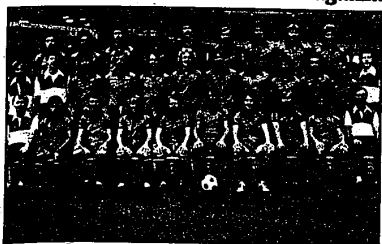


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