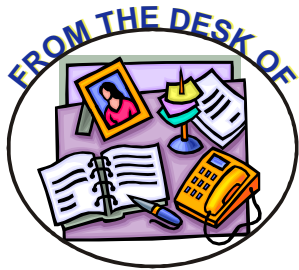


FIREFAX

VOLUME 24

March 2011

ISSUE 1



Becky Nelson
SECRETARY/TREASURER
FIREFAX EDITOR



I would be remiss if I didn't take the time to thank the Chapter's 2010 Sponsors. Our organization, like many others, depends on the loyalty of businesses that our membership is affiliated with to help with the rising costs of providing a seminar that is of the highest quality. The generosity of our supporting sponsors is unmatched.

The Officers and Board have decided the Chapter will not be mailing out membership cards due to the rising cost of postage. Members who attend the annual seminar can pick them up at the registration table upon request.

Lastly, it is with a heavy heart that I inform you of the passing of two of the Chapter's Life Members. James Carpenter January 5, 2010 and Roger Hegland November 24, 2010. These men were pillars in the fire community and will be greatly missed.

Continued on page 2.

I hope this Firefax finds everyone doing well in 2011. I, like each of you, am busy with work and day to day activities – but putting together this edition of Firefax brought me back to the realization of why I belong to this great organization. It's the membership. The Iowa Chapter IAAI has provided me with such a large group of people to network with in all areas of my professional career. I am so thankful I have had the opportunity and privilege to be an officer in the Chapter and look forward to this tenure.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2010 SPONSORS
WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

EFI Global
Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company
IFIC
Onsite Engineering
Pyr-Tech

IN MEMORY

James D. Carpenter
March 30, 1942 – January 5, 2010



James was a devoted fire fighter. He served his city of Davenport not only as a fire fighter but also Chief Fire Marshall until his retiring in 1998, following 32 years of service. He joined the Iowa Chapter on September 1, 1991 and was made a Life Member in 2000. James leaves behind his wife, Judith and daughters, Pam and Kathy.

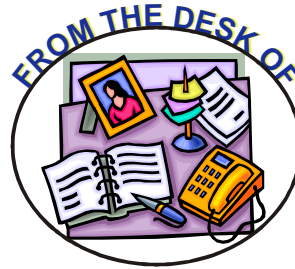
IN MEMORY

Roger Allen Heglund
May 14, 1955 – November 24, 2010.



Roger started his career as a fire fighter in 1984 and had a passion for it until his passing. He joined the Iowa Chapter on August 22, 1986 and served in numerous positions to include Secretary/Treasurer from 1991-1997 and President from 2000-2001. Roger was made a Life Member in 1996. Roger leaves behind his wife Lori, daughter Shannon and son Cody.

***Mark Your Calendars
and
Don't Miss the
29th Annual
Fire Investigation Seminar
And
Annual Meeting
September 20-23, 2011
West Des Moines Marriott***



**Chris VanVleet
PRESIDENT**



I hope 2011 has started well for everyone and that it will be a good year for you as well as our Chapter.

Let me start by thanking everyone for their support and vote of confidence by re-electing me as you President. You have elected a great board again this year and I think you will be pleased with their representation along with their selfless work on the board.

We had outstanding seminar in 2010 and I think 2011 is shaping up to be another great learning experience. First Vice President Dunn and the board have done a great job in getting this year's seminar all lined up. We have some great speakers on tap as well as some very interesting case studies that should help you in your everyday investigations. Mark your calendars and save the date, September 20 – 23, 2011 at the West Des Moines Marriott.

We have discussed the Task Force concept with the membership on past occasions and we would still like to see it spread throughout the state. Just yesterday, the Des Moines area task force, Metro Area Fire Investigation Task Force (MAFIT), was activated for a residential fire in Ankeny. We had about 10 investigators from the metro area respond to help out the Ankeny Fire Department and the Polk County Sheriff's Office with the origin and cause. We were able to process the scene in one day with all the help. I can't help but think this concept would be beneficial anywhere in Iowa. Extra free personnel working for the requesting department to get the job done as quickly and efficiently as possible. I, First VP Dunn, member Jason Ferguson, member Dave Proctor and Fire Marshal Reynolds recently met with members of the LEIN executive board to promote the task force concept. We are looking to promote a task force in each of the six LEIN regions. This would include the State Fire Marshal in each of those regions.

