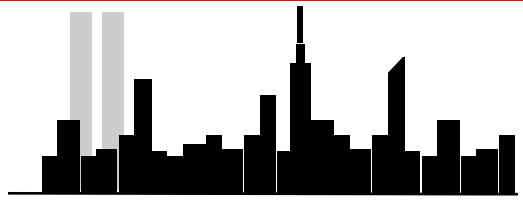


AUGUST 2009

VIEW
P O I N T

9 metro Tech
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NYC FIRE DEPARTMENT



CHANGES AT THE TOP

Five Staff Chiefs Promoted, Including Chief of Operations



Five staff chiefs were promoted in a ceremony at FDNY Headquarters.

Five staff chiefs were promoted on July 30 during a boisterous ceremony at FDNY Headquarters.

Dozens of family members and friends watched as Chief Robert Sweeney was promoted to the position of Chief of Operations, Chief James Manahan was promoted to Assistant Chief of Operations, and three members were promoted

to the rank of Deputy Assistant Chief, including William Seelig for SOC, Joseph Woznica for Fire Prevention and Robert Boyce for Personnel.

“This is a big day for promotions and a big day for the Department,” said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta. “You all have very big shoes to fill.”

He said the promoted members, who represent more than 140 years of experience, were each critical in rebuilding the Department after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

“These five officers will continue to move the Department forward,” said Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano. “You each have an unparalleled dedication to the job and to keeping New Yorkers safe.”

Chief Sweeney, a 29-year veteran of the FDNY, also served as a commanding officer in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.



Chief Robert Sweeney was promoted to Chief of Operations.

Among those attending the ceremony was the outgoing Chief of Operations Patrick McNally, who is retiring after 32 years of service.



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Increasing Diversity through Recruitment

Since becoming Fire Commissioner, I have recognized diversity as a critical issue for the Department. Minorities are historically underrepresented in fire departments across the country and that injustice must be addressed. We owe it to our communities to devote time and attention to making sure everyone is represented.

Yet the policies and practices used in the past to promote workplace diversity have long been in need of change. The Supreme Court affirmed that recently when it found in favor of a group white firefighters from New Haven who claimed reverse discrimination after the city tossed out results of a promotional exam because it did not advance any black firefighters.

Sacrificing one group at the expense of another does not create a positive work environment for anyone. It certainly is not fair to bring in minority firefighters under a cloud of resentment after standards have been changed. Those tasked with walking into burning buildings must have the mutual respect and trust of their fellow firefighters. Lives depend on it.

The Vulcan Society sued the Department after investigations of the 1999 and 2002 firefighter exams by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and U.S. Department of Justice, alleging that the differences in pass rates between minorities and whites was statistically significant.

The court recently ruled that firefighters exams given by Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) in 1999 and 2002 did have a disparate impact on minorities. That case will go on for some time as the judge considers a remedy and the City considers an appeal, but, more importantly, we are clearly moving in the right direction to increase the number of minority firefighters without resorting to court-mandated quotas.

In 2002, 21 percent of those who passed the firefighter entrance exam were minorities. In 2006, we increased it to 38 percent. As a result, last December we graduated the most diverse class of new firefighters in FDNY history – 35 percent. And 32 percent of the top 4,000 candidates on the current list are minorities.

These results, achieved through an emphasis on recruitment, took time and money. We started in 2006 armed with a \$2 million budget supported by Mayor Bloomberg, and made more than 2,600 presentations in minority communities. The job of being an FDNY firefighter – the pay, the benefits, the schedule and the public admiration – truly sells itself, once you get the information out.

We created a database of young people interested in the job and we followed up with thousands of phone calls, urging them to take the test. Children of firefighters don't need that encouragement – they already get it at home – but we wanted to give everyone the same motivation.

We offered extensive free tutoring so all test-takers could get the same help available to those who already had family members in a firehouse. I personally recorded an automated phone message that went out to 18,000 city residents, reminding them about the tutoring. A second automated reminder call was made two days before the test.

Our goal was as simple as making sure everyone who wanted the job had the same opportunity to get it. We made certain that no one had preferential treatment and no one was hired for any reason other than their ability.

In the end, 41 percent of the test-takers were minorities, as were 38 percent of those who passed and 35 percent who graduated in our last firefighter class. Everyone earned their place. We are encouraged by these results, and will work hard to achieve greater diversity.

What we did can work at any fire department. Firefighters aren't simply city employees, they're real-life role models. We need to make certain that people in communities all across New York City – and the nation – see themselves in us, and us in them.



Commissioner's
Message

Pinnacle of Safety

Secretary of Homeland Security Visits Manhattan Firehouse

Firefighters from Engine 39 and Ladder 16 greeted Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano when she stopped by their Upper East Side firehouse on July 29.

The members did a roll call and gave Secretary Napolitano a tour of their 9/11 memorial wall.

She asked the firefighters their motivations for joining the Department and how they saw the FDNY change after the attacks of Sept. 11.

“Thank you for what you do every day and congratulations for being a member of this fine department,” she said. “I’m very impressed with you all.”

The firefighters gave her a firehouse t-shirt and baseball cap as a token of thanks for her visit.

“I will wear them with pride,” she said.



Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano with the members of Engine 39 and Ladder 16.

A Gift that Defied Gravity

Astronaut Gives Flag Flown in Space to the Fire Museum

It has orbited the earth 197 times and traveled 5.3 million miles, all in honor of the 343 FDNY members who died on Sept. 11, 2001.

Astronaut Michael J. Massimino presented a flag flown on NASA Space Shuttle Atlantis to Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano and NYC Fire Museum President of the Board of Trustees John Bower on July 30.

“I have such respect for what [members of the FDNY] do every day,” Dr. Massimino said during the presentation at the museum in Manhattan. “I can’t express how meaningful it is to be here, and this is just a small token of our appreciation.”

