

Call/Volunteers Serving Today to Protect Your Tomorrow

SMOKE SHOWIN'



Winter 2015 • vol. 24 • no. 87

The Official Publication of the National Volunteer Fire Council
The National Volunteer Fire Council



NEW GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

NVFC has created a program to
help fire service families

Training Guidelines

Weak Chief Certification

Model Fire Code Adopted



**DO YOU HAVE YOUR
FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL
LICENSE PLATE YET?**

Order yours today!



SUPPORT THE MASSACHUSETTS FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL

by purchasing a Firefighters license plate.

You can order online through our web site, www.mafirememorial.org. You can also apply in person by visiting a Mass. Registry of Motor Vehicle location.

The cost of the plate is \$40, of which \$28 will go directly to the Memorial. The remaining \$12 is a one-time only cost to cover manufacturing expenses. Every two years when you renew your plate, the entire \$40 will go to the Memorial.



*Show your support of firefighters.
Order a Firefighters Memorial license plate today.*

www.mafirememorial.org

1-888-ASK FIRE

2015



President

Tom Burnett
Whitman Fire Department
(617) 719-1289
president@mcvfa.org

Secretary

David Sullivan
Seekonk Firefighters Assn
(774) 229-6202
secretary@mcvfa.org

Treasurer

Larry Holmberg
Chesterfield Fire Department
(413) 296-4247
treasurer@mcvfa.org

Recruitment and Retention Program Coordinator

Susan Dyer
recruit@mcvfa.org

Executive Vice President

Michael Bird
Wareham Fire Department
(508) 295-2716
evp@mcvfa.org

Region 1 Vice President

Bryan Moniz
Westport Fire Department
(508) 509-3531
vpreion1@mcvfa.org

Region 2 Vice President

David Thompson
Essex Fire Department
vpreion2@mcvfa.org

Region 3 Vice President

Bob Silver
Millbury Fire Department
(774) 239-7244
vpreion3@mcvfa.org

Region 4 Vice President

Kevin Connolly
Northfield Fire Department
(413) 498-4388
vpreion4@mcvfa.org

Region 5 Vice President

Paul Vallone
Clarksburg Fire Department
(413) 664-6281
vpreion5@mcvfa.org

WINTER 2015 INSIDE

4

MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE

Make sure your dues are paid, otherwise your benefits have been suspended.

4

MCVFA 25th ANNIVERSARY

The EMCAB recently approved more user-friendly treatment protocols.

6

LEGAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Training/certification minimum legal requirements for career, call, and volunteer firefighters.

6

ICS TRAINING FLOWCHART

Massachusetts incident command system nims advisory group guidelines.

8

GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

The NVFC offers a new guide to help families deal with the challenges of the fire service.



10

WEAK CHIEF? THAT'S NOT NICE

Yet another definition of the structure of certain fire departments.



13

MODEL FIRE CODE ADOPTED

BFPR voted to adopt a national model fire code at their August 7, 2014 meeting.



COLUMNS

5

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

6

TRAINING INFO

14

REGIONAL NEWS

To All Call/Combo/Volunteer Chiefs

If you received this issue of *Smoke Showin'* and your members did not, your department is either in arrears on its dues or is not a member of MCVFA.

Please contact the vice president serving your area or the MCVFA office to become a member in good standing.

www.mcvfa.org



www.mcvfatravel.com

MCVFA 25th Anniversary Plans Moving Ahead

by VP 4 Kevin Connolly

The newly formed Conference Committee has begun making plans for the MCVFA's celebration of their 25th Anniversary. The Association was formally organized in 1990 and held their first meeting in October of that year.

While the Committee is still formulating ideas, the primary proposal developed at the first committee meeting was to have the State Meeting in October serving as the primary celebratory function. The date is tentatively set for Saturday, October 17, 2015.

At this time, the plan for the day would include a business meeting, a Firefighter Memorial program, a number of fire and EMS training seminars, a program for the significant others not otherwise involved and concluding with a dinner-dance in the evening.

The Committee would love to hear ideas from the membership; we are open to any and all suggestions. We will continue working on the details and will post updates to both the Facebook and the webpage.

