



**Forest Fire Lookout Association
New York State Chapter
September 2018**

September, that time of the year when we transition a bit from busy vacation schedules to the rigidity of school days. The days are shorter, we begin to prepare for the closing of fire towers and wrapping up volunteer programs for the season. We draw comfort from the smell and the warmth of that first wood stove fire, yet we worry about a dangerous fire season. We begin to reflect on the successes of the season just passed, yet we also feel some sadness that it is over. Such were the feelings I had when I learned this week of the passing of Larry Gordon of Wilton.

Larry was a man of many successes, always ready with a smile and a solution. Larry was a longtime NYS Fire Warden, the oldest in the state I believe. Larry was the driving force behind the Cornell Hill Fire Tower restoration project. <http://www.saratogian.com/general-news/20110514/wilton-dedicates-cornell-hill-fire-tower-which-was-recently-restored-and-relocated-to-camp-saratoga>. Larry shared a great deal with me, invited me into his home, gave me tours of the fire tower, cabin, surrounding area, Camp Saratoga, shared fire tower information both historical and current and his passion for the Camp Saratoga area with all its wonderful assets, including the Cornell Hill Fire Tower. But the most fabulous asset was definitely Larry himself. He never saw a barrier that he could not overcome with his gentle kindnesses, his ability to bring differing parties together through his passion for the outdoors, history, and his beloved Camp Saratoga community. Larry was deeply involved in Search and Rescue, and Wildland fire fighting with the <https://www.nffpc.org/en/>, Larry was always thinking of ways to assist the next generation in learning about the outdoors and how to be good stewards of the land. Larry spoke at our FFLA Northeastern Conference in September of 2016. Larry, I hope the Blue Karner butterflies keep a close on you. You will be greatly missed. <https://dailygazette.com/article/2018/09/12/community-leaders-remember-wilton-icon-larry-gordon>



The Fire Tower world lost an Observer this past month as well. Donald Leroy Courtney who served as T-Lake Fire Tower Observer from 1953-1956 passed away. Thanks to Lori Ann for passing this along. <http://www.leaderherald.com/obituaries/2018/09/donald-leroy-courtney/>

News From Around The State

To limit overuse in the High Peaks of the Adirondacks, DEC is promoting hikes and activities in lesser used areas of the Adirondacks via the Adventure Adirondack social media channel. But has this simply created an overuse problem in other areas? More wear and tear on the fire tower?

<https://www.adirondackalmanack.com/2018/08/concerns-of-overuse-at-bald-mountain-rondaxe-fire-tower.html>

Another article with a direct correlation on overuse across the state has to do with the lack of Forest Ranger resources. This is a great article by NYSDEC Forest Ranger Scott Van Laer, where he speaks to the lack of resources contributing to the inability of NYS to send Forest Rangers to other states to assist: <https://www.adirondackalmanack.com/2018/09/nys-wildfire-response-speaks-to-ranger-staffing-crisis.html>

Forest Health always plays a role in Wild land Fires. These 2 articles, one related to history and one to today's forestry practices are both interesting to read and listen to.

<https://www.adirondackexplorer.org/stories/timber-managers-say-cutting-promotes-diversity-and-forest-health>

<https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/36907/20180829/north-country-at-work-forest-ranger-bernard-siskavich-remembers-the-1995-blowdown>

Sterling Forest Fire Tower: In its inaugural year, the Friends of Sterling Forest Fire Tower staffed the tower every Saturday from Memorial Day to Labor Day with volunteers who were able to provide historical and educational information to visitors. Here are the stats for this first year of the program: They were open 14 Saturdays (would have been 15, but they were rained out one Saturday), were open 70 hours, had 8 volunteers, and greeted 302 visitors! In addition, they participated in the Lighting of the Towers event. How wonderful that they were able to connect with so many visitors. Thanks to Tony Caterino, Gene Gouss, Ken Graber, Steven Jodry, Chris Madsen, Mario Medici, Dwayne Plokhooy, and Chair Susan Serico.

All Fire Tower Groups: Did you gather the numbers? It can be very helpful for planning purposes, grants, and more to know how many volunteers or paid staff are involved in your program, how many hours you spent greeting the public and/or doing maintenance and how many visitors you had.

