

A NEWSLETTER
DEDICATED TO
MEMBERS OF HALIFAX
REGIONAL FIRE &
EMERGENCY

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FeedLine

Serving Canada's Largest Composite Fire Service

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Huge Fire Engulfs Bedford Condo

IN POSITION – A three-storey condominium in Bedford was destroyed in a large fire March 13th at the corner of Hammonds Plans Rd. and the Bedford Highway. Above FF Len March gives a thumb up to Aerial 1 operator Mike Harlow as he prepares to attack fire at the rear of the building with a master stream

More action shots on pages 12,13



**Acting Chief
Director
Bill Mosher**

Message from the Chief's Office

Editor's Note: Acting Chief Director Bill Mosher has asked that his space in FeedLine this issue be dedicated to the department's new Firefighters and Family Assistance Program. FeedLine sent John Giggey to meet with Paul MacKenzie, the program coordinator. Here is his report.

Firefighters And Family Assistance. . . A Program That Belongs To Us All

As I climb the back stairs of the two-storey home on Windmill Road near the Dartmouth waterfront I can't shake the feeling that I have the wrong place.

I tap on the outside door, but can't hear any reply. And so I walk in to what I know now must be somebody's home. It's certainly not an office. I call out and a voice in the back of the house tells me to come on in. I move in the direction of the voice, passing through a comfortably furnished kitchen and living room, expecting that I'll have to apologize to whomever I meet.

I find Paul MacKenzie behind a desk in what had probably once been a small bedroom. The homey atmosphere, I find, is deliberate.

"We survive on confidentiality," says MacKenzie, who adds that people seeking any kind of help from this program have to know with certainty that absolutely nothing about them or their problems or the help they receive goes back to anyone; not their peers, and not management.

"This office is designed for confidentiality. That's why it's basically just a house. It creates a home-like environment that lends toward confidentiality and security.

"We're completely independent of headquarters. Nothing goes back. We provide annual stats on the issues we deal with so we can see trends, plan

additional training. But nothing is ever revealed about specific information, names, or anything that could in any way break the confidentiality of our members."

The official name is Firefighters and Family Assistance Program. The assistance offered to department members and their families is almost limitless.

"Sometimes there are issues involving blended families," says MacKenzie. "There could be other marital issues, substance abuse, financial problems. Someone could be going through a divorce or separation. There could be sickness or a death in the family. A member and his or her spouse may be having problems with their children and need help with parenting skills."

Some stations in the rural areas have junior firefighting programs. If any of these young people get in difficulty, they and their parents can get help and guidance through Family Assistance.

Other problems may include anything from post traumatic stress to conflict in the work place.

"We're basically into crisis management," says MacKenzie a retired Halifax police officer who managed a similar program for the Police Department since 1993, and provided the same service to officers "underground" for years before that.

"Our job is to make them aware of all the assistance that is available," says MacKenzie

about the members who may wonder whether the program can help them with their personal problems.

“No one is made to do anything. We give them good healthy choices. If they want help, we have all the resources they need. Once we know what the problem is, we can refer them to people trained in almost any field for help”

For years fire sent their employees to the police program. “But Bill Mosher had a vision,” says MacKenzie. “He wanted for a long time to have a support program of our own for Department members and their families.” The official process got started late last year and what is now called the FFAP officially got off the ground March 5th.

Retired District Chief Brian McCarthy was also instrumental in getting the service going. The program office for the Police Department shares the same house.

Besides the program, MacKenzie is also responsible for referring members to professional services, follow-up, coordinating and managing the Peer Referral Program, Critical Stress Management, and the Chaplaincy program.

The FFAP is also responsible for training members in suicide intervention, critical incident stress



FFAP Coordinator Paul MacKenzie

management, death notification, and grief counselling.

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Fleet Division **Paul McCulley**

Tenders Out For New Additions To Fleet

A tender is out for a new quint for Station 7 on Knightsridge Drive. The tender closed May 24th and delivery is expected some time next year. The current Quint 7, a 1990 E-One, will remain in the fleet as a spare quint and for training.

There is also a tender out for a two year price agreement for up to nine rescue pumpers. That tender was to close at the end of May.

Tenders have also been issued for two Dodge Dakotas for the District Captains, as well as three Dodge Calibres for administrative use.

Over the past year our department has provided technical and mechanical assistance to several other departments, including Bridgewater, Windsor, Lunenburg and Liverpool. We've also provided technical help to the Riverview and Moncton, New Brunswick, departments.

In addition some of our older trucks have been released from the



fleet and redeployed to smaller departments in the province including Sherbrook, St. Mary's and other communities.

Additional equipment has been purchased at the shop to facilitate the fabrication of trays and compartments for new apparatus. The quarter-inch plate sheer will be used for cutting steel and aluminum plate.

CO-ORDINATOR'S CORNER

Mileage Chart Changed. . . Keep Those Suggestions Coming

The Suggestion Form is alive and working.

In mid February, I received a Suggestion Form (FD-039) from Firefighter Jeff Brown. Jeff's suggestion was to develop a mileage chart to be used by members when traveling to the Composite stations from Stations 2 – 18, similar to the chart that was in place for core stations. He also suggested the additional data be combined on a single chart to make it easier for members submitting travel expenses.

The chart gives members a set number of kilometers to use in expense reports when they have to use their own vehicles to travel between stations during their shifts.

It provides consistency for mileage charges and eliminates the need of members to monitor, and sometimes guess, how far they have driven.

As a result of Jeff's suggestion, a new Mileage Chart has been developed and is now being utilized by staff. I would like to thank Jeff for sending in his suggestion and in taking the time to help improve processes for everyone. Kudos to Firefighter Jeff Brown, A Platoon.