Currently, the committee members include Bryan Moniz, Westport; Bob Silver, Millbury; Kevin Connolly, Northfield; Mike Bird, Wareham; and Susan Dyer, administrative assistant. We are looking for other individuals to step up to help with this very special event. We need more than five members to make this work and we hope that we can count on a number of you to help out. If you'd like to help, please contact us at vpregion4@mcvfa.org.



Membership Message

For those who have sent in your dues, thank you!
For those who have not...It's not too late.

As stated in earlier *Smoke Showin'* issues, membership dues are payable each year by July 1. Membership benefits will be lost if dues remain unpaid. The benefits offered are important and I don't want to see anyone lose them. The benefits that would be lost include the \$7000 accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) insurance, *Smoke Showin'*, which provides timely and important information, and scholarship opportunities that may be helpful for everyone in the family. If you have received a new membership card, your membership is current; if not, then your renewal may be in process either in the MCVFA office or somewhere in your town or it hasn't been started. If in doubt about your status, please contact your Regional Vice President or the MCVFA office at 800-551-FIRE.

American Income Life Insurance Company (AIL) who underwrites our AD&D insurance will shortly be mailing out your beneficiaries card. You only need to return the card if you want to change your beneficiary. If you send card in be advised that AIL may contact you and ask to set up an appointment to go over some of the other benefits they offer. This appointment is completely your option.

As we approach our 25th year as an Association, there are some very important issues we face that require your thoughts and ideas. Some of the suggestions put forth already could change how the Association operates. We will be discussing and deciding some of these issues at the April state meeting.

As a lead to the April meeting, President Burnett will be sending a letter to every member in February that addresses the challenges we face and some of the ideas that have come forward. The State Meeting is open to every member; you don't have to be a delegate or alternate delegate to attend or have an impact on how the Association moves into the future.

Remember, your involvement is critical so please speak up and be heard.

SMOKE Showin'

The Official Publication of the
Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association

MCVFA Offices

P.O. Box 124
Whitman, MA 02382



ph: (800) 551-FIRE

www.mcvfa.org • mcvfa@mcvfa.org

published by **LJ SQUARED PUBLISHING**

MCVFA president **TOM BURNETT, Whitman**
editor **LARRY HOLMBERG, Chesterfield**
publisher **LLOYD J. LATHROP, JR.**
production manager **KRISTIN LATHROP**
training committee **MICHAEL BIRD, Wareham**
legislative director **JOE MARUCA, West Barnstable**

The editorial deadline is
the 1st of the month preceding each issue

Address all editorial content to:

Smoke Showin'

MCVFA
P.O. Box 124 • Whitman, MA 02382
ph: (800) 551-FIRE
www.mcvfa.org • editor@mcvfa.org

For address changes or
MCVFA membership questions please call

1-800-551-FIRE

For advertising requests contact Larry Holmberg

1-800-551-FIRE

or email smokeshowin@ljsquared.com

Smoke Showin' is published quarterly by the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association, PO Box 124, Whitman, Massachusetts 02536. Periodicals postage is paid at Whitman, MA, and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send all address changes to: MCVFA, P.O. Box 124, Whitman, MA 02382.

Smoke Showin' is the official journal of the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association, a non-profit organization, and carries news and announcements concerning the MCVFA. MCVFA members receive this magazine as part of their dues. The MCVFA is not responsible for contents or opinions other than Association activities. Entire contents are ©2015 the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association, all rights reserved and, as such, may not be reproduced in part or in whole without written permission of the publishers. The MCVFA reserves the right to print portions or all of any correspondence received by the editors without liability on its part and no such correspondence will be returned without prior agreement.

Home delivery of *Smoke Showin'* is one of the many benefits of MCVFA membership.

Follow His Example

Let me begin by congratulating Chief Robert Pray of the Rehoboth Fire Department on his retirement.

Some would label him as the voice of the call/volunteer fire service in Massachusetts. His voice could be heard on the Department of Fire Service Training Council or on one of the many committees he sat on on behalf of the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts. If an issue involved call/volunteers, you could be sure his opinion would be part of the conversation. This is who he is, always fighting to make it better for call and volunteer firefighters across the state.

Chief Pray, on behalf of the entire Association, thank you for your leadership, dedication and friendship over the past 38 years.