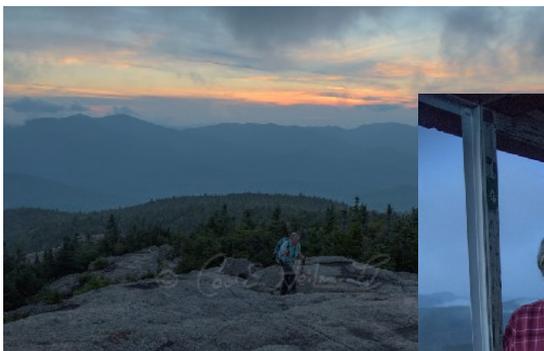
Cocktails in the Cab: On August 20th, there were cocktails in the cab at the Goodsell Museum in Old Forge. Bob E. and Mark H. attended and represented the FFLA. Between those two men, many, many hours of volunteer service have been given to the organization. Thank you for attending guys!

<https://www.adirondackexpress.com/party-at-the-goodsell/>



Lighting of the Fire Towers Event Follow Up

The FFLA encouraged fire tower groups through this medium and online on our Facebook page to consider joining in the 5th annual Lighting of the Fire Towers event on the Saturday night of Labor Day Weekend. Many groups joined in the event statewide. The event was initially begun by Doug Hamilton of the Red Hill Fire Tower Group. Doug's thought was to light the fire tower with a high powered light, put lots of press releases in the local paper about the time when this would occur and invite people to go to locations around the community where they could look up, see the light on the horizon and remember that there was a fire tower there watching over and protecting the community and surrounding forest. Sites where fire towers could be seen were posted on the Balsam Lake page. Individual groups decided on a light and an Illuminator for the event. The lights had to be hauled to the fire towers in the dark, lit and burned from 9:00 - 9:30 p.m. It is hoped that press releases did go out around the local communities and through social media to encourage people to look up at that time. The weather is always changing across NYS. Some areas had a great night for viewing, though a bit windy. Other areas found the fire towers deeply embedded in a cloud (Hunter was not able to see the cab from the base of the fire tower!). As I write this, I believe the following ten fire towers were able to participate; St. Regis, Hurricane, Red Hill, Balsam Lake, Mount Tremper, Overlook, Sterling Forest, Randall, Stillwater, and Bald. Photos courtesy of Jeremy Preston, Illuminator at Balsam Lake and Carl Heilmann who took the photos at Hurricane including Mary Jean Bland, Illuminator.



Trivia: In August we used Steve Canfield's suggested question, "All the observers were required to supply communications between D.E.C. Aircraft and ground fire crews when there were forest fires and the aircraft were dropping fire retarder (to make sure the drop area was clear) what was the call sign of the DEC aircraft? And who was the lead pilot?" Thanks for sending in the question Steve! Stickers went to Paul Hartmann and Rick Miller for correctly guessing Pilot Ace Howland whose call numbers were 600. Paul described Ace as "the classic combination of aircraft and pilot, a Vietnam vet, who could thread a needle with that airship." Photo Credit Paul Hartmann



Puzzle: Word Search

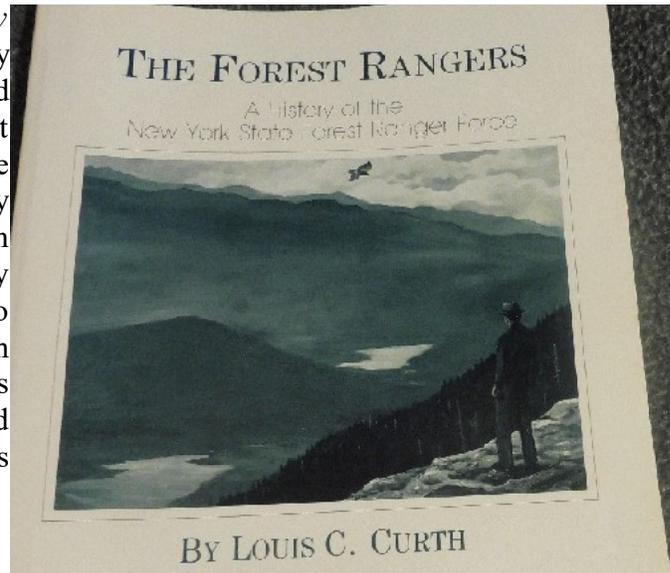
Fire Towers

Q	Y	I	Z	N	O	I	T	A	N	O	D	T	N	I	B	A	C	S	O	J	L	Y
N	A	H	E	R	I	F	R	E	S	T	O	R	A	T	I	O	N	N	T	B	H	K
C	W	S	D	Y	E	K	O	M	S	O	S	S	E	A	S	O	N	G	R	U	R	C
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N	D	C	O	M	M	I	T	T	E	E	T	E	L	E	P	H	O	N	E	R	E	R
M	L	R	E	E	T	N	U	L	O	V	W	X	P	U	L	A	S	K	I	S	Y	N

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden ↑ ↓ → ← and ↘ .