In April we attended the All Chief's meeting in Chezzetcook to meet with the group and review the Illegal and Irregular Conduct, Code of Ethics, HRM 's Customer Service Strategy, and the changes that will be made to the Policy and



by Darlene Ellis, Coordinator

Operating Guidelines.

We also reviewed our Business Plan. Now that the 07/08 budget has been approved, the final version of the Business Plan can be found on the Internal Website.

This year we had one additional full time position approved. That is for a BA Technician to assist in delivering the same level of service to Stations 19-63 as in Stations 2-18.

Till next issue.....Darlene



CHEQUE FOR IWK – Members decided to combine a public education presentation with a little fund raising for the IWK Childrens Hospital while attending the We Love Our Children Family Expo at Exhibition Park on May 5th and 6th. The Expo has been running for three years and this is the first time our department has participated. Members staffing the HRFE booth decided to offer photographs with Sparky or plastic fire fighter helmets in exchange for a \$2. donation to the IWK. They raised \$725. in just a few hours. Fire Prevention Officer Wayne Higgins of Public Education presents a cheque to Brad Jacobs, Director of Development with the IWK Health Centre Foundation, and Trena Crewe, the foundation's Development & Stewardship Officer. The presentation was made at the Foundation's offices on Spring Garden Rd. on May 8th.

Training*Div. Chief Scott Shaffner***Evaluation - A Necessary Function of Training**

In the last issue, I spoke of how the Training Division determines what training to give (needs analysis), and how we deliver this training (training design and delivery). These activities are the first two components of a three step training system - part of our systematic approach to training.

The third component of this training system, and the one most commonly misunderstood, is the process of evaluation. Historically, we have depended solely on a written course evaluation from the students as the extent of our evaluation process. Although this allows for direct input from the students, it provides few clues as to the overall effectiveness of the program.

An evaluation should be conducted after each training program to determine the effectiveness of the training. Some of the critical evaluation questions we need answered are: Did the training program achieve its objectives? What did the firefighters learn? Did the firefighters job performance improve? Is our organization more effective? Was the training worth the cost?

The purpose of all training and development efforts is ultimately to improve firefighter performance and organizational effectiveness. Thus, it is important to know if employee job performance has changed and if the organization has improved following a training program. On the basis of a training evaluation, decisions can be made about what aspects of a training program should be retained, modified, or discarded.

Starting in June, the Training Division will be conducting crew evaluations. The crews will be evaluated on their proficiency at completing evolutions based on the content completed in the monthly drills. This level of proficiency will be the determinate as to whether or not the design and delivery component of the monthly drills has been effective. In other words, these evaluations will be used to help determine the effectiveness of our programs - that is, did the firefighters learn.

Evaluations will further be used as a needs assessment tool - in this case firefighters will be evaluated on skills not recently delivered through the Training Division. The results of these evaluations will be the basis for deciding which training is required in the coming months. In turn, this evaluation process will become a 'needs analysis' tool and, as such, will initiate the training cycle once again.

I hope this takes some of the mystery out of the training function. It's really pretty simple - needs analysis, training design and delivery, and evaluation.

FEATURE STORY

by John Giggey

“I Wouldn’t Change Anything. I’d Do It All Over Again.”

It’s a long road from selling shoes to managing some of the biggest fires Halifax has seen, but that’s the path Tim Bookholt took when he heard the fire department was hiring in 1968.

Bookholt grew up in the West End of Halifax and after finishing school he found himself working for Lewis Shoes at the Halifax Shopping Centre. He was thinking of joining the Air Force. He was dating a girl at the time whose dad was in the fire department. He told Tim there was going to be a big hiring on the department and he suggested he give it a try.

This was the time of the so-called ‘first amalgamation’, when the communities of Spryfield, Armdale, Rockingham and Fairview became part of Halifax. The department was about to embark on what is still called “the big hiring”, and the man thought Bookholt had a good chance to get on.

At that time the headquarters for the old Halifax Fire Department was on Bedford Row. Bookholt went down and wrote the test. On Nov. 1, 1968, he became one of 65 new members to be hired. His first station was on Oxford St. But when that station closed a year later, he went to Bedford Row where there was a rescue and an aerial. “I especially enjoyed the rescue,” he remembers now, “because we used to go to all the fires on the peninsula.

“It didn’t take me long before I realized this was what I wanted as my career.”

Bookholt says he was formed by the men he worked with and some stand out in his mind. There was Joe Bulger, known for his strength. “He could bounce the truck like a ball,” says Bookholt. “If you needed a wall knocked down, he was the guy.” He remembers Morris (MoMo) Downey, a rugged firefighter and skilled driver. “He had a great knowledge of firefighting and made everything look easy.” And there was Byford (Tinker) Hopkins who retired as district chief five years ago. All are now

retired. (‘Tinker’ Hopkins is the brother of District Chief Paul Hopkins.)

There were some big fires and some close calls. He was a captain and off duty when he was called in to assist with a fire on Smith St. in 1999 that destroyed a row of houses. “We were on a roof making a trench cut when there was an explosion below us. We could actually feel the roof lift.”

As district chief, Bookholt was shift commander when an explosion ripped through a grain elevator in south end Halifax in 2003. More than 400 people were evacuated from nearby homes due to concerns of a second explosion because of dust particles.

“We got conflicting reports, even from the people who worked there. A lot came down to guesswork. We had a lot of small fires that had to be extinguished. We just



DINNER AT 12 – Bookholt and fellow District Chief Paul Hopkins enjoy a dinner together hosted by members of Station 12 on Highfield Park Dr. in honour of Bookholt’s retirement on March 7th. Many members who intended to make the dinner weren’t able to come. They were tied up at the Gottingen St. fire across town. (see Jan-Feb edition)

had to focus on keeping our people safe. When there was another explosion a year later, we were more knowledgeable.”