Chief Pray's quiet leadership on many issues affected how the fire service does things today but it took time and a vision. I would like to think that I follow his example. Most people do not realize how much of impact they can have on an issue. To achieve change, you need to focus on the goal and that takes time, dedication and persistence.

Start with an idea that you are passionate about and think about how it will affect others. Think of it as looking at the pros and cons. If the positives outweigh the negatives, then determine how to frame the argument and who to reach out to that will support the idea and can influence others. You have to remind yourself that failure is not an option and you don't have all the answers.

This is the method I follow with ideas that are important to me. It could be a political idea, policies and procedures, a safety issue, or something else.

The completion of an idea is a marathon and not a sprint. It is also generally an amalgam of many people's thoughts and contributions and usually the end product is better than the original idea. We are all capable of following these simple steps; you just need to develop a little bit of confidence and commitment.

It's this type of individual that makes an organization strong. Be passionate, committed and determined.

Your voice does matter—get involved!



Tom Burnett

President



Like us on
Facebook

**Join your fellow
firefighters on
Facebook!**

The official MCVFA and MCVFA Legislative Facebook pages are your place to get news and information concerning the Massachusetts Call Volunteer Firefighters' Association

www.facebook.com/MCVFAff • www.facebook.com/MCVFAlegis

And make even more connections by
following us on Twitter

www.twitter.com/MCVFA



Massachusetts Training/Certification Minimum Legal Requirements

Firefighters – Career, Call and Volunteer • November 1, 2014

TRAINING	RANK/LEVEL	CERTIFICATION LEVEL	LEGAL CITATION:
CPR/AED 201	All FF	Card from Red Cross or AHA Annual Training	MGL Chapter 111 section 105 CMR 171.00 OEMS A/R-2-100
First Aid “First Responder”	All FF	Documented Training by Fire Dept. 16 Hours/3 Years and Within 1 year of hire	MGL Chapter 111 Section 201 105 CMR 171.00 OEMS A/R-2- 100
Hazcom/ Right to Know	All FF	Annual Documented Training by Department and within 30 days of hire	MGL Chapter 111F
Hazmat: Awareness	All FF	Initial Training and Annual Refresher	29 CFR 1910.120 (federal code)
Hazmat: Operational	All FF	Initial Training and Annual Refresher	29 CFR 1910.120 (federal code)
IS 700	All FF	Online Class and Certificate	Governor’s Executive Order 2005-469*
ICS 100	All FF	Online Class and Certificate	Governor’s Executive Order 2005-469*
ICS 200	All FF	Online Class and Certificate	Governor’s Executive Order 2005-469*
ICS 300	Officers	3-day class from MEMA	Governor’s Executive Order 2005-469*
IS 701	Officers	Online Class and Certificate	Governor’s Executive Order 2005-469*
IS 702	Officers	Online Class and Certificate	Governor’s Executive Order 2005-469*
IS 703	Officers	Online Class and Certificate	Governor’s Executive Order 2005-469*
ICS 400	Chief Officers	2-day class from MEMA	Governor’s Executive Order 2005-469*
IS 800B	Emergency Managers	Online Class and Certificate	Governor’s Executive Order 2005-469*
Ethics	All FF	Online Class and Certificate Within 30 days of Hire and Every 2 Years	Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2009

