

# ...“Can’t you idiots do anything right?” continued

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have training, he told me, and informed me of a first aid course to be given in the near future. The day of the course I got off work at 7 a.m., and was at the training site at 8. The course lasted eight hours. Upon receipt of my red cross card I immediately showed it to the ambulance chief. He set up a driver training session for me. I sat back and waited for my first call.

Finally it came in. I know it will be hard to believe, but it turned out to be my own daughter who was injured at school. Not long after that I responded to my first heart attack call. There again I had to stand back and watch the trained, experienced men.

Soon after that came my training in C.P.R. (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation). Then came the advanced first aid course. Those ten weeks, four hours every Sunday were very beneficial in my knowledge of first aid. Then came the

day of work I missed so I could spend 8 hours in classes to become a standard first aid instructor, so I could share some of my knowledge with others. Now it's the 26 three hour sessions in the Emergency Medical Technician Institute, not including the 10 hours in hospital experience and the practical skills session. After this is the C.P.R. instructor course which will be 20 hours.

Another question frequently encountered is, “What do you guys think you are, doctors?” To answer this briefly, no. We don't think we are doctors, nor do we think we are paramedics like you see on television. We are trained ambulance personnel. As we like to state it, the days of “you call, we haul” are long over. Now the patient must be treated and stabilized at the scene and then transported. The 5 to 15 minutes it takes to get to the hospital can mean the difference between life and death.

Many people tell me they

would never have the ‘guts’ to do things like we do. At one time I felt the same way. They say you never know until you try. I find this to be very true. Once I got my ‘feet wet’ I just kept getting in deeper.

What qualifications are necessary to be really involved in the Emergency Services? Dedication, self-sacrifice, willingness to help others are a must. An extremely understanding wife is a necessity. An understanding boss is also helpful.

This brings us back to the question, “What's in it for me?” In the terms of money, again, nothing. Of the calls we get only about half of the people even bother to say thank-you. Out of the half, 75% of them forget us after we walk out. What do we expect a couple bucks tip, or a case of beer at Christmas time? Of course not. All we want is a little support of our fund raising activities. What we do get is, “What took you so long?” “Can't you idiots do anything right?” “It's

all your fault.”

Ask yourself these questions: did you think you could put the fire out yourself? did you want to attend one of our free training sessions but there was something on T.V you wanted to see? You watch **Emergency One** on T.V. every night, so you are a trained first aider.

What does it cost to do these things for free? First you have the yearly dues, \$5.00; your monitor radio, \$200.00 with roof antennae; your plectron monitor with only opens up when you get a call, \$100.00 (used); gas, oil, and wear on your personal vehicle; lost time from work; incidentals (license plate, scissors and holster, books and literature, etc.).

Granted, all these things are not necessary. But think, if you call on us; you want us to be as efficient and look as professional as possible. If it is your life or property don't you expect the best?

Many people ask why we can't have professional paramedics and firemen.

Take a minute and think about the cost of something like that.

In Lancaster County there are 84 fire companies. What would it cost to pay crews to man these stations 24 hours a day? Then what about maintenance and upkeep on the stations and equipment?

In large cities this kind of tax revenue is available, but with our area being mainly rural, think of what your taxes would be like to support this kind of service. I am not saying that it will never happen, but I don't see it in the near

future.

In closing I want to again remind you that these people are all volunteers. They are the man or woman next door, the guy you work with, or the person you see driving down the street with the red or blue light on the roof of his car. Show them a little consideration, they are taking their own time from their families and work to be there to help you.

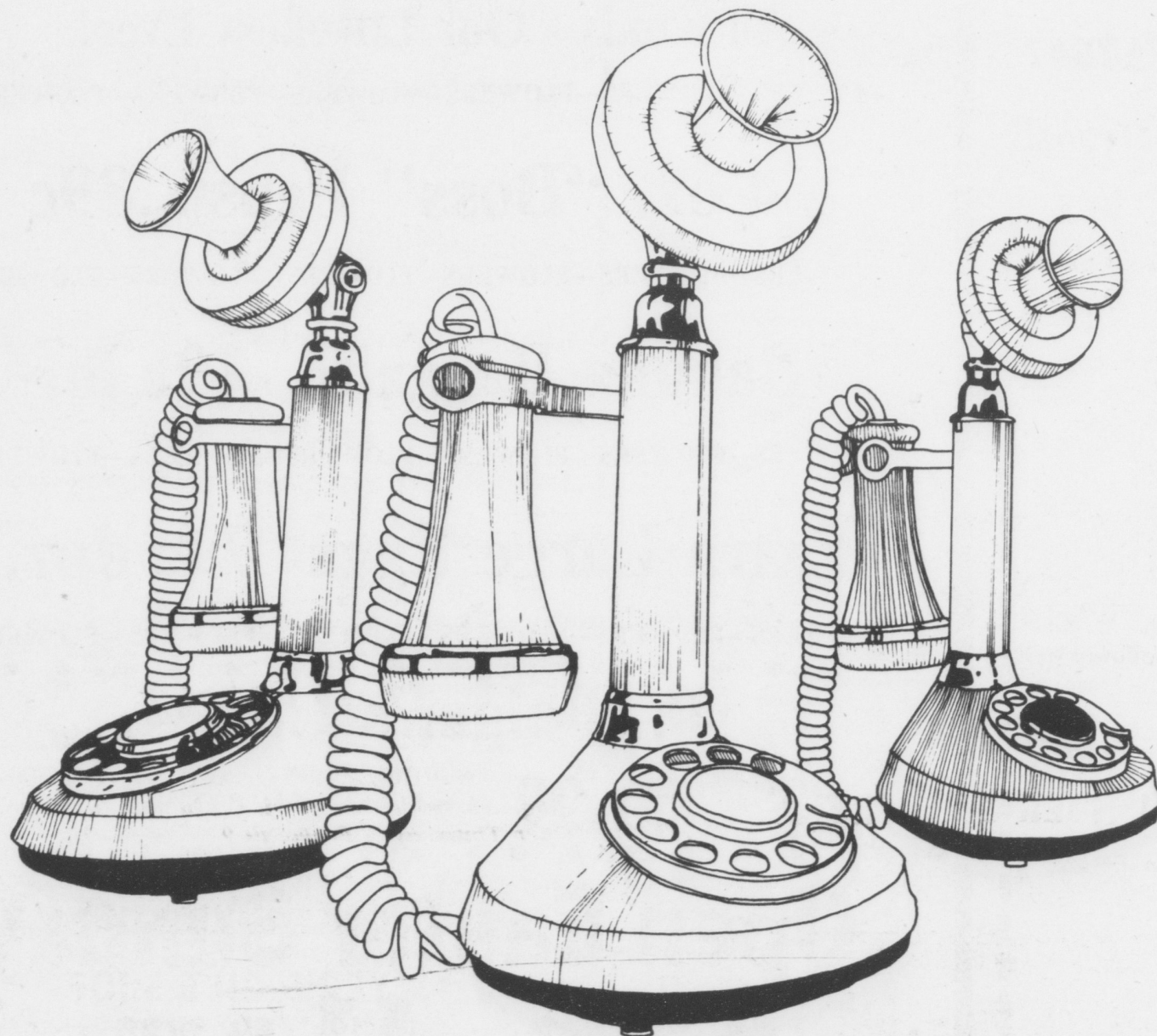
These observations are all my own personal views of volunteer emergency service.

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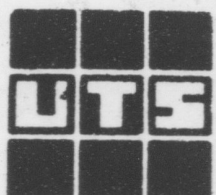
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