

## Reader Mail

06/27/10 983 W, 3 I - + 13 - 12

The gas bag opens the mail bag. Most of these are queries or requests. Many rewritten for the sake of clarity and/or obfuscation. Should be reasonably interesting or entertaining. Thanks for your notes.

Q: Do you have a current list of fire stations and addresses in Wake County?

A: This [directory of county fire departments](#)  should meet your needs. Same is linked from the [Wake County Fire-Rescue](#) site.

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Q: Can you throw these guys a plug on the blog, [www.urbanfirefighter.com](http://www.urbanfirefighter.com)? New, online magazine. Very cool.

A: Nice sound effects on the home page!

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Q: Are the [toys on your site](#) for sale? I am trying to find die-cast vehicles for sand-table training exercises, particularly Boley brand.

A: Negative. Try [eBay](#) and do a search on "boley fire." That's a good place to start.

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Q: Here's a topic for discussion. It's Jersey City [letter to the editor](#) with the Fire Chief telling a Councilman that he hasn't a clue. The context is an [op-ed article](#) that the latter wrote about the fire department administration. And here's the Councilman's [brief rebuttal](#).

A: Now that is a public disagreement!


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Q: Great site of [historic Baltimore firehouses](#)! Where did you get your pictures?

A: The pictures on the main page, showing still-standing structures, were taken by myself in 2009 and 2008. Those were trips to attend the Fire Expo. The pictures on the second page, showing demolished stations, were largely scanned from *The Rigs of the Unheralded Heroes* by William F. Synder and William A. Murray, published 1971. Good book!

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Q: Have you ever done any research on fire alarm system bells? I was wondering what the different signals were from different areas. It seems like they were like ten codes, with different bell sequences signaling different things. I was curious if anyone still had any knowledge of how many rings meant a fire was out, or a unit was back in service, or such.

A: This [web page of mine](#) has some information about the bell codes in Raleigh. Scroll to the bottom and you'll see box signals as they appeared in the Raleigh City Directory of the early 20th Century. And here's a [history of the city's fire alarm system](#) . I do not have a good handle on how late bell codes were used in Raleigh. Could have been into the 1920s and 1930s. Could have been later. One of the better books on this subject is [Fire Alarm! by Paul Ditzel](#).

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Q: I have always wondered where Saw Mill Road got its name. Is there even an old saw mill nearby?

A: Doesn't ring a bell, though that doesn't meant I haven't heard the story at some point. Nice double negatives in my response, as well! Neither Google nor a *News & Observer* search finds anything easily. Don't believe any old mills are in that area, either. However, I can relate that Lead Mine Road refers to the mines that were located on the west side of the road, just north of Lynn Road. There were two or three graphite mines at that location. One of which was accessible and reported in a *News & Observer* story about ten years or so. A nearby resident

was keeping the thing pumped out, at times. Lynn Road, by the way, is named for the Lynn family, that originated in that area. Yes, related to those Lynns!

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Q: I am trying find information or pictures on uniforms in the early years of the Fayetteville Fire Department, that were worn during participation during the conventions held throughout the state. In particular, the early years of the conventions.

A: For pictures, I do not have much knowledge on vintage images of FFD. The best source for that information is probably the State Archives and [their photo division](#). For descriptions of uniforms, those might be present in newspaper descriptions of the tournaments. I have [scanned and posted several dozen such articles](#), as found at the local history library in Wake County. It will require digging, and I cannot guarantee that you will find results. I do not readily recall if uniform descriptions are included, either often or rarely.

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Q: How do you make panoramic pictures like [this recent photo](#) of the old Packard Plant in Detroit?

A: These are my steps:

1. Use manual mode, versus semi- or fully-automatic. This ensure the same exposure for every shot.
2. Stand in place. Turn camera incrementally. Hold camera at same height. Or use tripod for best results.
3. Stitch photos together using software, such as [AutoStitch](#). That's a great computer program, and free!
4. If the results look weird, where the frames are stitched together, edit individual images as necessary. Such as cropping. Repeat Step #3.

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Q: Here's a water rescue that didn't happen. Heard this third-hand. Boaters put canoe into Crabtree Creek, when water was high and current strong. They launch maybe 10 or 15 feet from bridge, maybe Atlantic Avenue. They try to reach the middle of the creek, and go under the bridge. Instead they strike the concrete support. Both boaters dumped in water, one trapped under crumpled canoe for a few seconds. Boat gets wedged against concrete. They try but can't move the thing. Tie using strap, so the boat won't float away. Return later, hoping water is lower. Push and pull and finally free the thing to continue downstream. One runs ahead, jumps into water, battles current and floating log. Grabs but can't hold canoe. Boat floats farther, strikes bridge at Capital Boulevard, and gets stuck again. Next attempt involves canoe plus strap plus car. On a busy street. Lifting is attempted, but strap breaks. Boat very bent by this time. Probably not creek-worthy. Story ends at this point. Went by later and took this picture. Glad everyone was safe. Boat later recovered and returned to owner.



A: Wow.

This concept of reprinting reader mail is shamelessly swiped from my days as a movie critic, and my former web site Movie Hell.

<http://www.legeros.com/moviehell/letters..>

That’s the letters page, which contained this disclaimer: Mail to Movie Hell™ is subject to reprint with sender identity concealed. Same for news posts. Messages may also be edited, for length, clarity, or just to make Yours Truly look better.

My online self was considerably more sarcastic in those days.

**Legeros** - 06/27/10 - 10:03

Some more on Saw Mill Road, that Mrs. Blogger found at <http://www.greystonevillage.org/Neighbor..>

For some years, there was a sawmill located approximately where the cabin sits on Baker’s Lake, though it had ceased operation long before we bought our first holding on Lead Mine. Thus the name "Sawmill" for the street which now connects Creedmoor and Lead Mine. The name "Lead Mine" comes from the many graphite mines underneath Greystone Village, particularly the area south of Sawmill Road that runs along Lead Mind Road . Graphite is a soft mineral used in "lead" pencils, which are not lead at all. When graphite was first discovered in England in the 16th century, it was mistaken for lead; hence its name.

**Legeros** - 06/27/10 - 12:59

Ask and ye shall receive. Boone’s Pond, see <http://legeros.com/hidden-raleigh/ponds...>

mjl

**Legeros** - 06/30/10 - 07:26

Name: (real name  
preferred)  
E-mail: (optional)  
Web Site: (optional)

Remember personal info?  
Yes  
No

Comment: / [Textile](#)

Comment moderation is enabled on this site. This means that your comment will not be visible on this site until it has been approved by an editor.

To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question

**What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?**

[\(Register your username / Log in\)](#)

Notify: Yes, send me email when someone replies.

Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.

**Small print:** All html tags except <b> and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.