

the little sentinel

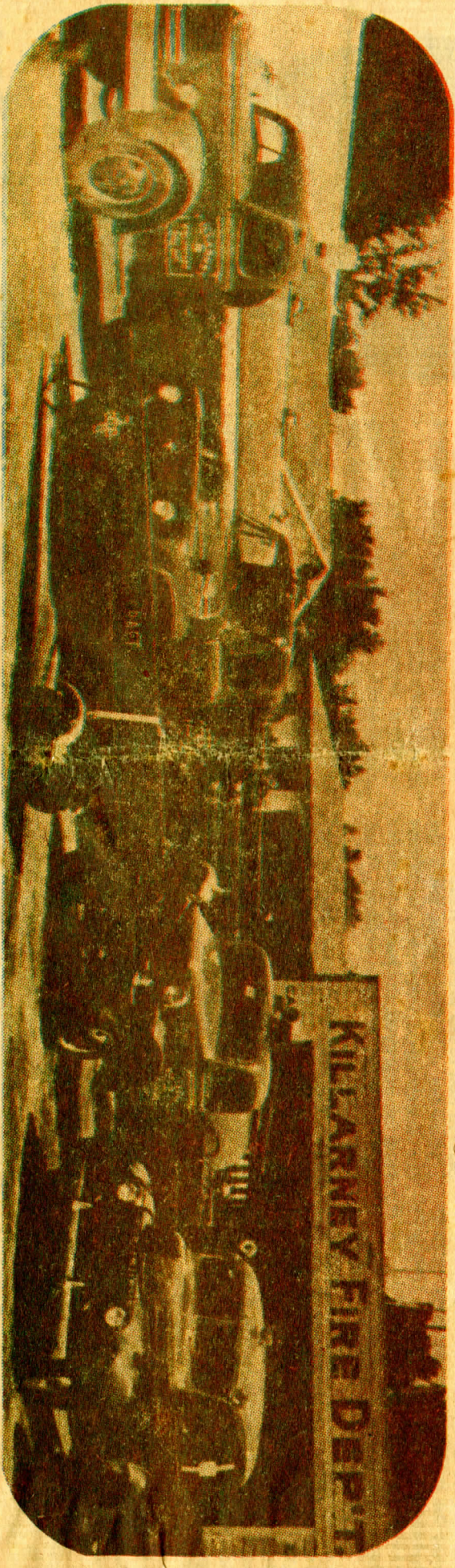


Winter Park, Eatonville, Maitland and College Park

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Killarney Fire Department's original equipment in 1956 contrasts with its present vehicles, below

Department on fire with growth

By MARY R. HEFFRON

It started in 1953 with a pickup truck, a few volunteers, five links of garden hose and a five-digit phone number, to serve a rural area of less than 5,000 people.

The Killarney Fire District and Recreation Association, which turned 25 this year, now serves 30,000 people in an urban-industrial chunk of Orange County west of Winter Park.

It has three engines, two rescue trucks, a fire prevention van, a tanker and a boat, all radio equipped.