Bookholt got a shock in 2005 when he was assigned to rural operations as District Chief in Zone 3 in the Musquodoboit Valley.

“I was disappointed at first,” says Bookholt. “I had spent 37 years in core operations and wanted to finish my career there.”

In fact, then Chief Director Mike Eddy remembers Bookholt coming to his office and asking if he was being disciplined for something. But Bookholt came to love his

new assignment in the rurals.

“I’m glad I came,” he said in an interview for *Firefighting In Canada* magazine last year. “The rural fire departments have shown me a side of the fire service I was not familiar with. These people have jobs and families. Yet they train, fight fires, go to meetings, all on their own time. The people in the fire service are basically the same, career or volunteer. They’re the salt of the earth.

“I never saw this coming, he told *Firefighting In Canada*. “I never dreamed I’d end my career with the Halifax Fire department supervising five volunteer departments. But I’m

glad it happened.”

Bookholt officially retired on April 1st.

“I wouldn’t change anything,” he says. “I enjoyed the job.”

Having worked up through the ranks to District Chief, Bookholt says: “I think the best job on the department is station captain. You work with your own crew. It’s still hands on.”

With Bookholt retired, only Capt. Andy Comstock of Engine 8 (B Platoon) remains on active duty of the 65 firefighters hired on Nov. 1, 1968.



CHOW TIME – Bookholt and his wife Gail (far left) chow down with some members from Zone 3 during a reception at Station 38 (Middle Musquodoboit) March 25. With them from left are Captains Jeff and Kara McCurdy, Amanda Kay, wife of Middle Musquodoboit Chief Robert Kay, and Katy Dickey. All are from Station 38.

Photos by John Giggey

Gas Spill With A Difference



NOT YOUR AVERAGE DAY – After evacuating RCMP and paramedics from the immediate area, members discuss their strategy outside a home on Lucasville Rd. May 4th. Engine 50 from Hammonds Plains was originally dispatched to assist RCMP at a home where gasoline had been poured over a resident. On arrival they were told a large amount of gasoline had also been spilled throughout the house. From left are Platoon C District Captain Barry MacKenzie, who was safety officer; Western Region District Captain Ian Smith, who was incident command; firefighters Rob Belliveau and Jason Squires of E-50.

REDUCING THE RISK – Below, members stand by with police as a Nova Scotia Power linesman cuts power to the two-storey home, eliminating one more ignition source.



VENTILATION TIME – At left, Firefighter Jason Squires of E-50 moves a PPV fan in place as the ventilation process gets under way. A three-person team later entered the home with a meter and found gas readings were minimal and well below the explosive level. The home was then turned over again to RCMP officers so they could continue their investigation. Engines 50 and 10, Tanker 50 and Tactical 1 responded to the call. The Logistics Division also brought the Rehab Trailer to the scene.

Photos by John Giggey



HOME SPRINKLER WINNER – When Karen Fitzgerald visited the Home Show this year, she didn't expect to win a major prize. And the prize will make the new home she and her partner, Tony Hamilton, are building in Cole Harbour a lot safer. Karen visited the Nova Scotia Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition's booth and entered a draw to win the installation of a residential fire sprinkler system in her new home. The prize is worth \$5,000. She won. On April 16 she visited Station 17 to be officially congratulated. She got to meet the Engine 17 crew as well as Abbey, one of the USAR team's search and rescue dogs. From left are Fire Prevention Officer Holly Weatherby of Public Education, FF Brian McKay, Karen, Abbey, FF's Joel Doyle and Brian Acker, and Capt. Paul Aalders. McKay is a member of the USAR team and Abbey frequently accompanies him during a shift so they can get in some extra training. Karen is manager of Empire Theatres at Bayer's Lake.



A TIC PLEASE — Lt. Jared Doucette of Station 62 (Harrietsfield-Sambro) leans out a window of a burned out bungalow in Ketch Harbour to ask for a thermal imaging camera to help with overhaul. The early morning fire April 25th gutted the home. Working beside him is Firefighter Jodi Payne, also of Station 62.

Photos by John Giggey

FEATURE STORY

by John Giggey

Province Recognizes Long-Serving Volunteer Bob Ruggles

"I'm not a big traveller," says Bob Ruggles who, at 67, lives just half a mile from where he was born in Middle Musquodoboit. And most of that life has been spent in the fire department.

Ruggles joined the old Middle Musquodoboit Volunteer Fire Department in 1968, seven years after it was formed. Although officially "retired" from active firefighting, he continues a very active member of what is now Station 38 of HRFE, as well as in Zone 3. In fact at the end of May, he had been in the service for 39 years.

On April 28th Ruggles was officially honoured for his years of service by the provincial government at the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia annual conference in Truro. A special award, the first of its kind by the province, was presented to a surprised Ruggles by Mark Parent, the Minister of Environment and Labour. Also on hand for the occasion was Fire Marshal Bob Cormier, himself a former volunteer and career firefighter. Both praised Ruggles for his service.

Ruggles spent about 20 years as an officer, in all ranks. "I was a lieutenant, a captain, a deputy chief and then chief for four years," says Ruggles. In fact he continues to attend the monthly meeting of the zone's chief officers.

"I asked them if they wanted me to stop coming," says Ruggles, "since I'm not a chief any more. But they said: 'Good God no! We want you there.'" He is heavily involved in zone projects, is in charge of air management for the zone, and has responsibility for the zone's Tactical unit.

Sometimes circumstances demand a more active role. On April 26th this year he was the initial incident commander at a large brush fire in Middle Musquodoboit that raced over several acres and destroyed a barn. (See pictures pages 18, 19) His tactics played a critical role in saving a house and a garage.