- | | | | | |
|-----------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| ADZE | DONATION | LOOKOUT | RADIO | SMOKEY |
| AEROMOTOR | FIRE | MAP | RAKE | TELEPHONE |
| ALIDADE | FLAG | OBSERVATORY | RANGER | TOWER |
| BINOCULAR | FOREST | OBSERVER | REPORT | TRAIL |
| CABIN | FOUNDATION | ORGANIZATION | RESTORATION | UNIFORM |
| COMMITTEE | HIKE | PREVENTION | SEASON | VOLUNTEER |
| COUNCIL | JUNCTION | PRIVY | SIGHT | WILDFIRE |
| DERRICK | LANDING | PULASKI | SMOKE | WILDLAND |

Book of the Month: *The Forest Rangers A History of the New York State Forest Ranger Force* by Louis C. Curth. This is an amazing resource and one that can be both difficult to find and also a bit costly to purchase. I am pleased to say, the State Chapter finally has a copy of this and at a fairly reasonable price. This resource contains a wealth of information. Do you want to know how many acres of forest burned in 1923? Do you want to know what Forest Ranger covered Brant Lake in 1915? This and MUCH more information is available in this book. You will refer to it over and over again. There are some fantastic photographs included too!



Lost Lookouts

FFLA Member Bill Hill wrote this wonderful piece on Catamount Fire Tower and the surrounding communities. Packed with tons of historical information and photographs, Bill spends quite a few hours researching, and hiking to put together his articles. We greatly appreciate Bill's contribution to the Lost Lookouts category. <https://hikingthetrailtoyesterday.wordpress.com/2018/01/17/catamount-mt-on-carry-falls-reservoir/>

Calendar

Saturday, September 29, 2018, 11:00AM As part of the Hudson Valley River Ramble, The Sterling Fire Tower Ramble is a moderate 4 mile loop highlighted by scenic views of Sterling Forest. Hikers are able to observe the surrounding Hudson Highlands from a 60 foot fire tower built in 1922. <http://www.hudsonrivervalleyramble.com>

Sunday, September 30, 2018 the Friends of Sterling Forest will be holding Sterling Forest Day. Events will include a hike to the fire tower. <http://www.friendsofsterlingforest.org/calendar.html>

Tuesday, October 2, 2018 the Catskills Lark in the Park event will include a historic hike to Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower. http://catskillslark.org/park_events/a-balsam-lake-mountain-fire-tower-hike-into-history/

Saturday, October 6, 2018 the Catskills Lark in the Park event will include a trip to the Rock Rift Fire Tower. http://catskillslark.org/park_events/rock-rift-fire-tower-loop-hike/. *Note the fire tower is currently closed.

Sunday, October 21, 2018 the 26th annual Ridge Walk and Run will be taking place. Several of the routes pass by the Alma fire tower and Observer's cabins which are on private property. This may be your only chance to get a photo! Registration is open <http://www.ridgewalk.com>.

Sunday, November 11, 2018 the Ravens Rock Run will be held to bring back the [Cross River Mountain Fire Tower at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation](#) at its former site in the park.

SAVE THE DATE: June 8th and 9, 2018: Northeastern Conference of the FFLA. If you are interested in speaking at the conference, please let me know. While these dates seem many months away, the planning is already underway.

St. Regis: The Friends of St. Regis Fire Tower announced the winners of their raffle on their web page and facebook page. Congratulations to all! <http://www.friendsofstregis.org/raffle/>

Mt Arab: The Friends of Mount Arab had a great group of people helping them out with their work of delivering new flooring for the Observer's cabin to the summit. Many thanks to the following people who made this happen: Landon Debes, Nicolas Staggert, Robb Gaffney, Noah Gaffney, Aaron Graves, Herman Vandenburg, Hunter Hardy, Mathew Clemons, Brent Carlson, Riley White, Dallas Towner, Keith Smith, and Ed Farrell.

In the beauty and the beast category this crazy video of the Northern Lights in the sky near a forest fire is outstanding: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9X1IKBY3LvQ&feature=youtu.be>

In closing, please consider what you may be able to do to help your State Chapter or a local fire tower group. This organization is totally a volunteer one. Assistance with work projects, communications, web pages, facebook pages, grants, resources, recruitment, items for this newsletter, sharing of memories and photos, and simply joining all helps the State Chapter and the individual fire tower groups. Please visit the web page or contact me if you are willing to help out. Many thanks to my husband Tom who never gets credit, but is the Editor of this monthly newsletter.

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