I would like to see our Chapter take the lead in forming these task force groups. Not only does it serve a

vital role in working together on fire scenes, but it serves a great educational roll as well. We meet in the metro area every other month. We discuss issues that are affecting us in our area. It is a great way to identify trends and issues that we may not have been aware of, or didn't know others were having the same problem. We also try to incorporate an educational piece at each meeting for the good of the group. As you know, our Chapter is rooted in providing education to its members in the arena of fire investigation. We think this is a great way to help accomplish that mission in addition to our annual seminar. If you have any ideas, or would like to help out with any of the task forces, let one of your board members know.

On the topic of educational opportunities, we are still looking for hosts of a Lunch & Learn. These are free to the host and all we need is a location, date and list of people or agencies to invite. The attendee buys their lunch and we provide 30 to 45 minutes of training on a fire investigation related topic. These are great networking tools. Please let a board member know if you are interested in hosting or presenting!



Jess Dunn
1ST VICE PRESIDENT



Greetings to all Iowa Chapter members!

Those of you that follow the International may have seen that they have created the IAAI-FIT certification (Fire Investigation Technician). This certification has now been offered for a little over a year. The IAAI-FIT certification is intended to be available to investigators that maybe don't have all the points required for the IAAI-CFI. You can consider it somewhat of a stepping stone to the IAAI-CFI. If you visit the International Website at www.firearson.com and click on the Professional Credentialing tab, you will be taken to the two certifications offered. The IAAI-FIT program is designed to verify an applicant's fundamental knowledge as measured against core job performance requirements of established professional qualification standards for fire investigators defined in NFPA 1021, NFPA 1033, and NFPA 1037. The applicant must provide documentation of meeting minimum requirements including experience, training, and education. Upon approval they must successfully pass a comprehensive examination. There are a couple of "Tracks" that you can follow to meet the minimum requirements in order to test.

So, a couple of weeks ago, I figured I would give it a try. First, I chose which "Track" to follow. Since I took the Iowa SFM Arson Investigator School (just a short 11 years ago), all I needed was about 7 hours of training using the www.CFITrainer.net. This was all web based and very easy to complete when I had some time. Once I completed those modules, I printed off the application from the web, filled it out and verified my experience and work. After that, I mailed it in. Within a week, I got my approval to test. The IAAI-FIT test is on-line unlike the IAAI-CFI, which must be done in person with a proctor. The test was 50 questions. You get your score and results as soon as you finish the test. So, now I am "FIT". So, if you are interested in getting certified, but maybe don't qualify for the IAAI-CFI yet, check out the IAAI-FIT certification. It just might fit you!



**Don't Forget to Enter the
2011 IOWA CHAPTER IAAI
FIRE PHOTO CONTEST**

First and second prizes will be awarded
in each of two categories:

Best Photo Representing an Arson Origin
and

Best Photo Representing an Accidental Origin.

Photos will be judged on content, technique, and composition. First prize will be \$25 and the second place winner will receive an IAAI T-shirt.

In addition to first and second place awards, winners' names will appear in the *FireFax*.

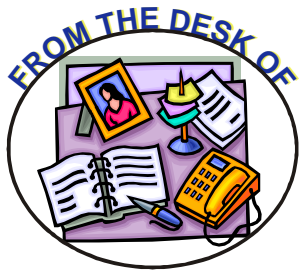
Photos will be displayed at the Annual Seminar
September 20 – 23, 2011.

**Find Complete rules for the contest
on our website iowaiaaichapter.org and look at
FIREFAX Newsletter
August 2010, Vol 23, Issue 3**



Send photos to:

**Becky Nelson, Iowa Chapter IAAI Inc.,
PO Box 177, Malcom, IA 50157**



Tony Collins
DIRECTOR AT LARGE/WEST
tcollins@cityofclive.com



Once the annual seminar is over, and everyone goes back to their respective jurisdictions, it quickly becomes business as usual for all of us. Our expertise, as it is, is only put to use when we least expect it. And maintaining a certain level of expertise in the science of fire investigation, we need all the practice, and help, we can get. And for many, the annual Iowa Chapter IAAI Educational Conference might be as good as it gets so you can go out and apply what you have learned lately.

In October 2010, Clive Fire Department hosted a rare opportunity to local fire investigators. An older home was donated to the department for the usual training purposes. As we all know, those opportunities typically end up limited to the area of fire attack, fire suppression, and fire behavior. And they typically only involve various drills that only include hoses, ladders, equipment and tactics. But how often do you see fire investigation as a part of these abandoned home exercises by fire departments statewide? Not a lot I'm guessing. So our approach with this house was a bit different, in that we "pre-burned" four different scenarios the day before the training, with all four scenarios being "set" fires with specific elements to be evaluated. Each scenario was approached as a team, with each participant filling various roles; photographer, scribe, interviewer and of course, the trusty old app – the iDig. (Yes there's an app for that!)