The flag was onboard the Space Shuttle Atlantis for two weeks as Dr. Massimino and seven other astronauts traveled to fix the Hubble Space Telescope in May 2009.

“This is deeply appreciated by all of



Astronaut Michael J. Massimino (center) presents NYC Fire Museum President of the Board of Trustees John Bower (right) and Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano with a flag and a NASA patch that was flown on the Space Shuttle Atlantis in honor of the 343 members of the FDNY who were killed on Sept. 11, 2001.

us,” said Chief Cassano. “You are a true member of the FDNY.”

Mr. Bower added, “[Dr. Massimino] is truly a brave and heroic man.”

Dr. Massimino’s father was a chief inspector for the FDNY’s Bureau of Fire Prevention. He said he went on his first mission to space just months after 9/11 and his team brought with them patches, flags and a poster honoring the 343 members in honor of their bravery.

“It’s not trivial what you decide to take with you and who you decide to give it to,” he said.

On this mission he also brought home plate from Shea Stadium, Galileo’s telescope and a large flag that he plans to donate to the City in honor of all those lost on Sept. 11.

He also showed the group the FDNY baseball cap he wore throughout the mission.

He showed the group photos from his expedition and explained how he and the other astronauts were able to repair the Hubble Space Telescope and improve it, so it can take better photos in the future.

As a token of appreciation, Chief Cassano presented the astronaut with an FDNY sweatshirt with his name and 343 embroidered on it.

“This is awesome,” he said. “I will wear it with pride.”

Decades After Tragedy, Lives Remembered

FDNY Members Commemorate 31st Anniversary of Tragic Waldbaum's Fire

It has been 31 years since a fire at a Waldbaum's supermarket in Brooklyn took the lives of six firefighters and injured dozens of others, yet friends and family of those lost have never forgotten the tragedy.

Numerous active and retired firefighters filled St. Brendan's Roman Catholic Church in Gravesend, Brooklyn, on Aug. 2 to remember the fallen during the annual memorial service.

"Those were good men and I'll never forget them," said retired Firefighter Donald King of Ladder 156.

The fire began on Aug. 2, 1978, in a hallway near the compressor room as crews were renovating the Brooklyn supermarket, and quickly escalated to a fourth-alarm. Less than an hour after the fire was first reported, two dozen firefighters were on the roof when the central portion gave way, plunging half of the men into the flames.

Firefighter King was one of the 12 firefighters who fell through the roof that morning.

He remembered hearing a cracking sound just before the roof gave way. After falling, he said he thinks he was unconscious for short time, but when he awakened, he remembered hearing the screams of other firefighters. He threw his weight against the debris that trapped him and he was able to escape with a dislocated elbow and multiple burns.

Six firefighters were killed in the blaze, including Lt. James E. Cutillo, Battalion 33; Firefighter Charles S. Bouton, Ladder 156; Firefighter Harold F. Hastings, Battalion 42; Firefighter James P. McManus, Ladder 153; Probationary Firefighter William O'Connor, Ladder 156; and Firefighter George S. Rice, Ladder 153.

Remembering back to that terrible day, Firefighter King said, "It just never should have happened. So I come [to the memorial service] for the families here."

One of the many family members attending the service was Louise O'Connor, who was at the Waldbaum's fire with



(Above) Active and retired firefighters fill the pews at St. Brendan's Roman Catholic Church in Brooklyn for a service honoring the 31st anniversary of the Waldbaum's fire, which killed six firefighters. (Right) Fire apparatus lined up outside St. Brendan's Church.

her three small children when her husband, Probationary Firefighter O'Connor, lost his life.

"He was a good father and loved the FDNY – when he got on the job he said 'what else do I need in life?'" she said about her husband, who had only been out of the Academy and stationed at Ladder 156 since May 1978.

She and the kids were picking up her husband after his tour at the firehouse when the call came in and they went to the fire to see Firefighter O'Connor work. Recalling the horrible day, she said she sensed something bad was going to happen and called her father-in-law, who rushed to the scene and arrived in the aftermath of the tragedy, with shaving cream still on his face.

Looking around at the firefighters attending the memorial service, many in dress uniform and others in bunker gear, she added, "These new guys don't remember, or were too young to know, what happened that day, so it's overwhelming to see them all here."

Others attending the service included retired firefighters, some of whom



worked at the fire and others who were close friends with those who perished.

Retired Firefighters Gene Bruno and Danny Prince did not respond to the fire but were members of Ladder 156 at the time.

"We come back every year for the families and the firefighters who were there," said Firefighter Prince. "And it's important for the new guys to see that we never forget."

Firefighter Bruno nodded, adding, "The camaraderie is here, and if you come back 15 years from now, you'll see the same thing. The Fire Department is a family and a half."

Honor through Education

Eight Members of Fire Service Receive Thomas Brick Scholarships

A ceremony at FDNY Headquarters on July 9 memorialized Firefighter Thomas Brick in two ways – with the presentation of eight college scholarships to FDNY members and the dedication of training equipment in his honor.

Firefighter Brick from Ladder 36 made the Supreme Sacrifice on Dec. 16, 2003, while operating at a four-alarm fire in upper Manhattan.

“I can’t think of a better way to remember Tom Brick than through education and training,” Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta said as he stood with Firefighter Brick’s parents, Thomas and Margaret.

This is the sixth year financier Salvatore Bommarito and his family have funded scholarships honoring Firefighter Brick. They donated \$20,000 for this year’s scholarships, and over the past six years, they have contributed \$114,500 to the program.

This year’s recipients included Captains Paul Conrad of Division 6, Michael Hubert from Division 11 and John Mack of Engine 68; Lt. Anthony Pasquin of Battalion 12; SFM Vincent Palmieri from the Brooklyn Base; and Firefighters Robert Knabbe from Rescue 3, Robert Lagnese from Squad 270 and Christopher LeBarron of Ladder 46.

