

Service Department



*John J. Bohdan Service Center
7201 Canal Road*

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



Service Department Staff

Front Row (*left to right*): Assistant Service Director Jeff Baciak, Laborer Diane Simmons, Laborer Bob Krajewski, Laborer Cory Pucci and Laborer Rick Henley

Second Row (*left to right*): Laborer Jesse James, Landscaper Eric McKenzie, Mechanic Ross Patterson, Maintenance Jason Sagan and Service Director Dave Sammons

Service Department

by Service Director David Sammons

As the current Service Director of the Cuyahoga Heights Service Department, I sat down with Jim Crooks to get his best recollections of past service department operations, service directors, department locations, history, and some of his 40 years of memories. Although exact dates are not known, Jim Consiglio was the village's first service director, serving approximately 10 to 15 years.

Long-time resident Vic Duber followed as director from 1957 to 1962. Vic stepped down after running for council in 1962 and getting elected to a two year term. Vic later became a firefighter, serving in that capacity from 1964 to 1987, about 23 years. We've been told Vic also served briefly as village clerk in 1990. Ed Stawicki followed Vic from 1962 to 1966 serving as service director until he stepped down to take a job as a Cleveland policeman. Ed later became a police officer in the Cuyahoga Heights Police Department and rose to the rank of captain serving until his retirement in 1984.

Jim Crooks followed Ed serving from 1967 to 2007, Jim retired after 40 years of service. He grew up in the village and lived with his family in the old Willow House at Klima Grove. He graduated high school in 1966 and went to work at the service department part-time under Mayor George Gallitz. In 1967, then Mayor Bill Gerdon appointed Jim to service director at the ripe old age of 19. Jim was drafted in 1968 and had to step aside for a couple of years to serve his country.

During that time, Ron Kimmel (Chmielewski) stepped in temporarily until Jim came home from Vietnam. During Jim's tenure as service director, he served six different mayors and numerous police chiefs. In all, Jim served the Village of Cuyahoga Heights for 40 years—two years part-time and 38 years full-time. By law, Jim also had to be reappointed every two years by whomever was the Mayor at that particular time. Seems everybody liked Jim's work ethic.

As service director, Jim noted that Jim Henley was his second in command, many of those years. Jim Henley was hired around 1977 as a full-time mechanic, he took over for Gilbert Pallini. Jim Crooks had two other full-time employees during his tenure: Dean Vaccher and Benny Stawicki. He also had many part-time resident employees who may have been out of work.

Over those 40 years of service, Jim Crooks' employees came to know many of Jim's off the wall sayings. For instance. Jim had a very distinct style of answering the phone. It sounded like Jim would say "umm... yellow" when answering the phone. When Jim would assign jobs in the morning to his crew there would be interesting jobs such as "laminating the back forty" and "honey dipping." "Laminating the back forty" meant going out back and cleaning up or picking up trash. "Honey dipping" was trenching out a catch basin along the road with a long-spooned shovel. He would also throw out terms like "go pacify the situation" or "go challenge that person." These are just a few of the many "Jimmy-ism's" that many of his co-workers enjoyed during his 40 years of service. Jim Crooks took great pride in his work as director and his hometown of the Village of Cuyahoga Heights by responding to and meeting the needs of residents, keeping the village clean, tidy and looking sharp.

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Scott Waldemarson, Service Director | 1994 to 2016

Comments from Florida from former mechanic and Service Director Scott Waldemarson: “It is with great gratitude that I was part of the Cuyahoga Heights Village Service Department for 22 years. During my time of employment with the village, I was the mechanic for 10 years and service director for 12 years. During my tenure, I have served under four mayors: Lou Bacci, Marilyn Duszynski, Ralph Contipelli and Jack Bacci. While working as service director and at the mayor and council’s direction, we were able to implement numerous programs including development of the girls softball field, the annual Corn Roast Celebration, Rails-to-Trails Program and many more. Last, but not least, during the great layoff due to financial distress of 2010, we were able to keep the town up and running with just two other employees.”

Dave Sammons, Service Director | 2016 to present

Dave Sammons grew up in Valley View and graduated from Cuyahoga Heights School in 1985. He served three years in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged as an E-4/Specialist. Prior to this new position, Dave, who holds a commercial driver’s license (CDL), was hired September, 1998. He worked as a laborer performing duties such as landscaping, refuse collection, snow maintenance and just about any task he was called upon to do.

Under Dave’s watch, the service department champions a staff of ten full-timers, ten part-timers and numerous seasonal employees. Working in concert with the Mayor and his crew, as well as outside contractors, Sammons was charged with supervising the creation of our boys baseball field through Phase 1. There are still upgrades coming in the near future such as lights, scoreboard, and possibly press box, but the field is playable and looks great. Another project completed is our East 49th Street residential parking lot. Other projects include our recent makeovers to the auditorium at the village hall and the service department kitchen.