* See Incident Command System (ICS) Training Flowchart

Incident Command System (ICS) Training Flowchart

Massachusetts NIMS Advisory Group • June, 2010

QUESTION ONE	QUESTION TWO	QUESTION THREE	QUESTION FOUR	QUESTION FIVE
Are you a first responder? The ten (10) disciplines required to be NIMS compliant are: law enforcement, fire services, emergency management, emergency medical services, health care providers, hazardous material personnel, public safety communicators, public health, public works, and governmental administrators.	Are you <u>likely</u> to assume a supervisory position within the ICS?	Do you consider yourself as middle management <u>and</u> are you <u>likely</u> to assume any of the following ICS positions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strike Team Leader • Task Force Leader • Unit Leader • Division/Group Supervisors • Branch Directors • MACS / EOC staff <p><u>OR</u></p> <p>Are you <u>likely</u> to be an Incident Commander for an operational period of greater than 24 hours?</p>	Are you a senior-level response manager <u>and</u> would you consider yourself to be a select department head with multi-agency coordination responsibilities? <p><u>OR</u></p> <p>Are you <u>likely</u> to be an Incident Commander under a Unified Command?</p>	Are you an emergency management director, or is your primary responsibility emergency management? <p>If 'yes', you are required to take IS-800B in addition to other ICS courses appropriate to your role within your organization and community. Individuals who have previously completed IS-800 or IS-800A are <u>not</u> required to complete IS-800B as part of NIMS compliance. However, FEMA and EOPSS encourage appropriate personnel to take IS-800B.</p>
If your response is 'yes', you must complete IS 700 and ICS 100. IS 701 is <u>recommended</u> for chief municipal officials (elected and appointed).	If your response is 'yes', IS 700, ICS 100, and ICS 200 must be completed. IS 701 is <u>recommended</u> for chief municipal officials (elected and appointed).	If your response is 'yes', IS 700, ICS 100, ICS 200, ICS 300, IS 701, IS 702, IS 703, and IS 704 must be completed.	If your response is 'yes', IS 700, ICS 100, ICS 200, ICS 300, ICS 400, IS 701, IS 702, IS 703, and IS 704 must be completed.	
	If your response is 'no', then no additional training is needed.	If your response is 'no', then no additional training is needed.	If your response is 'no', then no additional training is needed.	

The ICS Training Flowchart is intended to be used as a guide in determining the appropriate levels of ICS training for the ten (10) disciplines required to be NIMS compliant: law enforcement, fire services, emergency management, emergency medical services, health care providers, hazardous material personnel, public safety communicators, public health, public works, and governmental administrators.

This Flowchart may be used in conjunction with materials developed by FEMA's NIMS Resource Center, which may be found on-line here: <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm>

When determining appropriate levels of ICS training, it is important to note that the functional criteria expressed in this Flowchart (e.g., are you likely to be an Incident Commander for an operational period of greater than 24 hours?) can be thought of this way: If your job duties and role in your organization and

community would necessitate that you would assume the role described above, then ICS 300 would be appropriate for you.

IS 700, IS 800B, ICS 100, ICS 200, IS 701, IS 702, IS 703, and IS 704 may be taken on-line via FEMA's Emergency Management Institute here: <http://www.training.fema.gov/>

In Massachusetts, ICS 300 and ICS 400 are classroom-based and offered through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. MEMA's on-line Training Registration System may be found here: <https://training.mema.state.ma.us/Mema/mmFrontPage.do>



send your training-related articles to

Larry Holmberg

PO Box 176 • Chesterfield, MA 01012

editor@mcvfa.org



Supporting Those Who Serve

New Guide Helps Families Navigate the Challenges of the Volunteer Fire Service Life

Volunteer firefighters and EMTs have long hours, unpredictable schedules, and dangerous job responsibilities. For the volunteer, these negatives are outweighed by the pride they feel in contributing to the safety of their community, helping those in need, and bonding with their fellow volunteers.



What to Expect:

A Guide for Family Members of Volunteer Firefighters



But when a volunteer has to run off in the middle of a family dinner, or misses another of their children's recitals or sports games, or is responding for hours to a raging fire without being able to provide their family back home with a status report on their well-being, it becomes clear that the volunteer lifestyle affects not just the individual volunteer but their entire family.

Adjusting to the lifestyle of a volunteer fire family can be difficult at best and can present on-going challenges that strain family relationships. Knowing what challenges lie ahead and having the tools and perseverance to address these challenges and adapt as a family is key to the overall well-being of a volunteer fire family. To help families adjust to the volunteer fire service life, the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) partnered with FirefighterWife.com to release *What to Expect: A Guide for Family Members of Volunteer Firefighters*.

"Many volunteer fire families struggle to find the balance between the fire service and home life," said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. "This lifestyle can put a strain on family relationships and cause an array of negative outcomes, from resentment, to the volunteer leaving the fire service, to divorce. Our goal with this guide

is to help families adjust to the fire service lifestyle, know what to expect and how to deal with the challenges, and create open, supportive, and strong family relationships for all those who take on this exciting and rewarding life."