“I sincerely hope all our recipients will go on to accomplish great things in the Department,” Mr. Bommarito said. “It



Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta, Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano, Thomas and Margaret Brick (fifth and sixth from the left) and Salvatore Bommarito (fifth from the right) join the eight 2009 Thomas Brick Scholarship winners.

would be a worthwhile reward for our family.”

Capt. Mack, who started his FDNY career at Engine 95/Ladder 36 and grew up in the same neighborhood as Firefighter Brick, said the scholarship will help fund his study of fire science at John Jay College.

“This is greatly, greatly appreciated,” he said, noting he is 18 credits shy of graduating.

Firefighter Lagnese, who is a year away from graduating from Empire State College with a degree in fire administration added: “It’s nice that people recognize the sacrifice [Firefighter Brick] made and are generous

enough to help members of the FDNY in his name.”

The ceremony also served as a way for the FDNY and members of Engine 95/Ladder 36 to thank donors – including Jenifer DeLuca, Michele De Maria and Denise Sculco – who contributed nearly \$6,500 for the purchase of specialized confined space training equipment at the Fire Academy.

A plaque, which will be hung at the Rescue School, was dedicated at the event.

“I can think of no greater gift to the FDNY than training equipment, which will save firefighter lives for years to come,” said Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano.

Honor and Remembrance

Staten Island Firehouse Receives Grant Honoring Lt. Robert Ryan

The firehouse Lt. Robert Ryan called home – Engine 155 and Ladder 78 on Staten Island – received a \$8,600 grant from Kornreich-NIA and the Fireman’s Fund Insurance Company on June 18, to use for the purchase of training and physical fitness equipment.

“We are most appreciative of this generous donation,” said Capt. Steven Gentiluomo of Ladder 78. “This will benefit the long-term health and safety of the firehouse.”

Funds from the grant will be used to purchase a fog machine that simulates smoke conditions in a fire and a landing

mat for ropes training, as well as various exercise equipment, such as a ver-saclimber and rowing machine.

Members of Engine 155 and Ladder 78 were chosen as recipients of the grant in honor of Lt. Robert Ryan, who was killed in the line of duty on Nov. 23, 2008.

“This is all about giving back,” said Steve Parnes, Executive Vice President of Kornreich-NIA. “After hearing the story of Lt. Ryan, we knew we had to give the funds to this company.”

This is the second grant by Kornreich-NIA to the FDNY.

The grant package is part of a nationwide program called Fireman’s Fund Her-

itage®, which is funded by Fireman’s Fund Insurance Company. The program is designed to provide needed equipment, training and educational tools to local fire departments.

Since 2004, Fireman’s Fund has issued grants to hundreds of different departments totaling more than \$22 million, including more than \$315,000 to the FDNY.

“This is all about saving lives,” said Terry McCormick, Fireman’s Fund Relationship Manager. “If we can prevent an injury or death with these grants, then they are worthwhile.”

Explosive Responsibilities

FDNY Blasting Unit Oversees the Macy's Fourth of July Fireworks

Although Independence Day is a treasured holiday for many New Yorkers, it's considered one of the busiest days of the year for the FDNY's Blasting Unit.

They oversee the six barges used for the Macy's Fourth of July Fireworks display, each loaded with 6,000 to 7,000 fireworks shells and rockets.

On the barge, clusters of fireworks are divided into rows of steel racks, which Blasting Unit's Chief Inspector Jim Lauer said ensures that if one explodes erroneously, the entire barge will not be jeopardized.

Each firework also is wired to a computer called a firing board that controls the show. These computers are located at the end of the barge in a safety container, which is a trailer-sized box that serves as a protective shell for the workers. They used this computer system on July 1 also to test each shell and ensure they would fire without a hitch during the show.

On July 4, six tugboats pull the barges to their locations on the Hudson River between 23rd and 50th streets.

Then, as millions gather to watch the spectacular display, members of the blasting unit take their places. Two or three members are stationed on each barge. One acts as the crew chief and sits in the safety container, while the other watches the explosions to ensure flares and embers are not hitting another barge.

Another member of the unit is stationed in the tugboat wheel house, ensuring the barges remain 1,000 feet apart and the same distance from shore. And other blasting inspectors are in the command posts, located on 27th Street and at the Intrepid overseeing the entire operation.

Among those working the event this year are Chief Inspector Lauer; Deputy Chief Inspectors L. McCassling, N. Criscuolo, C. Holzinger, M. Reardon, J. Cruz, F. Benjamin and D. Franco; Supervising Inspectors V. Singh, L. Romero, A. Dushynsky, N. Alexander, M. Fredericks, A. Ayala, I. DeLeon, D. Chalmers, D. Connors, L. Gorbach, O. Horton, P. Pulisciano and D. Crescenzo; and Inspectors M. Rivera, R. Reynolds, W. Burt and F. Prokipchuk.



(Top) Members of the FDNY's Blasting Unit. (L to R) Chief Inspector Jim Lauer, Deputy Chief Inspector Chuck Holzinger, Supervising Inspector Luis Romero and Supervising Inspector Andrew Dushynsky. (Bottom) Macy's 33rd annual pyrotechnic show on July 4 was set on the Hudson River in honor of the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's historic voyage on the great waterway.

Heroes Honor Heroes

FDNY Appreciation Day at the USS Intrepid

Hundreds of Department members and their families gathered at Manhattan's Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum on July 18 and 19 for FDNY Appreciation Weekend.

The weekend included the annual Blessing of the Marine Fleet, a Battle of the Boroughs Cook Off, tours of the apparatus, as well as demonstrations of the life-saving techniques FDNY members perform each day, including CPR, vehicle extrications and tower-ladder rescues.

8th Annual Blessing of the Marine Fleet

The FDNY's seven fireboats processed past the USS Intrepid during the 8th Annual Blessing of the Marine Fleet on July 18.