With leadership and guidance from my superiors, coupled with the vision of our talented crew at the service department, the goal of Cuyahoga Heights as a destination spot for visitors and community residents is becoming a reality. The Cuyahoga Heights Service Department employees take pride in the work we do to present the village as it currently is and aspire to an even better future. Our service crews continue by maintaining the village’s high level of attention to detail, sound infrastructure and a sharp cleanliness throughout the community.

Locations of the service department over the years include space in the rear area of the fire department, a quonset hut on Chapek Parkway, and the present address at 7201 Canal Road. Although we are not certain how many years the department worked out of the back of the fire department, while at that location, their salt bin was located down the street at what is now Praxair Welding and Gas Supply. From 1975 to 1978, the service department operated out of a Butler Steel Building or a “clam shell” as they were called back in the day. This was the building at the end of Chapek Parkway. In 1978, the current service department was built on Canal Road and remains at that location. The building was later named in honor of long-time village council member John Bohdan.

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Limited records were found regarding former street commissioners.
These men may have been the precursor to the actual position of service director:

John H. Connors | 1918

R. D. Kerr (possibly) | 1919 to 1920

Albert Bletch | during 1923

Ed Baur | 1923 to 1927

Paul Kornowski | 1928 to 1932

Mr. Fontana | resigned in 1946

Service Director Is Facing Service

Jim Crooks, 20, who answered the call of Cuyahoga Heights to take the service director's post nine months ago, now is facing a bigger call—that of the U. S. Army.



CROOKS

Crooks last week received notice to report for his draft physical exam on Oct. 22. If he passes, he probably will be inducted in late November or December.

Young Crooks became service director at the request of then Mayor George Gallitz in January. He has about 20 part-time workers under him.

HIS MOTHER, Mrs. Frank Crooks, 4646 E. 71st St., said:

"He got one letter from the Army last Tuesday or Wednesday and another one the following day," Mrs. Crooks said. "If he's drafted, we'll miss him so much around here."

He will be missed by the village also. It is unlikely he could be deferred on the basis of his work as service director.

Mayor Stanley Klima said he will not consider a replacement until it is determined whether Crooks will be drafted. Council approval of a successor would be required.

Crooks was reared in the village of 800 residents and was graduated from Cuyahoga Heights High School in 1966. He has attended Cuyahoga Community College.



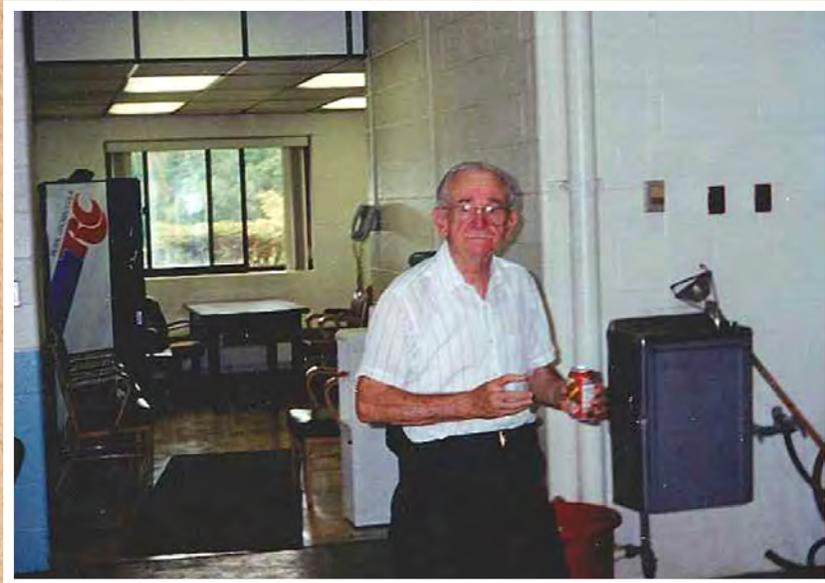
Service Director Jim Crooks

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Jim Crooks with maintenance garage staff

(left to right) Ross Patterson, Jim Crooks, Dave Sammons and Frank Domzalski



Councilman John J. Bohdan

Councilman Bohdan frequently stopped by the service department to check on things and take time to enjoy some Cotton Club Cherikey Red pop.