In fact the department became a sort of family affair at times for him, his wife Catherine, and their two

daughters, both now grown.

"Often we just joined in," says Catherine. "Sometimes the whole family was down at the fire hall when something was going on: events, fundraisers."

She acknowledges that it could be frustrating. "It was annoying sometimes. Just when you think we were going to do something, he'd have to go down to the fire hall. But he's enjoyed it and we're proud of him.

"There were a few times they were out on fires and there was no way of knowing if they were OK. We would worry. He was always one of the ones that was there first and he would do what he had to do. He wasn't careless. But you know what fires are like.

"If I had it do over, I'd still want to see him in the fire department. He had a good teacher. Edgar Annand (*who died years ago*) encouraged him. He was one of the ones who believed if you're going to be there for the fire department, you're going to be there for the fire department. He was dedicated and Bob is dedicated."

In fact, Catherine is still involved. "I'm still sort of his department secretary," she says. "He doesn't use the computer, so I handle his e-mail and so on."

When amalgamation began 11 years ago, Ruggles was one of the early supporters. "I was optimistic it would be an improvement for rural departments," he says. In fact he and some other chiefs had already begun pooling their resources and were purchasing for several stations together before the policy was brought in by the new amalgamated department. "A couple of us managed to convince the others this was the way to go and we started it before HRM brought in the arrangement."

A comment by Acting Chief Director Bill Mosher seems to sum up the reputation Ruggles has built in the department over the years.

"He is the finest gentleman I have ever met," said Mosher. "He works hard for his community and for the fire service."



Photo by John Giggey

RECEPTION – Ruggles was a special guest at a reception at headquarters March 8th for retiring District Chief Tim Bookholt. Here he poses with Bookholt and his wife, Gail. When Bookholt left core operations to become District Chief of Zone 3, Ruggles and Bookholt became friends and discovered they are distantly related. They shared an aunt.

SPECIAL AWARD – The Nova Scotia Minister of Environment and Labour, Mark Parent (left), presents veteran firefighter Bob Ruggles with a special award for his years of service during the annual conference of the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia in Truro. Ruggles has been with the Middle Musquodoboit department since 1968.

Photo by Bernie Turpin



Fire Destroys Condo at Piers Landing

EXPOSURE – FF John Neal and Lt. Robert Andrews of Engine 8-alpha operate a 2 ½ exposure line to protect another apartment building 15 feet from the structure (not visible on right). The crew of 9 Engine was covering Station 8 in Bedford when the fire broke out at Piers Landing. By the time dispatch toned out the call, 9 engine was already on the road after a civilian raced to the station a block away to report the fire.



ACTING PLATOON CHIEF and incident commander Chuck Bezanson briefs Deputy Director Steve Thurber as flames roar out of a second floor apartment an hour into the fire. Looking on is District Captain Barry MacKenzie who acted as Safety Officer. First in was Capt. Greg Hebb and his crew from 9 Engine. Faced with a huge fire that was already threatening another nearby condo, his first actions were to lay a 2 1/2 exposure line (above) and call for help. About 20 people were left homeless.



FIGHTING IT FROM THE WOODS –

Because of the collapse zone at the rear, crews had to extend lines into a wooded area on a small knoll behind the fire building to direct streams into the interior from the C side. Capt. Paul Stoddard and FF Gary Euloth of E-14 man a 2 ½ line from the trees. Investigator Bill Murphy says the fire started high on the rear of the building and moved quickly across the roof. It created so much smoke so quickly that the pilot of a small plane was among the first to sound the alarm.

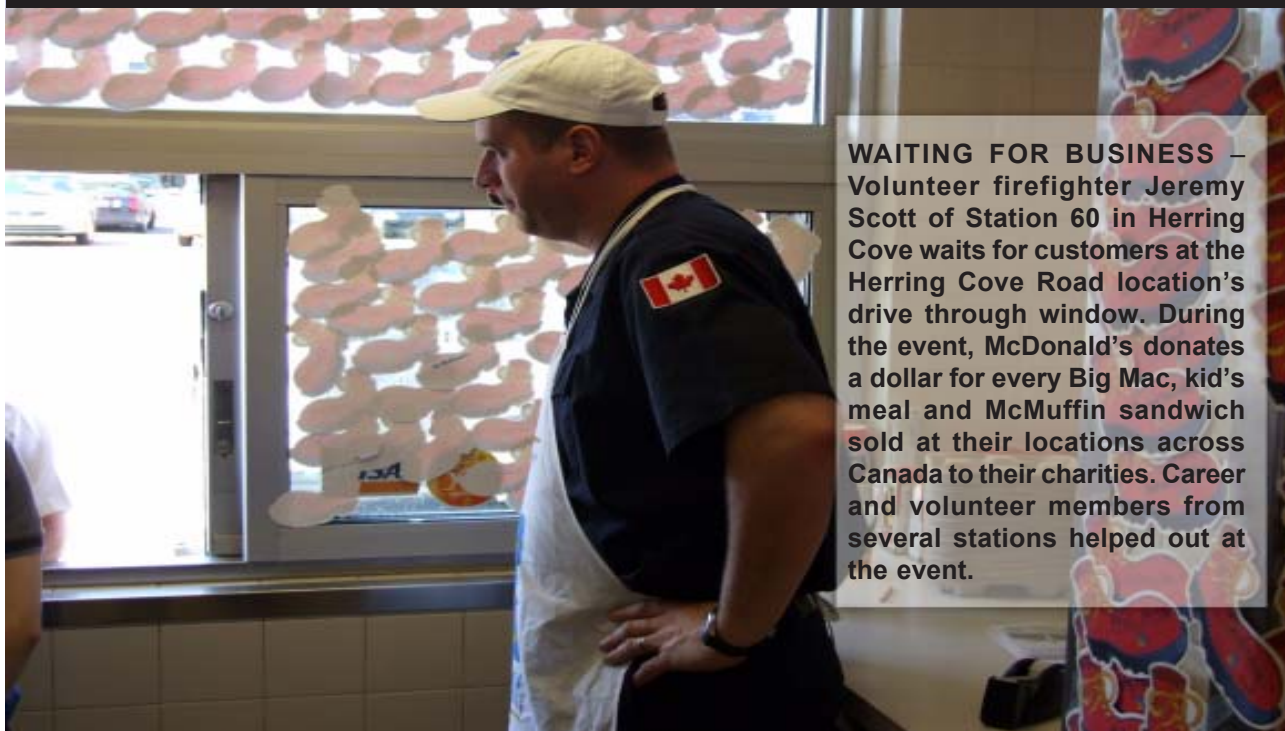
THE HARD WAY – Amid a cascade of sparks and burning debris an excavator begins tackling the D side of the building to help crews get at fire that could not be reached from outside. Members could not enter that part of the building because of the collapse hazard. Almost half the building was torn down by the machine. Following an extensive investigation, Fire Prevention Officer Bill Murphy said the cause is officially listed as undetermined. Responding to the call were seven engines, Aerial 1 and Quint 7, Tacts 1 and 2, 11 Tanker and the Rehab Trailer.