From the flight deck of the aircraft carrier, some six-stories above the water's surface, FDNY Chaplains Monsignor John Delendick and Reverend Stephen Harding blessed the vessels as the crews saluted.

The ceremony ended with a water display on the Hudson River.

"Members of the FDNY's Marine Division serve with bravery, honor and dedication," said Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano, who said members rescued someone from a kayak just before the ceremony began. "And I can't imagine a better place to bless the fleet of the FDNY than from the flight deck of the USS Intrepid."

He noted that just yards away, members of the Marine Division helped rescue the victims of US Airways Flight 1549 in January – known to many as the Miracle on the Hudson.

They also responded to the fire on the Throgs Neck Bridge on July 10.



(Top) FDNY Chaplains Monsignor John Delendick and Reverend Stephen Harding bless the FDNY's Marine Fleet from atop the flight deck of the USS Intrepid. (Bottom) The team from Engine 7/Ladder 1 in Tribeca won first place in the Cook Off challenge.

In 2008 the Marine Unit was called to more than 1,400 emergencies. It is charged with protecting New York City's 560 miles of waterfront, as well as its millions of residents and visitors.

Battle of the Boroughs Cook Off

Seven teams battled to be named the best of the FDNY cooks during the Battle of the Boroughs Cook Off on July 19.

Teams of fire and EMS members from the five boroughs prepared an appetizer and main course on a grill for a five judges – Michael Proietti from the reality competition the Next Food Network Star;

Michael Hallahan, President of the Former Crew Members' Association; FF Keith Young from Ladder 158; FF Danny Prince from Ladder 156; and FF Fred Ancona from Ladder 132.

The appetizers included grilled vegetable quesadillas, barbequed shrimp and chicken kabobs and grilled cheese with tomato. Main dishes ranged from barbequed skirt steak with garlic and tossed summer greens to Stop, Drop and Roll chicken.

The judges asked the cooks questions as they presented their dishes and took notes in between bites, saying the competition was tough.

First place went to the team from Engine 7/Ladder 1 in Manhattan, second place to Engine 95/Ladder 36 in Manhattan and third to Engine 157/Ladder 80 on Staten Island.

Winning teams took home cooking tools donated by the Food Network and cooking stations provided by Anheuser Busch. All teams got to keep the grills from Weber.

Teams included:

Engine 157/Ladder 80: FF Kevin Brennan and FF Aaron Clark

Engine 7/Ladder 1: FF Billy Benitez and FF Jesse Klipp

Engine 95/Ladder 36: FF Steven Brunner and FF John McGinty

Engine 246/Ladder 169: FF Jeffrey Scotto and Ethan Lahey

Engine 79/Ladder 37: FF Peter Acton
Engine 90/Ladder 4: FF Matthew DeRose

EMS Station 39: Lt. Michael Palleschi and Paramedic Juan Lebron

New Career, Bright Future

75 Graduate EMS Academy

Every seat in the auditorium at the Fire Academy was filled with cheering family and friends as 75 new emergency medical technicians (EMTs) walked across the stage to accept their diplomas on July 21.

“It takes a special person to be an EMT,” said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta. “This is not an easy profession, you deal with tragedy and stress every day of the week, but it is a rewarding profession. There is honor in what you do.”

EMTs Alexander Kuc and Daniel Mitchell were named class valedictorians.

The diverse graduates speak eight languages, ranging from Creole to Sinhala. One of the new members, EMT William Hunt, is an eight-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.

“Your efforts make a difference to everyone you encounter, no matter how big or small the emergency,” said Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano.

Last year the members of the FDNY’s EMS Command responded to more than 1.2 million calls with an average response time of 6 minutes, 38 seconds.

“You have chosen a noble profession in an organization with a profound histo-



The 75 new EMTs salute during their graduation ceremony.

ry of heroism and greatness in fulfilling its mission,” said Chief of EMS John Peruggia.

One of the happy graduates, EMT Netta Bedassie, said she has always been interested in the medical profession and

joined the Command after her husband suggested the idea.

As her classmates hugged and congratulated one another following the ceremony, she said, “I’m excited to start, this feels wonderful.”

Up the Ranks

40 Members of Fire Service Promoted

As hundreds of firefighters, family and friends filled the auditorium at the Fire Academy, 10 new captains and 30 new lieutenants walked across the stage to accept their promotions on July 1.

“Every emergency you have responded to has brought you to this moment,” said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta. “This is a milestone in your careers and a turning point in your fire department lives.”

The 40 members represent more than 500 years of experience with the FDNY.

“Those banners hanging from the rafters say it all – we support each other in

good times and bad, in and out of the firehouse,” said Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano.

Among the promoted members was Capt. George Polito from Engine 321, who said although the day was exciting, “it’s also bitter-sweet, having to leave a great house. But this is a big accomplishment and I’m very proud.”

The newly promoted fire lieutenants take the oath of office.



Man of the Year

Fire Commissioner Honored by FDNY Columbia Association

Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta was named the 2009 Man of the Year by the FDNY's Columbia Association on June 19 at the group's 75th Annual Scholarship Dinner Dance at Russo's on the Bay in Queens.

"I think I have been enormously lucky to work in public service," Commissioner Scoppetta said to the crowd of more than 400 well-wishers. "I have had a very fortunate and successful career."

Commissioner Scoppetta was appointed as New York City's 31st fire commissioner by Mayor Michael Bloomberg on Dec. 30, 2001.

He was born on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. After serving two years in the Army, he attended Bradley University on the G.I. Bill and graduated in 1958 with a degree in Engineering. He received his Juris Doctorate from Brooklyn Law School in 1962. While attending law school at night, he worked by day as an investigator for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Upon graduation from law school, he was appointed an Assistant District Attorney in New York County by District Attorney Frank S. Hogan. He has also served as Associate Counsel to the Knapp Commission, an Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and

as the Deputy Independent Counsel in the investigation and prosecution of a former Special Assistant to the President of the United States.

