

## **Puslinch Fire and Rescue**

*By : Graham Ross*

*The founding of **Puslinch Fire and Rescue** was preempted by a number of initiatives by local residents and eventually the Township Council.*

*The village of Morriston instituted fire protection in 1921 with the purchase of 18 pails, a 24 and 40 foot ladder. Residents formed a bucket brigade to fight the threat of fire to local barns, town buildings and private homes.*

*The town of Hespeler and Guelph provided fire protection for the Township for a number of decades until 1968 when Township Council decided it made economic sense to create our own Department. On September 9, 1968 Council passed a bylaw for the formation of our first Fire Department. Thirty four volunteers were recruited from the township and after four months of training the Fire Department under the command of Chief Bob Hilborn, Deputy Gerald Slade, Captains Carl Bousfield, Ray Brown, Ron McLean and Doug Smith took over Township Fire services on January 1, 1969.*

*The original fire hall was an old building on the site of the Community Centre. The first fire truck was a converted gasoline delivery truck. Later that year a used pumper, pumper 30, was purchased from the Hamilton Fire Department. It remained in use for a dozen years until it was retired and restored. It is still operational today but seldom seen outside of parade use. We are currently operating our fourth rescue unit, purchased and entered into service in 2000. It is a far cry nicer than the 1959 International cube van bought and renovated for rescue use in 1970.*

*In 1981 the Fire Department moved to a new Municipal Building on Wellington Road 34. This building has three bays for apparatus, a communications room, offices for staff, training and storage facilities.*

*Changes in technology over the past forty years has changed the roles of the **Puslinch Fire and Rescue**. The growth and development of the 401 highway system that bisects our Township has changes our roles from predominantly fire response to that of accident rescue. Technology made way for the retirement of Fire Phones, manned by the wives of firefighters and the introduction of personal pagers carried by each firefighter. Enhanced 911 service has further improved our response times. We can also thank technology with the introduction of the defibrillator program in 2003 and for the countless pieces of equipment used daily by our firefighters.*

*The department now in its 42<sup>nd</sup> year has seen a number of personnel come and go. The department is now under the Command of Chief Bob Gordon our 5<sup>th</sup> Chief. We are fortunate to still have original firefighters hired in the beginning as members of our ranks today. Since 1969 there have been over one hundred and thirty volunteers trained as firefighters for **Puslinch Fire and Rescue**.*