

Newsletter85

Keith's Corner/McGill News

January 1, 2021

The Great Downtown Fire

I usually don't write about current events, but this event is a bit different.

Because of the many color photos there won't be any Old Photos. I can only send so many megabytes at one time.

It happened early in the morning on Christmas Day. I live close to the Club, but didn't hear a thing. I was shocked later that morning when I drove thru town at 11 am. What a surprise that was. The biggest fire in many years and I slept thru it. Thankfully others didn't and sent me some great photos. We owe a debt of gratitude to our local firefighters who were on the scene quickly and saved the Club and adjacent buildings from devastation. Had the Club gone up in flames, that whole side of the street would have been lost. The McGill Club is an historical treasure for the town and thankfully is still intact.

The day after the fire I had the McGill Drug Store Museum open and watched the cleanup. An outfit from Wells did the job. I talked with the foreman and he told me they do this all the time.

Several people watching the cleanup had all kinds of theories. Many thought there was a connection with the Nashville explosion that happened at almost the exact same time. Some were hoping the Feds would take chemical samples of the truck contents. Some were sure it was a terrorist plot to park in front of the Club, but could not give me a factual reason for that. I sent some photos out to all the Newsletter subscribers, but no story. I didn't want to speculate. I want the actual facts before writing anything.

2020 has been a crazy year and all sorts of wild theories abound.
Here are some photos of the fire and aftermath.



Picture #1 of fire.



Picture #2 of fire.

Credit—Picture #1 was sent to me by Rick Hankins, Electra Larsen.

Picture #2 was from Electra. Shows the overhead fire hose shooting down on the contents of the truck.

The aftermath later Christmas Day.



Taken by Rick Hankins, Christmas morning about noon.



Sent to me by Electra



Another one from Electra

I talked with Roy Allen and he said most of the damage inside the Club was from the water. The place is boarded up, as the window in front were knocked out by the heat and the water. Again we owe our volunteer fireman a lot of thanks for their swift action, keeping the fire from spreading.

And, thanks to Rick and Electra for the photos.

Wed. Dec. 30th, I noticed the Club was open, so I went in and talked with Roy. There was a smell of smoke in the bar, but it was slight. Thankfully there was no damage to the WWII pictures. There is scorching on the front of the building and the large windows need to be replaced, as well as the windows in the small salon next door. I will report more as the damage is further assessed.

In the meantime, have a great New Years and stay safe.