He also served as a Deputy Mayor, Commissioner of Investigation for the City of New York, Commissioner for the Administration for Children's Services and on the boards of numerous non-profit institutions.

"Nicholas Scoppetta has worked hard to fulfill the American dream," said Supervising Fire Marshal Buddy Santangelo, President of the Columbia Association. "He is someone who is dedicated to public service and deserves no less than our praise and heartfelt acknowledgment."

Commissioner Scoppetta thanked numerous members of the Department for their support during his nearly eight years as Fire Commissioner, including Chief Cassano, Chief of Operations Patrick McNally, his Executive Officer Capt. Thomas Kelly, staff chiefs and his Executive Assistant Margie Fermaint.

"As any firefighter will tell you, it's all about teamwork, and I couldn't have done it without them," Commissioner Scoppetta said.

The Commissioner, whose father was from Amalfi in Italy, was the 30th person to receive the honor. Other honorees have



Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta accepts the FDNY Columbia Association's Man of the Year award from Supervising Fire Marshal Buddy Santangelo (seated)

included Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano, Chief of EMS John Peruggia and former Mayor Rudy Guiliani.

He noted the event marked his 46th wedding anniversary to his wife, Susan.

The annual Dinner Dance also included the presentation of 11 scholarship awards for both college and high school study for the children of Association members. The year's Humanitarian Award was presented to Vincenzo Marra, Founder of ILICA.

A New Chapter

FDNY High School Graduation

With the Fire Academy as a colorful backdrop, 57 students from the FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety graduated on June 25.

"What you accomplished to get this far is a huge first step for you," said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta. "You are truly an example for the other kids at your school and your neighbors – they will look at you and say, 'I can do that too.'"

This is the second graduating class from the FDNY High School, which is part of the City's small schools initiative. Housed in Thomas Jefferson High School in East New York, Brooklyn, the school provides a rigorous academic program with a special emphasis on the academic, physical and moral rigors of emergency response.

"We, as a high school, are a launching pad, sending you to your future," said Prin-



Fifty-seven students graduated from the FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety on June 25.

cipal James Anderson. During his address, he also asked all students find their own purpose in life and give back to their communities.

FDNY High School Program Coordina-

tor Erick Green added, "You have made the school special."

Eighty percent of the graduates have been accepted to colleges and nine of the students are eligible to join the FDNY as EMTs this autumn.

"I feel proud of myself today, it's truly an honor," said class Valedictorian Odani Acevedo, who will be attending Lehman College.

The class Salutatorian was Tariq Witherpoon. He thanked his teachers, counselors, FDNY officials and his family, noting, "the FDNY was like a second family to me."

And as the students shared inside jokes, took photos and hugged their friends and family, Student Body President James Fernandez said: "Stay brave, stay strong, stay focused and stay ready for anything that comes your way."

To Catch a Thief

Fire Marshals Nab Two in Connection with Robbery, Fire at Brooklyn Target Store



Chief Fire Marshal Robert Byrnes explains the video showing Jared Devonish and Neftatarah Meyerdierks starting a fire at a Brooklyn Target store to distract employees as they stole eight flat-screen televisions.

FDNY fire marshals used video surveillance footage and some good detective work to capture a Brooklyn couple on June 12, charging them with setting a fire at a Brooklyn Target store to distract employees as they stole eight flat-screen televisions.

“This is a typical distraction fire, used to divert the attention of the public,” Chief Fire Marshal Robert Byrnes said during a press conference at FDNY Headquarters on June 17. “The fire marshals involved with this case did an excellent job with their investigation, leading to the arrest of these two individuals.”

Jared Devonish, 26, snuck into the stock room of a Target store on Gateway Drive at around 9:15 p.m. on June 11, a store from which he had recently been fired for chronic absences.

With the hood of a red sweatshirt pulled tightly over his head, he hid behind a few freezer units and waited for his girlfriend, Neftatarah Meyerdierks, 25, to arrive for her overnight cleaning and restocking shift at 11 p.m. When she arrived, she tossed him a bottle of water and strategically placed a flatbed cart in the stock area.

When the overnight crew of 56 people went on break at around 2 a.m., he loaded

eight flat-screen televisions onto the cart, rolled it to a back exit and started a fire in an aisle of paper towels to cause a distraction as he pushed the merchandise out the door.

What the couple may not have realized was that the entire incident was caught on surveillance video and FDNY fire marshals were able to identify Ms. Meyerdierks on the tape as a person of interest.

When they arrived at her home, they found Mr. Devonish and four of the eight televisions. Both individuals were placed under arrest transported to the NYPD’s 75th Precinct, where they confessed to the crime.

The televisions were worth approximately \$8,000, and damage caused by the fire is estimated to be several hundred thousand dollars.

Mr. Devonish is charged with arson in the second degree, grand larceny, burglary, criminal mischief, criminal possession of stolen property and criminal trespassing. Ms. Meyerdierks is charged first degree reckless endangerment, grand larceny, criminal mischief, criminal possession of stolen property and petty larceny.

The Kings County District Attorney’s office is prosecuting the case.

FDNY to Receive \$4 Million for Fire Marshals

By Catherine Regan

The New York City Fire Department will receive \$4 million for the hiring and retaining of 18 fire marshals.

This money is part of New York City’s \$29.1 million stimulus fund to support criminal justice.

By investigating arsons, accident fires and explosions, fire marshals are promoting public safety and criminal justice throughout the City.

Announced June 30 by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, members of Congress and City district attorneys, the stimulus fund will also go towards programs such as the NYPD, Child Advocacy Centers, and the Department of Correction, as well as many others.

Tribute to a Rescuer

Fire Lieutenant Receives Proclamation on Staten Island

According to Joan Cupo, Lt. Chris Kane from Ladder 153 has been an outstanding neighbor for the last decade. When she needed the help, he took out her garbage, shoveled her driveway ... and saved her life.