In the Des Moines area, our group is called "MAFIT" (Metro Area Fire Investigator Task Force). This group of investigators is formed of multiple agencies that have committed to respond upon request by any other participating agency on larger and/or more challenging fires. The more we utilize each other, the better the investigations go. And if anything came from this exercise beside the training practice, which was modeled after the Fire Service Training Bureau's annual two week school, was the NEED. There just

aren't that many opportunities for investigative training beyond "lunch n learns", post-fire critiques, and annual seminars, none of which typically include actual digging and focused photography (pardon the play). Its great practice under no stress conditions, and the hours put in can count as credit for those working toward their CFI if planned correctly. After investigation exercises are accomplished, the house is then turned back over to suppression for the usual live fire training drills. It's a win-win for everybody.

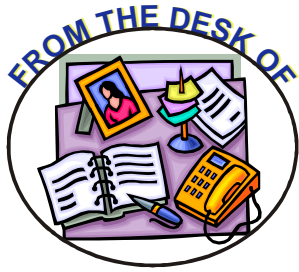
We would encourage all departments statewide to think about taking this approach the next time a house is donated for training, and invite your area investigators for a valuable experience before that first due engine arrives and evidence is lost. We dig this idea!



MAFIT member Al Abbott of Ankeny Fire Department inspects an area of origin in a simulated arson fire.



MAFIT members L to R: Jason Ferguson (Altoona Police Department), Terry Brauch (Clive Police Department), Pat Daly (Clive Fire Department), Al Abbott (Ankeny Fire Department), Tony Collins (Clive Fire Department), and Jess Dunn (Grimes Fire Department).



Greg Siembieda
DIRECTOR OF
INVESTIGATIONS



Recently I had to investigate a large fire in an apartment building. This fire happened shortly after 3:00 pm as some people were beginning to arrive home from work and others were preparing to leave for work. In other words, there was a lot of activity in the parking lot of the complex. With the help of MAFIT and witnesses, I was able to conclude the cause of the fire, improperly discarded smoking material.

Initial reports of heavy smoke and fire triggered a second and eventually a third alarm. The first trucks to arrive were faced with tenants stating where the fire started, with some saying it was on the third floor deck and others saying it started inside and was on the second floor. As we prepared to enter the structure to perform a rapid search of the second floor I noticed several people photographing the fire. This is not uncommon but with all the conflicting views of where this fire started I figured it would work to my advantage to see some of these pictures.

After suppression operations were completed I was reassigned to investigate. I was faced with the overwhelming thought of having to interview all the witnesses and tenants of the building. It was instantly clear I needed to activate the Metro Area Fire Investigation Task Force (MAFIT).

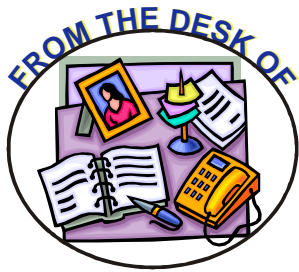
For those of you that have not heard of MAFIT, it is a diverse group of individuals that all work together to investigate and solve fires in the Des Moines metro area. MAFIT consists of Fire Investigators, Police Detectives, State Fire Marshals Office, ATF Agents, Attorneys, State Insurance Fraud Bureau, and many others making this group effective. A MAFIT call for assistance will bring whatever resources you need to assist you in gathering information, evidence or completing interviews with witnesses or persons of interest. With all of this knowledge and experience it is possible to put together all the components of investigation in short order.

This system works very well because all the members involved are dedicated to assisting each other and sharing information that might be valuable to another department. Monthly meetings and training evolutions ensure that everyone is current on anything that might be of interest to the task force.

Within a few minutes I had ten investigators ready to assist me with all the interviews that needed to happen. During these interviews, we were able to identify a couple of those that were photographing the fire. We also obtained information from several people that aided us in pinpointing the initial location of the fire when first discovered. Armed with this information we focused on a second floor deck. We interviewed the tenants of that apartment. The timeline of their day revealed a couple of important pieces of information. First, these two young men were smokers that consumed a minimum of one pack of cigarettes per day each. Second, it was less than an hour before the fire was discovered that one of the young men emptied his ash tray into a plastic bucket on the deck of their apartment.