McHappy Day



MAKING A DONATION – Businessman Cec Caines buys a McDonald's trinket from Engine 6 Firefighter Dave Spencer during McHappy Day at the fast food restaurant's Herring Cove Rd. location March 09. McDonald's holds the event to raise money for its local charities. In HRM, the funds go to Ronald McDonald House.



WAITING FOR BUSINESS – Volunteer firefighter Jeremy Scott of Station 60 in Herring Cove waits for customers at the Herring Cove Road location's drive through window. During the event, McDonald's donates a dollar for every Big Mac, kid's meal and McMuffin sandwich sold at their locations across Canada to their charities. Career and volunteer members from several stations helped out at the event.



DOING IT TOGETHER – Department members line up with other volunteers and restaurant staff at the McDonald's location on Nantucket Ave. in Dartmouth. From left are Const. Allan MacLennan of HRM Police, Capt. Brendan Dunfee of 13 Quint, assistant manager Belinda Jessome, Firefighter Benoit David of 13 Quint, and McDonald's employees Jessica Proulx and Ibrahim Manna. In the background at right are reservists Mahmoud Manna of the Princess Louise Fusiliers and Nicolas de l'Eveille of the 33rd Service Battalion. Ibrahim and Mahmoud are brothers.



AND THAT COMES TO... – Capt. Stephen Auton of Engine 3 tallies up an order for Charlie Whelan of Halifax (centre) at the McDonald's location on Quinpool Rd. At left Gerry Young and Gussie Prowse, also of 3 Engine, flank dispatcher Rebecca Sparks. The traditional event has raised about 22.5 million dollars for McDonald's charities across Canada since 1977.

FEATURE STORY

Families in the Fire Service

by John Giggey

From the First Kiss to the Fire Department. . . Gina and PJ Byrne Are “Here To Stay”

For PJ Byrne, his entry into the fire department came right out of the blue - literally.

As new residents of Hammonds Plains four years ago, Gina and PJ decided to spend a sunny Saturday morning at an open house and volunteer drive at their local fire hall.

“On the way home,” PJ remembers now, “Gina said: ‘Well. I signed us up.’”

“Signed us up for what,” asked PJ.

“For the fire department,” replied Gina. “I signed us up for the fire department.”

Gina had put both their names down as potential recruits at Stations 50/51 in Hammonds Plains and had brought along the paperwork for both of them. They filled it out, handed in their applications and were accepted. They’ve both been Level One firefighters for going on two years.

They’ve fallen in love with the fire service. But they’re used to falling in love.

The first time it happened was when they were in grade 6 together in St. Albert, northwest of Edmonton.

“I wanted to kiss him,” Gina remembers, “but he wouldn’t kiss me unless we were married. And so

we got some friends and went down to a creek near our school and our friends performed the marriage ceremony.

“But PJ still wouldn’t kiss me because we were in public. So we went under the bridge and had our first kiss.”

A year later PJ’s family moved to Warburg, Alta., an hour away. They never saw each other again for years.

“I couldn’t forget her and I remained faithful,” remembers PJ. “From time to time I’d look up her name in the telephone book and so I always knew her telephone number.”

Eventually PJ moved back to the Edmonton area as a pilot with Kenn Borek Air. “As soon as the phone book arrived, I looked her up her name and there it was.”

“He didn’t even call,” says Gina, picking up the story. “He just showed up at my door. I looked through the peephole and there was a man in uniform. I asked who he was and he said ‘PJ’. “They hadn’t seen each other in 18 years.

Eight months later they were engaged, and eight months after that they were married, this time for real. And they held the ceremony on the same bridge where they shared their first kiss

as kids years before.

The two moved to High River in 2002, where Gina became a town councillor, and then to Haliburton Hills in Hammonds Plains. PJ (*his full name is Patrick Joseph, but he is only ever called PJ*) is now a pilot for Air Canada Jazz. Gina is the owner of the Boston Pizza franchise in Sackville.

“In my past council experience I found it good to be involved with the community,” says Gina. “I had a good relationship with the volunteer fire department in High River and so when firefighter Patrick Dean approached me at the open house about joining the volunteers here, it seemed like a good idea.”