On July 29, 2008, Lt. Kane did CPR on Ms. Cupo after she collapsed outside her home, saving her life. To thank him for his assistance, Ms. Cupo arranged for the Lieutenant to receive a Proclamation from Staten Island Councilman Kenneth Mitchell on July 21.

"You want Chris as a neighbor," said Ms. Cupo at the Café Del Mondo on Staten Island. "If you need something, he's always there – whatever you need, he'll do it. If you know him, you just fall in love with him."

Ms. Cupo was returning home from a lunch at Café Del Mondo last July when she said she began feeling dizzy and her vision blurred.

When walked into her Westerleigh home, she said she was greeted by Florence Kane, the Lieutenant's wife, from their yard next door. Moments later, Ms. Cupo collapsed.

Lt. Kane remembered hearing his wife call for him.

"I could tell by the tone of her voice that it wasn't good," he said.

Ms. Cupo was laying under a table in her yard. He said he heard her exhale and then she stopped breathing. When he could not find a pulse, Ms. Kane called 9-1-1 and



Lt. Chris Kane receives a Proclamation from Staten Island Councilman Kenneth Mitchell for saving the life of his neighbor, Joan Cupo. (L to R) Christopher Kane, 12; Florence Kane; Ms. Cupo; William Kane, 6; Councilman Mitchell; Timothy Kane, 7; and Lt. Kane.

he began CPR.

After he did more than 20 chest compressions and two rescue breaths, he said, "I heard her strain and then take a deep breath. It was really emotional."

Moments later EMS members arrived and transported her to the hospital, where she was diagnosed with a heart condition.

He said the life-saving incident did not really register until Christmas-time, when Ms. Cupo delivered cookies and a card that read, "Thank you for saving my life."

Councilman Mitchell said he was honored to present Lt. Kane with a Proclamation acknowledging his service. He added, "This story illustrates how important it is for everyone to know CPR."

After receiving the framed Proclamation, Lt. Kane said, "This humbles me. I was just happy to help Joan that day. I'm happy Joan is here."

"I'm happy too!" Ms. Cupo said with a laugh and a hug.



(L to R) EMT Joe Fortis, Medical Director for the Competition Dr. Richard Chmielewski, Paramedic Eddy Perez and Paramedic Joe Hudak.

World Champions

FDNY EMS Team Wins First Place in International Competition

A team of FDNY EMS members took first place honors in a competition hosted by International EMS Global on August 1 and 2 in Utica, New York.

The team, including EMT Joe Fortis, the team leader, and Paramedics Joe Hudak and Eddy Perez competed in a series of 13 scenarios against 17 teams from as far away as Poland and Turkey.

"They did beyond great," said EMT Fortis, who also was named Top Paramedic Team Leader in the competition.

As the competition's winners, they receive an all-expenses paid trip to Poland in 2010 for their international EMS competition as Team USA.

Firefighters Rescue Man in the East River

Firefighter Andy Bowman and other members of Ladder 7 saved the life of a man who fell into the East River on July 17.

“You don’t expect to jump into the East River everyday, but we train for this kind of thing,” said Firefighter Bowman. “I’m just glad I was able to help out.”

Firefighters were called to the waters near 23rd Street at around 1 p.m.

Bystanders pointed them to a man who was caught on the rocks about five feet from the sea wall.

Firefighter Bowman rushed to put on a cold water suit and jumped into the water. Once he reached the victim he wrapped a life ring around him and checked for any injuries.

Then the pair made their way against the current, with the firefighter trying to keep the victim’s head above water.

Firefighters secured a portable ladder against the wall and helped Firefighter Bowman pull the man to safety.

“It was a team effort, it took everyone



Firefighter Andy Bowman describes his water rescue in the East River with Battalion Chief Thomas Reilly (far left), Lt. Frank Giacoio (far right) and members from Ladder 7.

there to get him out,” he said.

The man was transported by EMS members to Bellevue Hospital in stable condition.

“Everyone at the scene did an outstanding job,” said Battalion Chief Thomas Reilly.

Firefighters Rescue Man in East Chester Bay



Firefighter Ralph Manfredonia

Firefighters from Ladder 53 rescued a local resident from East Chester Bay after his boat sank approximately 40 yards off shore on July 31.

At 3:38 p.m., the victim was returning from a day of fishing when his boat began to take on water in the Bay off City Island.

The members of Ladder 53 were alerted to the location of the victim by witnesses on shore.

Firefighter Ralph Manfredonia removed his bunker gear and swam to the victim just before he went under. Firefighter Manfredonia returned to shore with the victim, where other members of Ladder 53 assisted with his removal.

The victim was then passed to EMS members, who treated and transported him to Jacobi Hospital Center in stable condition.

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Just in Time

Firefighters Rescue Two from Brooklyn Fire

Although they say it's all in a day's work, there is no doubt that firefighters from Ladder 169 did something extraordinary on June 23, when they rescued two from a late night fire in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn.

"We did a great job and got really lucky," said Capt. Bill Gallagher from Ladder 169. "You never want anyone to be in this situation, but when they are, you hope it works out well."

Firefighters were called to Brighton 3rd Street at 10:43 p.m. for a fire on the top floor of a six-story apartment building.

When the members of Ladder 169 reached the fire apartment, Firefighter Joe Roggenkamp forced open the front door with the Halligan tool. He said he had trouble opening the door, so he reached in and felt the body of a man lying face down on the other side.

He squeezed inside and was able to maneuver the unconscious man around so that Capt. Gallagher and Firefighter Dan Saalfrank could remove him from the apartment. They then passed him off to members



The members of Engine 246 and Ladder 169 (L to R) FF Robert Gnerre, FF James Egan, Lt. Richard Eggstein, FF Matt King, Capt. Bill Gallagher, FF Joe Roggenkamp, FF Thomas Curty, FF Gabe Buoninconti, FF Jeremy Hanophy, FF Mike Milazzo (assigned to Engine 245) and FF Dan Saalfrank.

of an engine company, who transported him to an awaiting ambulance.