This new guide is designed to help spouses, children, parents, siblings, and significant others navigate the volunteer fire service life, keep family relationships strong, and become part of the fire department family. It includes first-hand advice from real fire service families that have faced and overcome the challenges as well as tips and resources to assist volunteer responders and their families in navigating this unique lifestyle.

"Family support is critical for a volunteer firefighter," a fire chief from New York notes in the guide. "Having a family that

understands the oath you have taken to assist the community and be there for your fellow brother/sister firefighters when those tones go off allows you to respond and focus on the job at hand. Along with understanding, families too have to sacrifice time spent together in order for the volunteer to respond, but also to attend drills and trainings so we can keep our skills sharp. Without this support a volunteer is forced to choose between the needs of their family versus their commitment to the fire service."

What to Expect aims to help family members provide this support and embrace this new lifestyle with their volunteer so everyone can reap the rewards that the volunteer fire service life has to offer. Access the guide on the NVFC web site at www.nvfc.org.

About the National Volunteer Fire Council

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides invaluable tools, resources, programs, training, and advocacy for first responders across the nation. www.nvfc.org.

About FirefighterWife.com

FirefighterWife.com is an online community for wives, fiancées, and girlfriends of firefighters. Their mission is to strengthen fire marriages and encourage fire families. www.firefighterwife.com.



MERCHANDISE



Gildan, 99% Cotton/1% Poly, T-SHIRT, Maltese Cross, Gray, MCVFA on back
(S – XL) **\$13.00** plus postage
(2X – 3X) **\$15.00** plus postage



Gildan, 100% Cotton, T-SHIRT, Maltese Cross, Navy Blue, Pre-Shrunk
(M – XL) **\$10.00** plus postage
(2X – 3X) **\$12.00** plus postage



Gildan, 99% Cotton/1% Poly, T-SHIRT, Maltese Cross, Pink, MCVFA on back
\$15.00 plus postage (YL – 3X)

Portion of sale will go to the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition

MCVFA on back (not shown)
(M – XL) **\$13.00** plus postage
(2X – 3X) **\$15.00** plus postage



MCVFA 16 oz. Coffee Mug
\$8.00 plus postage

MCVFA Merchandise also has Men's and Ladies Golf Shirts, Baseball Caps with MCVFA Logo, Sweatshirts, Decals, Pins, Patches, Helmet Stickers, Portfolios and Novelty Banks. We are currently working to get this on the website. In the meantime, to order any items, or for more info, contact merchandise@mcvfa.org.

NEED A SCHOLARSHIP?

LET US HELP!

The Massachusetts Call Volunteer Firefighters' Association will be awarding the

Robert J. Hindley Memorial Scholarship

Five \$750 Scholarships

for an MCVFA member or immediate family member

Don't miss out on this excellent opportunity!

For eligibility information and requirements, please visit

www.mcvfa.org/scholarships

The deadline for applications is May 1, 2015



www.mcvfa.org

WEAK CHIEF

In past editions of *Smoke Showin'* we have looked at the legal structure of fire departments organized under a Board of Fire Engineers and under the so-called Strong Chief law.