“It’s probably not something I would have thought of on my own,” says PJ. “But when she told me what she had done, I thought: ‘OK. We’ll give that a try.’ Both say they’re getting a lot of satisfaction and enjoyment out of the service.

“It makes us appreciate life more,” says Gina, now a veteran of many calls where people have needed help. “Now we know how quickly things can change for people.

“It’s a huge time commitment,” says Gina. “To run the house, have children (2), run a business, I’m on two community committees, plus this. . . It’s a huge undertaking. But

I'm completely dedicated to it.”

“There’s also the social context,” adds PJ. “The people here in the department are now very good friends. The relationships we’ve developed here are very important to us.”

Gina has also developed a respect for anyone in emergency services. She has set up a Fireman’s

Corner in her restaurant, and firefighters, police officers or paramedics who show ID get a 10 per cent discount on any meals they are paying for.

“When we were first accepted, we wondered: ‘Now what do we do?’ “, says Gina. “It’s challenging. It makes you learn. If you don’t want life to pass you by, you have to jump in. And in this business, you certainly jump in. We’re here to stay.”



Photo by John Giggey

DRILL TIME TOGETHER — Firefighters PJ and Gina Byrne take some time out during training to pose for a picture at their station in Hammonds Plains. Despite the time involved, they say their close friends in the department and the satisfaction of helping people make them committed to the service.

Brush, Brush, Brush...



TAKING IT PERSONAL – Firefighter Kenneth Bell (left) of Station 38 in Middle Musquodoboit backs up a DNR firefighter in the woods April 26th. Bell had a vested interest in stopping the fire. It was moving toward his home just up the road. There was a multiple department response to this blaze.

WATER SUPPLY – A DNR helicopter can be seen lifting off just over the back of Engine 39 from Upper Musquodoboit as the truck feeds crews from a porta tank. Zone 3 District Chief Paul Hopkins is at left.





WETTING IT DOWN – E-45 firefighter Skip Hoffman wets down the ruins of a barn that was destroyed in the Middle Musquodobit fire. After sweeping across this field and burning out several old vehicles parked nearby, the fire jumped a Highway and threatened several nearby homes before being brought under control. Warm, dry conditions during much of April and early May led to one of the busiest brush fire seasons we have seen in several years. There were no injuries at any of the fires.

CONSULTATION – Chief Richard Arnold of Station 40 (Dutch Settlement) meets with several DNR firefighters as crews begin to get an upper hand on the fire. Fourteen pumpers and tankers plus support vehicles from Zones 3 and 4 responded, along with DNR and mutual aid from several Hants County departments. The first-in crew under the command of Bob Ruggles moved quickly to save a home and a garage directly threatened by the fire.

Photos by John Giggey



Brush, Brush, Brush...



MORE LINE PLEASE – Engine 21 firefighter Claude Garry looks for more slack as he advances a line at a large brush fire in East Preston May 10. Out of camera range to the left, Engine 18 Capt. Bernie MacDonald is freeing up the line tangled in the bush and moving it forward. The call came in as a structure fire and it quickly spread to several acres of brush. Six engines, 10 tankers and a tactical unit responded.

A LONG JOB – Station 21 (Lake Echo) volunteer Ted Cadieux wets down the ruins of a barn destroyed in the blaze. Eventually an excavator was brought in open up the collapsed building so members could access the remnants of the fire.



Applications Coming In For Second Camp Courage

"It has changed my life forever. Thanks a million." (age 16)

"This was really the greatest week of my entire life."
(age 16)

"I will follow my dreams and never give up." (age 15)

"(They) made me believe that I'm capable of whatever I want to do."

Those are some of the comments to come from the 20 graduates of last summer's first Camp Courage. Now the program is in place and the applications are coming in for the second camp scheduled for seven days – July 29th to August 4th – this summer.

Camp executive director Andrea Speranza says the purpose of the camp remains the unchanged. It's designed to introduce young women to emergency services as a possible career path, and to instill self confidence and self respect. It includes instructors from all three emergency services: fire, police and paramedics.

The core program will remain much the same, with just a few changes. For instance there will be physical fitness training and a module on self defence.

There will be about 20 female students ranging from 15 to 19 years of age.

A student at last summer's camp gets to see what the world looks like from the top of an aerial ladder. With her is Firefighter Kevin Reade



Growing up with a Firefighter Dad



Editor's Note

The picture wound up on the FeedLine Desk a couple of months ago. It was a copy of a newspaper clipping from Oct. 13, 1984, of a pretty four-year-old girl, her long blonde hair in a pony tail, climbing up on the lap of her dad. Along with 10 others, he had just been sworn in as a Halifax firefighter and was preparing for a group photo. His name was Luke Whiting, now Captain of Engine 6, D Platoon. His little girl, Jacqueline, is now Communications Officer for Premier Rodney MacDonald. The original picture can no longer be found in the Chronicle Herald archives. But the picture posed a question: What was it like to grow up with a dad as a firefighter? We asked Jacqueline to prepare an article for us. Here is her story.

Leaders Dressed as Heroes

By Jacqueline Whiting

The day my father was hired by the old Halifax Fire Department I was four years old. Thanks to a photo in the Chronicle-Herald that day, I am able to relive the emotions I felt in 1984.

With a beaming smile, I stared at my father with overwhelming pride. I clutched my yellow Fisher-Price® purse not knowing what lie ahead. The sound of a siren, the sight of burning candles and the smell of a campfire would come to mean something different to me. Now, these objects and senses carry emotional weight that no other human being can understand. But somehow the thought of a loved one leaving every fourth day to perhaps not make it home gets buried. The fear is suppressed like any other fear—you let life get in the way.

