

COMMUNITY NEWS

Celebration to mark 50th year of Kecksburg fire department

By John Wislocki TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Most Kecksburg residents will be putting the eeriness of the Meteor Road mystery 24 years ago behind them when the Community Day Parade occurs Aug. 13.

Months of preparation have been under way to make the music-filled occasion a success.

"After all," said Kecksburg Fire Chief Ron Struble, "it isn't every day you celebrate your 50-year anniversary."

Kecksburg, on that special day in August, intends to honor the half-century service of its volunteer fire department.

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ve how much work goes into this," he said, walking from the social hall to the fire station.

He envisions floats and glad tidings.

Noteworthy events from the department's past have been com-

Mystery of Meteor Road still unsolved

By The Tribune-Review

There's no telling who'll show up in Kecksburg Aug. 13 when the Community Day Parade trumpets the 50th anniversary of the Kecksburg Volunteer Fire Department.

A chance exists that someone will boldly go beyond inspiring tales of firefighting heroics into another world to debate whether a UFO or meteor landed in a wooded area off Meteor Road — that's right, METEOR ROAD — 24 years ago.

Talk threatens to climb beyond the stratosphere ever since a Japanese television crew visited the area in Mt. Pleasant Township earlier in the year. The footage shot — no one seems to know what will be highlighted — will form part of a two-hour special scheduled to air in that country later in the year, possibly September.

Lore about what happened on Dec. 9, 1965, encroaches on the Zone of Beyondo Bizzaro.

The Office of Special Investigations at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, won't comment on whether its personnel were running around Meteor Road that day.

The township supervisors thought enough of what occurred then to christen the byway as Meteor Road. As expected, the road signs disappear as fast as a shooting star, said township Secretary Ray Zimmerman.

"They're a big item," he says.

Kecksburg Fire Department President Jim Mayes was on the road that day, looking down into a field as military personnel, state police and a swarm of authorities converged to do something mysterious and keep area residents from seeing it.

"I remember it like it was yesterday," said Mayes. "We had the four-wheel-drive truck and we took the military on down. They kept people there all night. There was a tractor-trailer and a couple other vehicles, and I still say they took something out of there. The big thing about it was the blue blinding lights — like a timing light."

The field of Jerome and Valeria Miller was tramped through by Boy Scouts a day later, searching for the magnet that would later draw college students from the University of Colorado and the film crew from Japan.

Valeria Miller was not at home at the time of the most famous drop-in since John Martin Keck started the village of Kecksburg in the 1860s.

Stan Gordon, who heads the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, hasn't completely ruled out that space debris — and not a UFO — went down in the area.

But the easier to swallow suggestion has choked one eyewitness who disputed that theory in talking with Gordon.

The eyewitness, identified only as Pete by Gordon, said the object resembled a giant metal acorn and contained writing that "looked like hieroglyphics" on part of its raised surface. The object was supposedly loaded onto a flatbed trailer, covered with a tarp and hauled to an unknown location.

Gordon is in search of more witnesses who might want to come forward on what made the noise heard around the world, and whether, just by chance, anyone might have seen anything leave that area before authorities arrived.

UFO ←

BETH ROBBINS VIA GATE COUD—I