The firefighters continued into the apartment and located the fire in a bedroom.

While Firefighter Saalfrank kept back the flames with an extinguisher as Capt. Gallagher and Firefighter Roggenkamp crawled past the fire into a back bedroom,

where they found a semi-conscious woman lying in bed.

They carried her back past the fire to the front door where, again, members of an engine company were able to carry her out.

Capt. Gallagher said the job was complicated by the lack of a hose well in the building, which allows firefighters to feed the hose through a space in the stairwell to upper floors. As a result, firefighters from several engine companies had to snake the hose up the staircase.

The fire was placed under control at 11:09 p.m. Fire marshals determined the cause to be smoking in bed.

Both victims were transported to Staten Island Burn Center with smoke inhalation.

This was the first rescue for both Firefighter Roggenkamp and Saalfrank.

"It's great when all the training you do pays off," said Firefighter Roggenkamp. "It feels good as an individual and as a team."

Firefighters Rescue Two from Bronx Blaze

Firefighters from Ladder 59 and Ladder 54 are being hailed as heroes after they rescued two men from a Bronx apartment fire on July 16.

Members were called to the scene of a fire on W. 183rd Street at 12:02 a.m.

As they approached, firefighters said neighbors pointed to the six-story building, where smoke was pouring out the windows of a corner apartment on the second floor.

Ladder 59 was the first company to arrive and immediately made their way to the fire apartment.

They forced open the door and Lt. Mike Fagan, and Firefighters Al Ronaldson and Paul Denver began their search. They said apartment was hot and extremely smoky, limiting visibility.

Firefighter Ronaldson said he turned

left into the living room and quickly located the victim face down under a table. As he lifted the man, he began to moan, so the firefighter said, "I knew I had to get him out in a hurry."

Firefighter Denver helped him remove the victim, who was in his 40s, to the hallway. There, the victim surprised his rescuers when he became alert and complained he could not breathe. Firefighters carried him to the lobby and brought him an oxygen mask ease his breathing as EMS members arrived.

The man suffered burns to his face, arms and back.

"It felt great it was almost surreal at first, but then your training takes over," said Firefighter Ronaldson. "I was just in the right place at the right time."

As this rescue took place, firefighters from Ladder 54 arrived and saw a man

leaning half way out a window on the second floor, with smoke billowing over his head.

Lt. Barry Leguernic said fire was quickly approaching and the man was ready to jump, but firefighters and neighbors convinced him to wait as Firefighters Greg Brannon and Steve Caglione set up a portable ladder. Firefighter Brannon quickly climbed to the window and pulled the man to safety.

He was passed to EMS members who treated the 62-year-old man for smoke inhalation.

"Everyone did a great job," said Lt. Leguernic.

The victims were transported to area hospitals. The fire was declared under control at 12:56 a.m. Fire marshals are investigating the cause.

How Does it Work?: Confined Space Rescues



FF James Lopez from Rescue 2 is lowered into a manhole during a confined space demonstration at the Fire Academy. He was assisted by Lt. Sean Parker from the Rescue Battalion, FF Eric Lynch from Squad 1, FF David Giardina from the Rescue Battalion and FF Mike Travers from Rescue 2.

As television, print and radio news reported two confined space rescues – on June 26 in Manhattan and June 29 in Queens – many New Yorkers were left asking how firefighters execute such complicated rescues.

So firefighters from the FDNY's Special Operations Command on June 30 demonstrated a confined space rescue at the Fire Academy.

A confined space is defined as an area not designed for continual human occupancy and with limited access and egress. These include manholes, transformer vaults and subway emergency exits.

Battalion Chief James Yakimovich said the demonstration simulated a victim who was trapped down a 10 foot manhole.

Firefighters arriving at the scene would need to determine what caused the victim to collapse into the space. They need to be mindful of any dangers in and around the area, including risks of asphyxia, toxicity and explosives.

"We immediately assume it's a toxic environment," said Chief Yakimovich. "Our number one concern is safety, so we assume it's contaminated until we learn it's not."

They determine the safest way to enter and exit the space, and determine how they will operate in the area, noting any obstacles they will need to overcome.

Firefighters set up a retrieval system, which includes a stand with a pulley, as well as a rope and a safety rope. Firefighters monitor air quality and wear air masks with surface supplied air as they lower a firefighter and stokes basket into the manhole.

The firefighter will package the victim and perform medical assistance, if needed, before they are pulled to safety. Depending on the size of the space, Chief Yakimovich said the victim will be pulled out prior to the FDNY member.

Chief Yakimovich used the demonstration to warn New Yorkers about the dangers of trying to rescue someone in a confined space. He said 60 percent of would-be rescuers become victims themselves because of their "inability to recognize the danger of the situation or their emotions just overwhelm them."

He added: "Training is what allows [FDNY members] to be successful rescuers."

Firefighters Rescue Worker Who Fell at Construction Site

By Catherine Regan



Firefighters perform a high-angle rescue to remove a worker who fell at a construction site. Photo courtesy of Deputy Chief James Daly, Div. 1.

On June 18, firefighters rescued a worker who had fallen approximately 20 feet into a construction site on Church Street between Barclay and Park Place in Manhattan.

According to Lt. Billy Ryan of Squad 1, the worker fell from a sidewalk adjacent to heavy machinery at around 2 p.m.

After arriving on scene, firefighters went down to where the worker was lying to begin performing first aid.

The worker was then latched into a stokes basket, and firefighters utilized their high-angle ropes to lift the worker to street level.

Despite various challenges they had to face due to the geography of the scene, firefighters were able to work together to perform this rescue.

Once the worker was on street level, FDNY EMS members transported the worker to Saint Vincent's Hospital in critical condition.