Today, some refer to him as Captain Luke Whiting, but he'll only ever be Daddy to me. You see, any firefighter's child will tell you that they don't dwell on the details of what their parent does at work. It goes unspoken at home, with the fear of hearing too much if you ask. I've never spent any great amount of time even thinking about how much emotional strength he must possess; whether he's seen someone die who might resemble me, or whether he's been in a room, blinded by smoke, scared that he may not make it home to his family the next morning. The closest I ever got to thinking about it was the smell of smoke when dad came home from work at 8 o'clock in the morning or the sombre look on his face from time to time.

On February 14, 2007, I witnessed something that changed everything. I sat on my white IKEA couch, eating supper while watching the evening news. The station was broadcasting a memorial service in Winnipeg for Captain Lessard and Captain Nichols, Winnipeg firefighters who both died in a house fire when a flashover engulfed them in flames. The eulogy spoken by Captain Nichols' wife, son and daughter instantly brought tears to my eyes.

On the other side of the city, my father was watching the same service. We later discussed how we both felt something we had never felt before. We saw ourselves in them. The sight of those three family members crying and praising their father and husband is the one scene my mother, my brother and I fear most. For the first time, their words articulated my emotions and my pride for a father who has always been my strength, the one who makes everything okay, and the one who no one could ever replace. It made me want to learn and appreciate more about my dad.

Growing up, our family functioned in a unique manner. My mother had the big corporate job, working 9 to 5, and dad was home three days out of four. He was the one to put pigtails in my hair before school, the one who did the laundry, the cooking, and the cleaning before mom got home, and the one who

made all my friends' dads, to what I admit is an unfair advantage, seem incomparable.

Needless to say, I quickly became the typical "daddy's little girl". I was able to learn a lot about dad after spending so much time with him in my childhood. And what I've learned about him as an adult continues to touch my heart. There isn't a Christmas morning he would ever take away from a younger firefighter who might miss time with their young children. He'd swap shifts with no hesitation. That's just dad.

At six-foot-one, 200 pounds, with a characteristic mustache and black steel-toe boots, dad suits the look of a stereotypical, burly firefighter quite well. Captain since 1997, his "open, honest and involved" leadership attitude earns the utmost respect from his crew.

"He's got your back when you are running into a burning building," says firefighter Ashley Branch. "He is always dependable and recognizes us every single time we

go out the door to an incident and we've handled it well. When my boss trusts me to do something, it makes me step up to the plate. He is an officer for whom we have respect because he has respect for us."

He gives them credit for work done well, just like he does for my brother and me at home. "He singles you out when something is done well and he gives you the inspiration to take your job to the next level," says firefighter and long time colleague of my dad, Bobby Legere. "However, he doesn't ask for us to be supermen, but to just do our job and to do it well." And there isn't one firefighter that will tell you otherwise.

After decades on the job, Dad's not going anywhere. He has no intention of retiring any time soon; he loves his job too much. Recommended many times for the daily position of district chief, he simply isn't ready to give up the camaraderie that comes along with shift work.

When the time does come for him to retire, it won't be one of his children

who will continue the family tradition of riding a red truck. But my cousin, Sara Drysdale*, has taken the torch. She has always had a close bond with my dad, and now I understand why. They both share a love for a profession that is ingrained in their souls. They live it and breathe it. Like most firefighters, they both give so much of themselves from a very deep heart-felt place. I can tell dad sees this quality in her and is proud of her for recognizing it.

While watching the memorial service for Captain Lessard and Captain Nichols, I finally acknowledged that my father will always run into burning buildings when others run out scared, that my father lives unselfishly day after day, and that my father has found a genuine compassion for strangers that few people ever find. I am a daughter of a firefighter and I have never been more proud.

*(*Sara was one of 18 new recruits sworn in May 18th. Story will be in the May-June edition.)*



STILL BEST FRIENDS – Jacqueline Whiting poses for a picture with her dad, Capt. Luke Whiting, at Luke's home in the Fairview area of Halifax. In the accompanying story, Jacqueline describes the huge impact her Firefighter Dad has had on her life.

Photo by John Giggey

Station 13 Offices To House New HRM Corporate Safety Group

by Veronica Faulkner

On April 1st the HRM Corporate Safety team came together under the direction of Deputy Chief Director Roy Hollett. His Administrative Assistant, Veronica Faulkner, is providing support for the Team.

HRM has been fortunate in putting together this group with a combined total of 67 years experience in safety. The working Team members are Gary Lively, Safety Consultant, Program & Policy; Mike MacKenzie, CRSP, CHSC, Safety Officer; and Don Kelly, CRSP, Safety Officer. Halifax Regional Police and Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency will also be working in liaison with the Corporate Safety Group. They have moved into offices recently vacated by Public Affairs and Public Education on the second floor of Station 13 on King St.

Although the team is in its infancy they are working diligently to develop a new safety culture in HRM and have the full support of the CAO, Dan English. The Corporate Occupational Health & Safety Policy & Procedures Manual Statement dated July 12, 2006 can be found on the Corporate Safety webpage on the HRM Intranet.

Corporate Safety's Mission Statement describes a Corporate Safety Team committed to the promotion and continuous improvement of a knowledgeable and dedicated safety culture. The goal is to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all HRM employees, customers, contractors and visitors. Through education, auditing, monitoring, technical consultation and the provision of services, the Corporate Safety Team will assist all business units in meeting their obligations for compliance with health and safety legislation.

The Team's vision is to realize an improvement in the safety culture within HRM that will include health and safety attitude and behaviour changes, as well as a better understanding of occupational health and safety requirements for a safer workplace; a reduction in workplace accidents/incidents, equipment/property damage, and zero fatalities or disabling injuries; achieving and maintaining compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements and becoming a recognized leader in health and safety promotion.