Improperly discarded smoking material has become a real concern in our communities. Some of our largest fires in my recent memory have been the result of smoking material not properly extinguished and disposed of. Combined with the growing number of multiple family dwellings and the growing population of these complexes this is a major concern for fire departments across the state. The owner of this particular apartment complex lost another building in the complex a few years ago, also to smoking material not being properly discarded. He is now considering making this entire complex smoke free. This might be a little drastic but his losses are strictly property now but he is concerned that the next time may result in loss of life.

While groups like MAFIT and IAAI are tremendous resources within our profession, the issue now becomes how we can all work together to educate Iowans on causes of fires in order to prevent similar events from happening. Working together with our Public Education personnel is the key to the results we are looking for. No one seems to believe an event like this will happen to them, but through increased education we can and will make a difference. I welcome your ideas and dialogue on how we can develop better education as a result of our investigations.



**Sean O'Brien
DIRECTOR OF
PROSECUTION**



NATB managed vehicle theft investigations and developed vehicle theft databases for use by the insurance industry, and it dates back to the early 20th century. The ICPI investigated insurance fraud, and it existed for approximately 20 years prior to the merger. The NICB's current membership includes more than 1,000 commercial and personal line property/casualty insurers, self-insured organizations, rental car companies, parking services providers, and transportation-related firms. A staff of over 300 employees provides services to the member companies.

The NICB aims to prevent and combat insurance fraud and crime through data analytics, investigations, training, legislative advocacy and public awareness. Its investigative efforts focus on multi-claim, multi-carrier investigations of major criminal activity, but it nevertheless can be a valuable tool in the toolbox of a fire investigator. Understanding national trends and large scale fraud can sometime help one to uncover a motive in a seemingly isolated claim. The NICB also administers "The Insurance Crime Training for Law Enforcement" Web-based training resource. You can learn more about the NICB by visiting its web site at www.nicb.org.

If you heard a recent report in the media on the trend of fraudulent insurance claims, the chances are likely that the information came from the National Insurance Crime Bureau, or "NICB." Headquartered in Des Plaines, Illinois, the NICB is a not-for-profit organization that receives support from approximately 1,000 property/casualty insurance companies. The NICB works together with insurers and law enforcement agencies to facilitate the identification, detection and prosecution of insurance criminals.

The NICB originated in 1992 from a merger between the National Automobile Theft Bureau (NATB) and the Insurance Crime Prevention Institute (ICPI). The

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ARSON INVESTIGATORS IOWA CHAPTER

MINUTES

February 3, 2011

I) Call to Order

The monthly meeting of Officers and Directors of the Iowa Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators was called to order at 10:00 AM at the Iowa DCI Laboratory, Ankeny, Iowa.

II) Roll Call

Roll call of Officers and Directors:

- Chris Van Vleet – President – Present
- Jess Dunn – 1st Vice President – Present
- Mark Crooks – 2nd Vice President – (Via Telephone Conference)
- Becky Nelson – Secretary/Treasurer – Present

- Greg Siembieda – Director of Investigation – Present
- Zach Spykerman – Director of Insurance – Present
- Sean O'Brien – Director of Prosecution – Present
- John Grier – Director of Detection – Present
- Tony Collins – Director at Large, West – Excused
- Andrew Burken – Director at Large, East – Excused
- Dennis Chapman – Past President – Present

III) Secretary/Treasurers Report

- a. Motion by 2nd Vice President Crooks, second by 1st Vice President Dunn, for the minutes from the minutes from the January 7, 2011 meeting to stand. Motion unanimous.
- b. Checking balance \$19,164.07
 1. CD – \$3,040.10 matures 5-9-11
 2. CD – \$3,578.68 matures 5-11-11
 3. CD – \$7,594.43 matures 1-29-12
 4. CD – \$1,409.68 matures 1-28-12
- c. Discussion on adding second person to help with checking should secretary/treasurer be absent – review of By-Laws needs to be made as they now state under Section 6:
 1. He/she shall be custodian and depositor of the funds of the organization and shall disburse such funds by check as authorized by the Board of Directors for purposes which promote the welfare and objectives of the organization.
- d. Discussion on expense of mailing out membership cards. Board decided to make membership cards available to be picked up at the AGM, however due to postage expenses they will not be mailed.
- e. Secretary/Treasurer Nelson will send out the 2010 revised Bylaws to the Officers and Board and they will be made available on the website.

IV) Officers/Board Reports

- a. 1st V.P. Dunn – No report.
- b. 2nd V.P. Crooks
 1. Will work with Secretary/Treasurer Nelson to attempt to get articles for a Firefax.
 2. Teaching two – one hour classes for the Criminal Justice Class at the SE Community College on March 25th and 28, 2011.
 3. Working on a Lunch and Learn with Director at Large, East Burken.
- c. Director of Insurance Spykerman
 1. Spoke with an independent firm on possibly working in the future to do

the Chapter's tax returns. Discussion held – Secretary/Treasurer Nelson will continue to work with Seth from Bradshaw Law Firm to do 2010 taxes and will follow up with Lori Heglund to see if she will do a complete audit of the financial books.