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*Service department crew and "village dignitaries"
in front of an old wood carving in Bacci Park*

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Jim Crooks and Dave Sammons

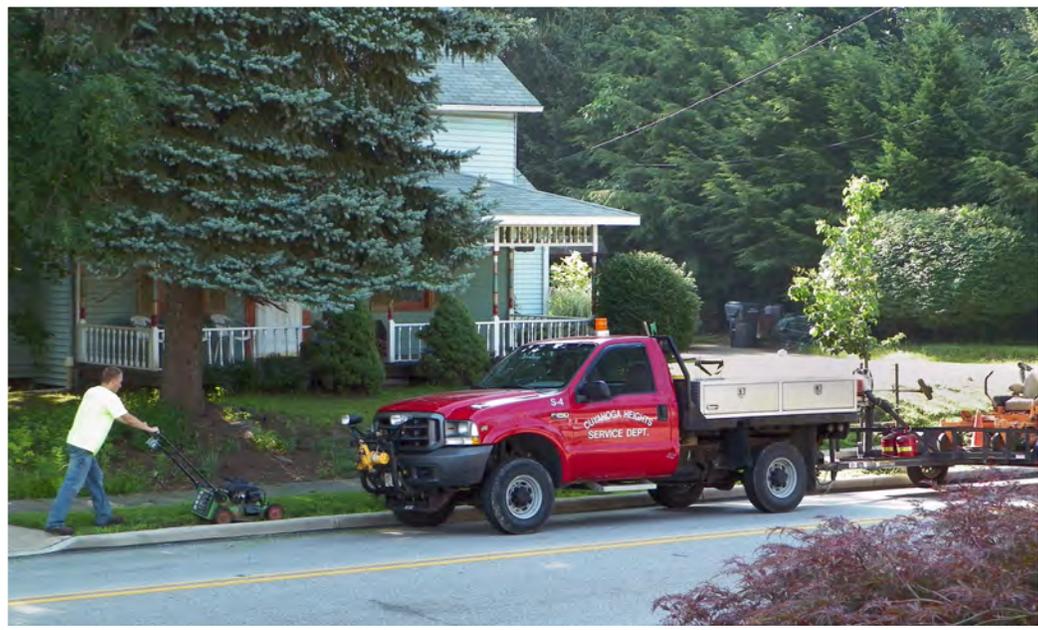


*Late 1990s or early 2000s service department crew
with legendary Bobby Schuschu up front in orange*



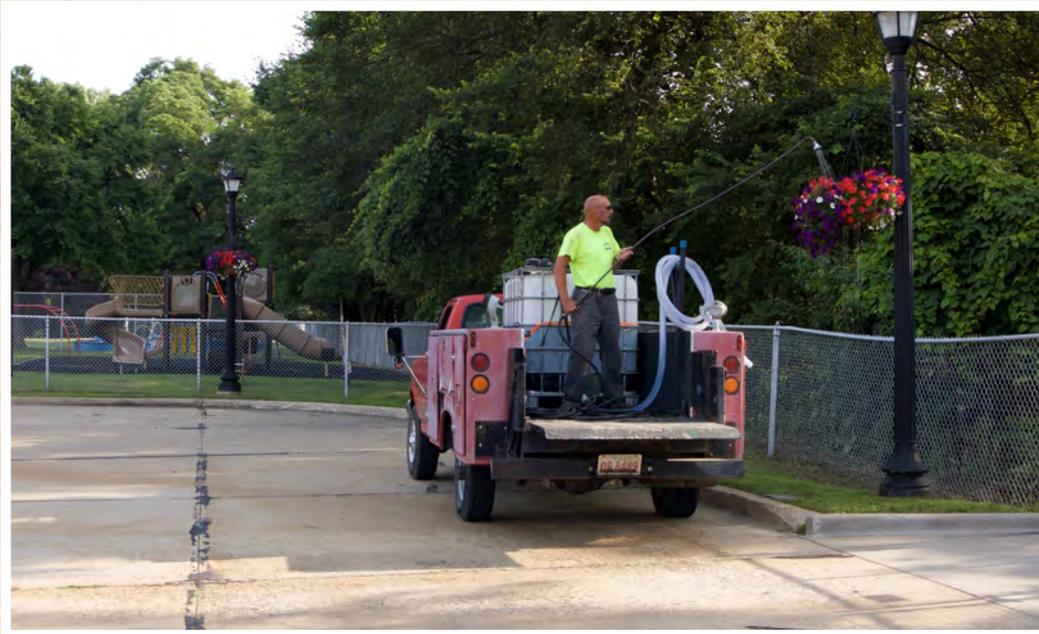
Cuyahoga Heights Service Center plaque

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*Lawn mowing and trash pickup
on East 49th Street*

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*Watering flower baskets at village hall
and spring cleanup at Bacci Park*

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*Service department vehicle storage
and maintenance garage*

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*Spreading salt on East 71st Street and
shoveling the pond for skating at Bacci Park*

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*Plowing driveways and sidewalks
on East 71st Street*

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