THE TEAM -- The new Corporate Safety Group gather for a photo on the second floor of Station 13 on King St. From left are Don Kelly, Gary Lively and Mike MacKenzie. Lively and MacKenzie are based on the old Public Affairs offices at Station 13. Kelly works out of the Spicer Building. All have extensive backgrounds in Safety. Kelly is a member of the Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia Safety Council.



Photo by John Giggey

Arson Fire Destroys Harrietsfield Mobile



OVERHAULING – Firefighters Jodi Payne and Dave Hart of Harrietsfield-Sambro (Stations 62, 63) check for hot spots after knocking down a roaring mobile home arson fire on Skyline Dr. in Harrietsfield March 27.



TALKIN' IT OVER – Lt. Mike Bonomo chats with a member of his crew, Firefighter Jodi Payne, after knocking down the mobile home blaze. Looking on is the third member of the team, Dave Hart. They had just exited the structure. The three are volunteers with the Harrietsfield-Sambro stations.



CHECKING THE DAMAGE – Harrietsfield-Sambro Chief Bill Powell, incident command at this fire, has a look at the damage. Besides stations 62 and 63, units responded from Herring Cove & Dist. (Station 60), Lakeside (Station 58), Prospect Rd. & Dist. (Station 52), and Station 6.

Photos by John Giggey

25th Anniversary of Bowl-a-thon \$1.25 Million So Far

FOUNDERS OF THE ANNUAL Nova Scotia Firefighters Burn Treatment Society Bowl-a-thon were honoured at the annual event April 21st at the Spryfield Bowlarama in South Centre Mall. All were presented with special Founder's Plaques marking the 25th anniversary of the event. Many are retired members from this and other departments and others are still active firefighters. The event this year involved some 60 teams of five people each from departments throughout mainland Nova Scotia. The event raised \$46,302. The Bowl-a-thon has raised about 1.25 million dollars for burn treatment since it started in 1982.



In the very back row are Gerry Condon (the hat) and Brian McCarthy. In front of them standing from left are Jane Friday, who received a Founder Plaque on behalf of the IWK; Sue MacMillan, who accepted a plaque on behalf of her late husband, Stephen O'Grady; Tony Garber; Douglas Castel; Kenny Martin and Terry Bourgeois. Kneeling in front are Michelle O'Grady and Jennifer O'Grady, who were also representing their dad, Stephen O'Grady; Leanne MacGillivray, who accepted a plaque on behalf of the Queen Elizabeth Two Health Sciences Centre; and Frank White. Missing is another founder, James Gray, who was away during this year's event.

Sackville Rink Wins Firefighters Curling Divisional Title By Stew Slauenwhite

It was another great season of fun and camaraderie for the Halifax County Firefighters Curling League.

The league had a full slate of 12 teams. The A Division season winner was the Pryde rink from Sackville. Their members are (skip) Mark Pryde, (mate) Terry Aucoin, (second) Earle Slauenwhite, and (lead) Stew Slauenwhite.

The Csutorka rink from Enfield won the B Division.

The winner of the Richard

Derbyshire award for the Most Sportsmanship Player was Susan Mader Zinck of the Donnelly Rink in Cole Harbour. The Team Sportsmanship award went to the Ernie Blois rink of Enfield whose members were (skip) Ernie Blois, (mate) Adrian Lohnes, (second) Angus Orman, and (lead) Glenn Crews.

There is an opportunity for members interested in curling to get involved with the league. One team has had to pull out, and officials hope for a replacement team by the time the

new season begins in the fall. The league is also looking for members who can act as spares for existing teams.

Anyone interested in becoming part of the league can contact:

Stewart Slauenwhite
865-6956 or 490-5587
(Station 6, A Platoon)

Derrick Harty 490-5675
(Station 8, C Platoon)

Ian Smith 860-0498

Battle of the Badges '07



THE GAME BEGINS – Shawn Harrison of Station 13 squares off with buddy Mike Redmond for the ceremonial puck drop. Former NHL'er Dale Hawerchuk (10) drops the puck with referee Eddie Shack keeping an eye on things. Redmond, who has Down Syndrome, has taken a special interest in the fire department and has come under the wing of several of our members. He is an honorary member of the hockey team.

DOWN, BUT NOT OUT -- West goalie Jamie O'Donnell takes a few seconds on the ice after being stung on a hard save. A time-out was called and he was back on his feet a few minutes later. This was the 12th annual Battle of the Badges which has raised about \$90,000 over the years for such charities as the Nova Scotia Burn Treatment Camp, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, various sports associations and others. The East team won 9-7 and Reg Bowes of the West team was MVP.



**A NEWSLETTER
DEDICATED TO
MEMBERS OF HALIFAX
REGIONAL FIRE &
EMERGENCY**

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We're on the Web!
www.halifax.ca/fire

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your Newsletter!
Articles, comments and
photographs are most
welcome!



**Halifax Regional
Fire & Emergency**



Photo Courtesy of Station 33

LOTS OF SMOKE, NO FIRE . . . thanks to Shay-Lynn. It was Dec. 07 that several stations in Zone 2 were dispatched to a possible structure fire in Port Dufferin. They arrived to find smoke. But thanks to four-year-old Shay-Lynn Westhaver, the situation was pretty well under control. The fire started on an electric stove. Shay-Lynn saw it and alerted her mom who was in another room vacuuming. Her mother emptied a fire extinguisher on the fire and fled the house with Shay-Lynn. "There was lots of smoke when we got there," reports Station 33 (Three Harbours) Chief Mike Butler, whose station was first due at the call. "We ventilated and cleaned up a bit. But the fire was out." Above Shay-Lynn is awarded a plaque by Butler on behalf of the department while a friend, Melissa Stuart, looks on. An open house was also held at the station for her and some of her friends.

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