Working as a Team

Firefighters Rescue Two from Bronx Fire

Firefighters from Ladder 41 rescued two civilians on June 20 from an apartment fire on White Plains Road in the Bronx.

At approximately 11:20 a.m. firefighters responded to a fire in a three-story apartment building. Although there was no sign of visible fire, firefighters from Ladder 41 said they encountered a heavy smoke condition.

They made their way to the second floor, where the fire was located, and Capt. Glenn Fritchett of Ladder 41 directed Firefighters Jeff Rivera and Sal Maita to force open the apartment door.

Inside, the team located an unconscious victim between the apartment door and the kitchen. The firefighters removed the woman to the hallway and performed CPR before carrying her downstairs.

EMTs Jeff Mottarella and Christopher McManus from Station 20 transported the victim to Jacobi Medical Center in critical condition.

At the same time, Firefighter John Hessler of Ladder 41 saw a man on the second floor who needed assistance. He set up a portable ladder and climbed up to help the man escape the fire apartment through the window.

Rescue Board Heroes

Rockaways Water Rescue Pays Dividends

Firefighters from Ladder 134 relied on their strength, training and a yellow rescue board on June 22 when they rescued two off the Rockaways in Queens.

“It’s rewarding to see their [surf rescue] training being put to use,” said Battalion Chief Jerry Esposito.

While out doing building inspections, Lt. Walter Rogers noticed an overturned boat in the water.

They drove as close as possible to the shore and prepared to enter the water. Firefighter Randy Eichin paddled toward the boat with the rescue board and Firefighter Bill Burns swam with the torpedo, for use as a backup. Firefighters Mike Ormiston and David Doxsey stayed on shore with the tether.

Once he reached the two victims – a man and a woman – about 300 feet from shore, Firefighter Eichin secured them to the board.

“I reassured them that I would keep them safe and they’d be OK,” said Firefighter Eichin. “We were doing what we were trained to do.”

He checked their vitals and ensured there were no other victims in the water before notifying firefighters on shore that they could be pulled to safety.

With the help of firefighters from Engine 264 and Engine 328, Firefighters Ormiston and Doxsey pulled them to shore.

“It was definitely a team effort,” said Firefighter Burns. “It feels good.”



The members of Ladder 134 with their surf rescue equipment (L to R) FF Bill Burns, FF Kevin Sokol, Lt. Walter Rogers, Chief Jerry Esposito, FF Randy Eichin, FF Mike Ormiston and FF David Doxsey.

Upcoming Events

Vegas Night! benefitting the Pat Lyons Foundation

**Saturday, September 12, 2009
6:30 p.m.**

**Hyatt Regency Long Island
1717 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY**

Play games like Blackjack, Craps and Roulette. Join the Texas Hold-em tournament or just enjoy the stocked bar, great food, music and some dancing! Then cash in your chips to win GREAT prizes like a flat screen TV or our Harrah's getaway package.

In the name of a fallen 9/11 hero, The Pat Lyons Foundation is dedicated to bettering the lives of sick children. We strive to enhance the lives of the seriously ill, and to assist children who have survived cancer and are now experiencing the late effects of their invasive treatments. The Pat Lyons Foundation also funds organizations whose mission is to find a cure for these terrible diseases through pediatric research and ongoing education.

For more information visit the Foundation's website at www.pat-lyonsfoundation.org

Support the Troops

Local Firehouses Collecting Items for Military Care Packages

In a partnership with Mayor Michael Bloomberg, firehouses throughout the five boroughs will collect items to include in care packages for the approximately 8,000 City residents currently serving overseas in the United States Armed Forces.

The *Supporting Our Troops* initiative will run from July 13 through August 21. Other drop off locations include NYPD precincts, the Staten Island Ferry Terminal and City offices.

Organizers hope enough items will be donated so care packages can be sent to all New Yorkers currently serving overseas.

Some of the most requested items include:

Consumables: gum, candy, cough drops, ibuprofen (no aspirin and single-use sealed packets only), non-perishable food items, pre-packaged cookies*, crackers, powder drink mixes (in boxes of individual packets), instant coffee or tea (individual packets), microwaveable soups (non-perishable, single-serving), pasta, popcorn, sealed nuts and dried fruits, granola and protein bars.

Hygiene: soft toilet paper, tissues (individual soft packs), toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss, saline eye drops,

body cream (travel size), lip balm stick, razors, bug repellent wipes, shaving cream (travel size), shampoo (travel size), conditioner (travel size), feminine products, baby wipes or alcohol wipes, talcum or cornstarch powder (travel size), foot powder (travel size), cotton swabs, bar soap and deodorant.

Entertainment Items: gift cards for music or movies redeemable online, movie DVDs, audio books, puzzles or Sudoku, magazines and newspapers.

Miscellaneous: men and women's New York City sports team paraphernalia, air fresheners (non-aerosol) and hand and foot warmers.

* **Please note:** due to health and safety concerns, anything home-cooked (including homemade cookies) is not permitted. Canned goods donations and alcoholic beverages also are prohibited.

For more information about what you can drop off, call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Fog horn: Members from the Department celebrated 9th Annual FDNY Night at Keyspan Park on July 17, as the Brooklyn Cyclones took on the Auburn Doubledays. Children of FDNY members helped kick off the game as they sang the National Anthem on the field with players, just before former Fire Commissioner, and Brooklyn District Attorney, Charles Hynes threw out the first pitch of the game. After the fifth inning, the game was called due to fog. A percentage of the night's ticket sales went to the Uniformed Firefighters Association Scholarship Fund. The FDNY Fire Safety Education Unit gave fire safety information during the game.



**VIEW
POINT**

AUGUST 2009

NEWSLETTER OF THE NYC FIRE DEPARTMENT

**FIRE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF NEW YORK**

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BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

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**A 145 YEAR HISTORY
OF COMMITMENT, COURAGE & COMPASSION**