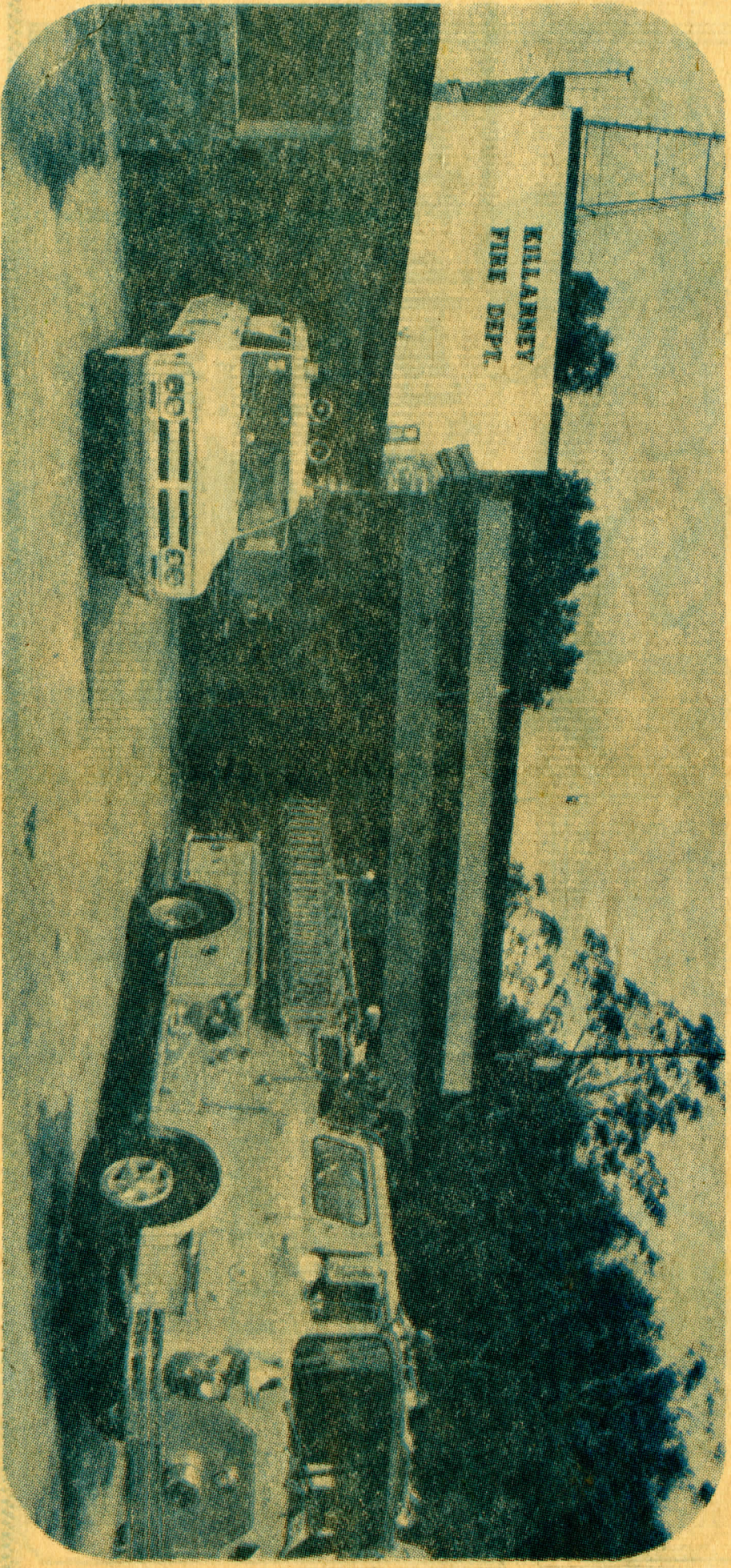
Killarney has 28 full-time employees, seven of them paid by the federal Comprehensive Education and Training Act, plus 20 volunteers, and a budget of \$615,000.

It has a station at 4412 Fairview Ave. (complete with a seven-digit phone number) and Chief Robert M. "Doc" Illyes likes to boast that Killarney was the first volunteer fire department in the southeastern United States to use five-inch hose.

What makes all this particularly noteworthy is that most of it was financed by voluntary contributions, bake sales, fish fries, rummage sales. Until four years ago, Killarney had no taxing power.

The district was born in April 1953, after two houses on Dartmouth Avenue just outside Orlando — one of them just across the street from an Orlando fire hydrant — burned down.

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Growth

From 1

Illyes and Harry H. Smith, Killarney chaplain and association president since 1956, say it was a jurisdictional dispute that kept Orlando firefighters from answering the calls outside their city.

So, "some interested citizens decided that they wanted some protection," Smith said, "The county commissioners had dragged their feet long enough."

The group started by going door-to-door and asking each household to pay \$5 a year for fire protection. Most people didn't want to pay at first, but by 1974, when official taxation started, 85 percent of the homeowners were paying \$15 a year to support Killarney. A third of the area's businesses, which paid proportionately more, also supported the district.

With the membership dues, and with fish fries, barbecues and sales sponsored by the district's auxiliary, the Fireflies, Killarney made the down payment on a

new \$12,000 engine in February 1954.

The voluntary activities continued to support the department and build up its equipment over the years and paid for the present fire station, built in 1962.

It was not only money, but also time that the people of Killarney gave to their fire district. Mrs. Iva Wagner worked without pay as the department's dispatcher from 1957 to 1967. Most of the department's volunteers answer night calls in the area.

The Fireflies are still active, and the firefighters are organizing a social group. The firefighters' group is planning to purchase smoke detectors to distribute to area homes.

The original volunteer board still owns the fire station, but five district commissioners govern the department. Residents of the district pay \$2.67 per \$1,000 assessed value of their homes in Killarney

taxes.

Earlier this year, the department bought its own \$15,000 telemetry unit, which provides for direct communication between a doctor at a hospital and a paramedic at the scene of an accident or illness. Ten other fire districts had units donated by Orange County.

The department now averages 1,500 alarms a year and has active fire prevention and arson investigation units.

Illyes, who has been chief since 1957 and with the department since its beginning, says any long-range plans depend on whether and when the county's fire districts are consolidated.

But for now, he says, Killarney is working "to improve our rescue capabilities and our firefighters' capabilities and to enhance the insurance rate for the homeowners in our district."