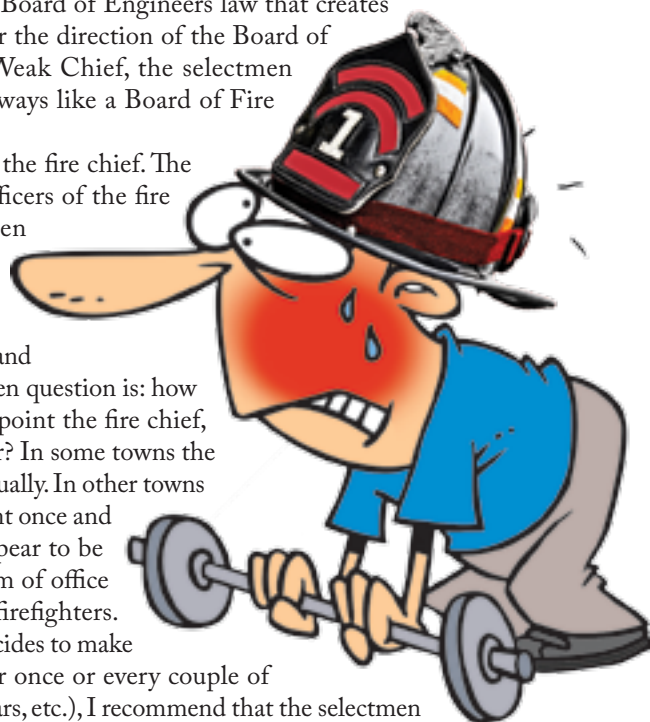
BY CHIEF JOE MARUCA

This quarter's installment looks at the fire department structure commonly referred to as "Weak Chief". The Weak Chief form of fire department is created when a town accepts the provisions of GL Chapter 48 Section 42A. As with Strong Chief, the Weak Chief statute is a template for the creation and organization of a fire department. This makes it more than simply a definition of the powers of the fire chief. It sets forth the structure of the fire department and the relationships among and between the selectmen, the chief, the officers and the firefighters. Weak Chief is one of at least five ways that a town can choose to organize its fire department, if it chooses to have a fire department. In Massachusetts there is no requirement that a town have a fire department. Fire protection is an optional public service. The Weak Chief statute was enacted as Section 2 of Chapter 1048 of the Acts of 1973 on November 16, 1973.

Weak Chief is only for towns. The first sentence of the law limits the application of the law to towns. Cities and fire districts can't adopt Weak Chief. In order to adopt Weak Chief your town must vote to accept the provisions of the law at a town meeting. As with the Strong Chief statute and the Board of Fire Engineers statutes, Weak Chief is not just about the fire chief, it is a structure for establishing and organizing a town fire department.

Weak Chief establishes the fire department under the direction of the selectman. This is as opposed to the Board of Engineers law that creates the fire department under the direction of the Board of Fire Engineers. Under Weak Chief, the selectmen are functioning in some ways like a Board of Fire Engineers.

The selectmen appoint the fire chief. The selectmen appoint the officers of the fire department. The selectmen appoint the firefighters of the fire department. The selectmen determine the number of firefighters and officers to appoint. An open question is: how long do the selectmen appoint the fire chief, officers and firefighters for? In some towns the appointment is done annually. In other towns they make the appointment once and that's it. There doesn't appear to be any legal limit on the term of office of the chief, officers and firefighters. Whether or not a town decides to make appointments annually or once or every couple of years (2 years, 3 years, 5 years, etc.), I recommend that the selectmen



make it clear how long the appointment is for on their appointment letter (appointment letters are an important legal and HR document you should use). For instance, for an annual appointment (or an appointment for some period of years) the letter could read:

"You are appointed as a firefighter of the XYZ Fire Department for a term of one-year from the date of this letter".

Or, if the appointment is for an indefinite time the letter could read:

"You are hereby appointed as a firefighter of the XYZ Fire Department for an indefinite term and you shall serve as an at-will employee of the Town of XYZ".

By having the power to determine how many officers and firefighters there will be on the fire department, and what ranks of officers to appoint within the fire department, the selectman essentially have the authority to determine the structure of the fire department.

Next, the law says that the selectmen fix the compensation of the fire chief, officers and firefighters so long as they don't exceed the aggregate amount of money appropriated for fire department pay (stipends, hourly pay, etc.). At first glance this simply says that the selectmen decide how much the chief, officers and firefighters get paid. And, they do. But it also says that the selectmen can't be

overridden by Town Meeting on this issue. Town Meeting can set the amount of money to be appropriated for fire department pay, but it can't decide how to use that money. So, if town meeting appropriates \$10,000 for fire department salaries, the selectmen have the sole and absolute power to decide how to pay the members of the fire department, so long as they don't exceed \$10,000 appropriated for payroll.

And, if the selectmen have the authority to move funds between and among lines of the budget, which they do within each town meeting article, they aren't bound to the line item you typically see for the fire chief's salary. They can determine the chief's pay or stipend and then move the appropriated funds around within the town meeting warrant article. It comes as a surprise to many regular town meeting goers that town meeting only sets the total appropriation within each warrant article, and all of the lines they see that make up that article can be adjusted after the fact, so long as the total appropriation is not exceeded.

The law goes on to say, "The selectmen may make suitable regulations governing the fire department and the officers and firemen". This means that the selectmen write the rules and regulations and the standard operating procedures/guidelines for the fire department. This is a substantive difference between Strong Chief and Weak Chief. A Strong Chief writes the rules and procedures for the fire department,

without having to seek approval of the selectman.