- d. Director of Investigation Siembieda
 1. Confirmed speaker from DEA for the seminar.

V) Committee Reports

- a. Audit – As discussed above.
- b. CFI
 1. Member John Nordyke is taking the CFI test.
- c. Communications
 1. 2nd V.P. Crooks will work with webmaster about adding a password protected membership page to the website. This would allow the members to update their current information.
 2. New form maybe added to website, which is a Fire Scene Release form.
- d. Scholarships
 1. Director Grier reported he's received one scholarship.
 2. Will get the revised scholarship to the website.
- e. Nomination
 1. President
 2. 1st Vice President
 3. 2nd Vice Present
- f. Training
 1. Director of Insurance Spykerman is working on the Expert Witness Class. More information to follow.
- g. 2011 Seminar
 1. 1st Vice President Dunn has the 2011 Seminar set up.
 2. Change shirt day to Jersey Shirt day instead of Hawaiian shirt.
 3. Director Spykerman will work on new items for the candy store.
 4. Discussion on purchasing give aways. Motion by Director Grier for

President Van Vleet to go and purchase give aways. 2nd by Secretary/Treasurer Nelson. Motion unanimous.

h. 2012 Seminar

1. 2nd V.P. Crooks is working on it – still has time slots open.
2. Discussion had previously been held on combining 2012 Seminar with Hawkeye. They have decided they are not interested in a joint seminar.
3. Hotel contract will be signed with changes to the attrition clause – as per Past President Clark.

VI) New Business

- a. Fire Investigation Task Force would like Chapter to help with MAFIT concept with LIEN. Discussion held – will be tabled till next meeting.

VII) For the Good of the Chapter

- a. Discussion held on officers and board members paying seminar registration.
 1. Executive order for the 2011 seminar: Officers and Directors do not pay 2011 seminar registration. This will be an item on the agenda for the 2011 AGM for future years. In lieu of time being expended and organizational time being donated as the officers and directors are expected to attend meetings the organization will not charge for their seminar registration as a way of showing appreciation to their employers.
- b. Cedar Rapids Marriott is courting the Chapter. Will have Past President Clark look into this to see if they want to make a proposal.

VIII) Adjournment

- a. Next meeting will be held March 4, 2011, at 10:00 AM the DCI Lab in Ankeny.
- b. Motion by Director Siembieda, second by Director Spykerman to adjourn at 12:13 PM. Motion unanimous.

Becky J. Nelson
Secretary/Treasurer
Iowa Chapter IAAI Inc.

March 13, 2011 Daylight Savings Time
Change your smoke detector batteries
A smoke alarm could mean the difference
between life and death!

BURLINGTON COAT FACTORY RECALLS SLOW COOKERS DUE TO FIRE HAZARD

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. It is illegal to resell or attempt to resell a recalled consumer product.

Name of Product: Slow Cooker

Units: About 7,460

Retailer: Burlington Coat Factory, of Burlington, N.J.

Importer/Distributor: Lehrhoff ABL, of Carlstadt, N.J.

Hazard: The slow cooker's control panel can overheat and melt, posing a fire hazard.

Incidents/Injuries: The manufacturer has received 60 reports of the control panels smoking, melting and sparking, and three reports of panels catching fire. Fourteen incidents resulted in minor damage to countertops. No injuries have been reported.

Description: This recall involves Bella Kitchen 5-quart programmable slow cookers. The slow cookers are black with "Bella Kitchen" printed on the control panel. Only slow cookers with model number WJ-5000DE and date codes 0907 or 0909 are included in this recall. The model number and the four-digit date code are printed on a label on the underside of the product.

Sold at: Burlington Coat Factory stores from June 2010 through December 2010 for \$20.

Manufactured in: China

Remedy: Consumers should stop using the slow cooker immediately, unplug it and return the slow cooker to Burlington Coat Factory for a full refund or store credit.

Consumer Contact: For additional information, contact Burlington Coat Factory toll-free at (888) 223-2628 between 8:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. ET Monday through Friday or visit the firm's website at <http://www.burlingtoncoatfactory.com>

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the IAAI or the Iowa Chapter IAAI.

Please, if you have any suggestions for improvements or changes to the newsletter send me an e-mail at: bnelson@gmrc.com.

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