Scenes from an art festival

Overcast skies that broke out into a lingering mid-afternoon shower kept the crowd sparse at the fifth annual Winter Park Autumn Arts Festival Saturday.

Twenty-five of the 85 artists at the festival divided up \$1,600 in prize money at the festival judged by Sarasota fine arts gallery director Joan Hodgell.

Lee Nesler of Orlando won the \$200 best of show with an acrylic painting, "The Negative Side of a Positive Life."

First-place awards of \$100 each went to Katie T. Wright, Orlando, drawing; Nancy S. Greenlee, Orlando, photography; James Schawweker, Palm Harbor, graphics, and Joel W. Reichard, Silver Springs, watercolor.

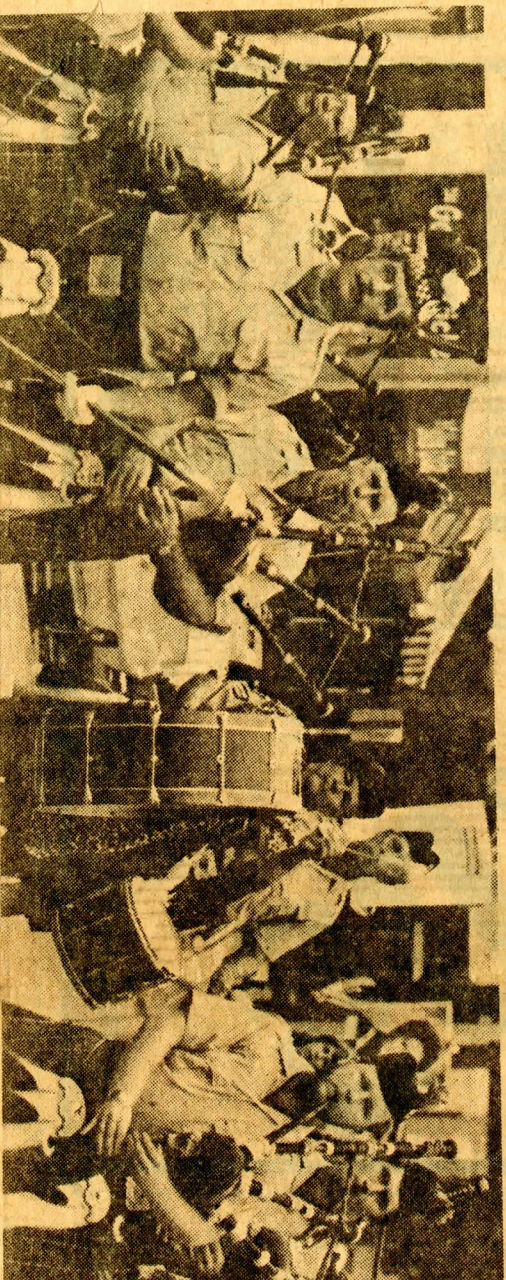
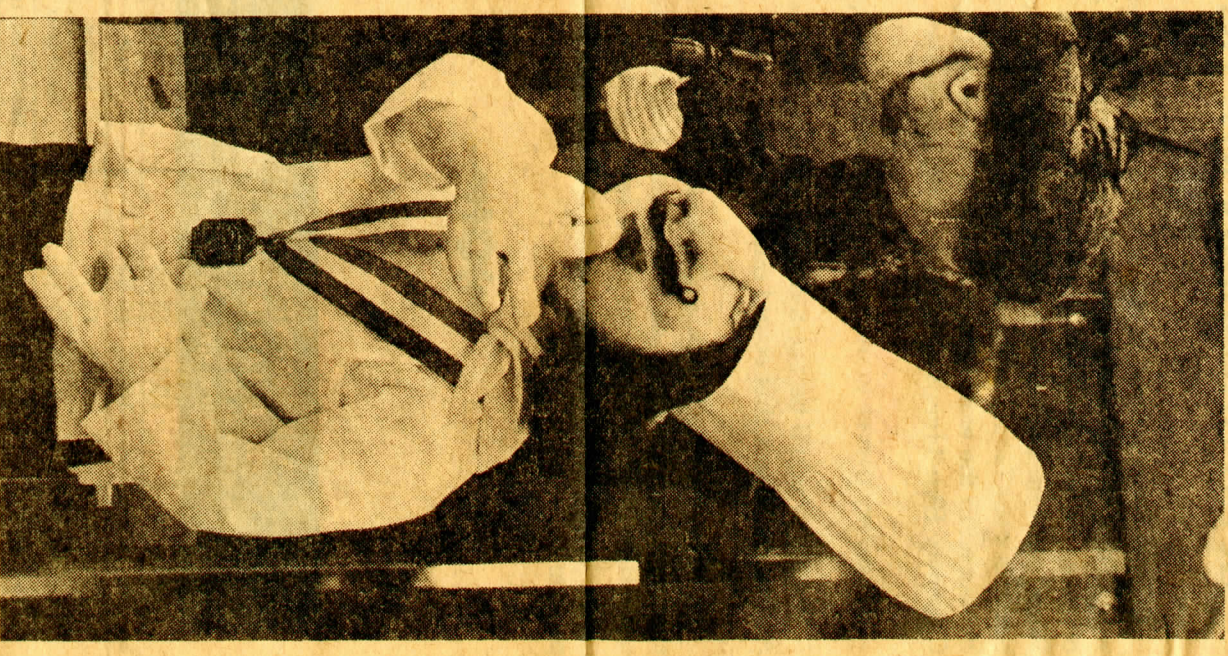
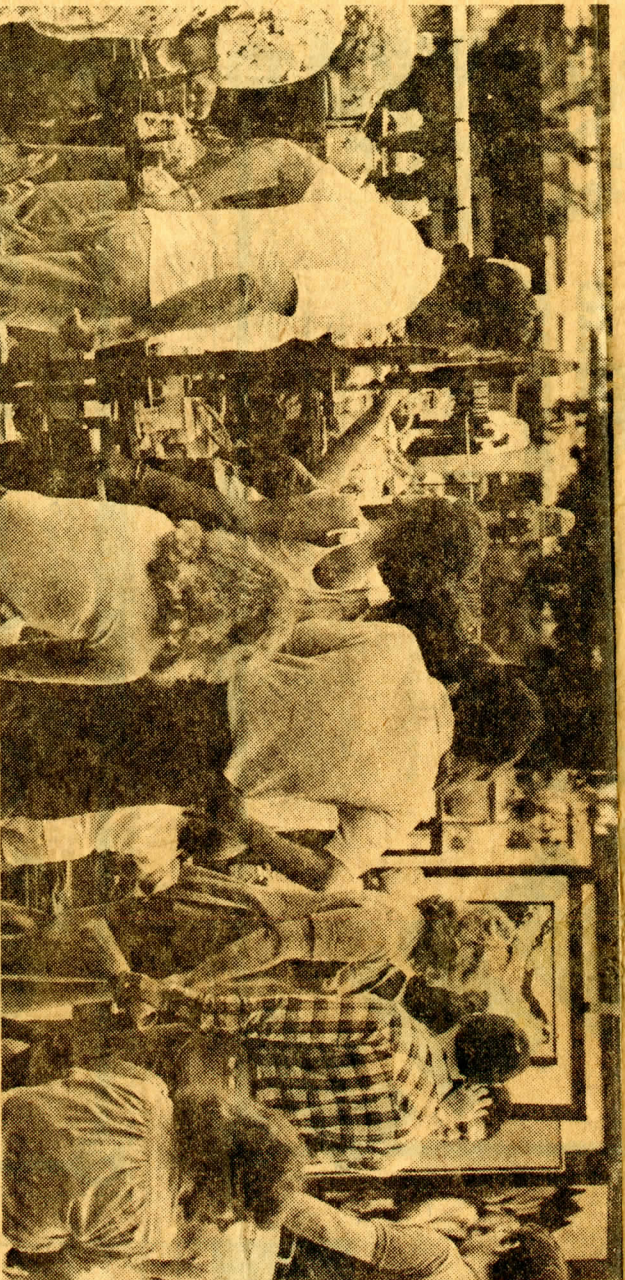
Winning \$50 merit awards were Paul R. Adams, Daytona Beach, ceramics; Marty Whipple, Maitland, soft sculpture; Donna Janeczko, Fern Park, batik; He-

len Bennett, Orlando, crafts.

Also, Kathleen Dennison, Naples, crafts; Patricia G. Pope, Orlando, soft sculpture; Frederick W.K. Taylor, Winter Park, oil painting; Skeets Hessenauer, Orlando, mixed media; Wayne Waldron, Kissimmee, acrylic painting.

And, Peggy J. Waldron, Kissimmee, photography; Peter Carlson, Longwood, jewelry; Robert M. Eginton, Winter Springs, color photography; Mary Hanson, Orlando, graphics; Kragh Lillethorup, Orlando, watercolor.

Also, Marcia Ramsdell, Winter Park, photography; James L. Koevenig, Oviedo, watercolor; Raymond Gendreau, Winter Park, photography; Ross Jordan, Winter Park, watercolor; Ellen J. Plankey, Indialantic, pastels, and Gordon Richard Bruno, West Palm Beach, photography.



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photos by
Dennis Wall