

Freemansburg Celebrates Nat'l Night Out - August 2, 2016



National Night Out, held on the first Tuesday of August, is a chance for police and other first responders to get together with the local residents they serve and show them that they are here to serve. Though Freemansburg has one of the tiniest communities in the Lehigh Valley, it has one of the best of these community gatherings. Where else can you go to get a hot dog grilled by Mayor Jerry Yob? A hamburger flipped by Council member Justin "Peanuts" LaBar? All washed down with a root beer poured by Council member Ed Smith? And the price is right, too. Free, which explains why at least 500 people crowd into the Municipal Park.

Though it's a community celebration, it starts off every year with a sad reminder that some police officers never come home. Even in tiny

Freemansburg. Five years ago, Officer Robert Lasso was gunned down while responding to what should have been a minor neighborhood squabble. He had a wife. Two children. That blue life mattered pretty much to them and many others. Every year, National Night Out starts with a moment of silence in Lasso's honor. Palmer and Forks Townships lent their ladder trucks to lay out a gigantic American

flag for the brief ceremony

Families and kids making their way to the Municipal Park were greeted by a cornucopia of police vehicles, firetrucks and ambulances. And the police officers and firefighters were bearing gifts. Police Chief Jonathan Itterly and Officer Stacy Smith prepared ID cards for children, which they loved. While the kids have probably already lost their cards, police have a record of each child who participated in case something unfortunate occurs.



Kids cleaned up at the fire department, too. Each child was provided with a bag, coloring books, crayons, pencils, bracelets and best of all, their very own firefighter helmets. The girls in particular loved it.



Alexis and Savannah Cintron, age 5 and 7, are happy to pose with their firefighter helmets, bags and stickers.

Sadly, there was no dunk tank this year. Council member Jim Smith is usually volunteered for this honor, but nearly drowned in the tank last year. Chilled by all the dunks, he was forced to go home and consume some boilo for medicinal purposes.

Of course there was the usual tractor pull, but the pièce de résistance included firefighters from Freemansburg, Palmer and Forks. They first took an old junk car and demonstrated the jaws of life. Then they set the junker ablaze. As clouds of black and white smoke billowed into the sky, you could actually hear explosions from inside the car.

Girls may have loved the coloring books, but the boys (large and small) were mesmerized by the fire, especially the popping sounds.



Then firefighters extinguished the blaze in about 20 seconds



It was a great event, but I must say that the ride home was a little rough. My car was still smoking.