You'll note that in this sentence about the selectman writing the rules is the word "may". So the selectmen aren't required to write the rules and regulations and standard operating procedures/guidelines. I would interpret this to mean that they can delegate this authority or they can do it themselves. The law doesn't say who they can delegate this authority to. An obvious choice is the fire chief, especially for standard operating procedures/guidelines that involve technical knowledge of firefighting, rescue, hazmat and EMS. The fire chief would be a reasonable choice for issues of training and participation. However, the selectmen aren't limited. They could delegate some items to a Town Administrator or the Human Resources Department or Personal Policy Committee.

This same sentence then goes on to read that in towns where the fire department is not part of civil service (GL Chapter 31) the selectmen "may remove the chief and other officers and firemen at pleasure." This is a great deal of power and very different from the Strong Chief Law. "At pleasure" means that the selectmen don't need a reason to remove a fire chief, an officer or a firefighter. However, there is an implied limitation. The selectmen cannot remove a fire chief, officer or firefighter for an illegal, unlawful or otherwise improper reason such as, but not limited to, race, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, certain disabilities, political party, National Guard service or unlawful retaliation.

The heart of the Weak Chief structure is that the selectmen make all of the personnel decisions for the fire department.

final sentence of the Weak Chief law says, "The chief of the fire department shall be in immediate control of town property used by the department, and of the officers and firemen, who shall obey his orders." This says a lot and nothing all at the same time. It's a guess what is really meant by this, but here is what I think.

Starting with the obvious, the fire chief is in charge of emergency incidents, not the selectmen. So, as soon as the alarm goes off and until the incident is terminated and all

continues on next page ►

MGL Chapter 48 Section 42A

Establishment in Towns Under the Direction of the Selectmen; Appointment of Fire Chief, Other Officers and Firemen; Compensation; Removal; Regulations; Control of Department.

Section 42A. In towns which accept this section or have accepted corresponding provisions of earlier laws there shall be a fire department established under the direction of the selectmen, who shall appoint a chief of the fire department and such other officers and firemen as they deem necessary, and fix their compensation in an amount not in the aggregate exceeding the annual appropriation therefor. The selectmen may make suitable regulations governing the fire department and the officers and firemen thereof, and in towns which are not subject to chapter thirty-one may remove the chief and other officers and firemen at pleasure. The chief of the fire department shall be in immediate control of all town property used by the department, and of the officers and firemen, who shall obey his orders.



units and personnel are back in quarters and in-service, the fire chief is in-charge. The selectman cannot give orders or require their approval for decisions and actions of the fire chief during an incident. They can, however, as part of his/her annual review or other appropriate process, review the fire chief's performance during an emergency incident and if they find it unacceptable they can take whatever administrative action they deem appropriate.

It is also clear that the officers and firefighters must obey the fire chief. They should not be going around the chief and looking to the selectman for direction.

It is in-between emergency calls that this last sentence gets murky because most policy-making authority is given to the selectmen. So, if the chief says all the firefighters must take a particular training class is that personnel policy or is that merely an operational order of the chief? I think that the selectmen would be within their rights to set a training policy saying what the frequency of training at the fire department should be, but it is the chief who determines the specific content of each training session. Or, the selectman can simply delegate all training to the chief.

Another thing that this sentence stands for is that the chief is responsible for the inventorying, properly housing of, maintenance of and use of all of the fire department facilities, apparatus and equipment. The chief is in-charge of scheduling maintenance. The chief is in-charge of how the fire station is used and in which bay each truck is parked. The chief decides what color helmets everyone wears.

Weak chief is open to a great deal of interpretation. There isn't any significant case law on it that I could find. Some elements of it are vague enough that every town might have its own interpretation and procedures based upon history, culture, and negotiations between the chief and the selectmen.

In my observations there are three significant flaws with the Weak Chief Law. First, by putting all personnel decisions in the hands of the selectmen it encourages firefighters to go around the fire chief with their personal gripes and agendas. Promotions, hiring and disciplinary matters can become overly political, especially in small towns where everyone knows each other. Maintaining any kind of professional and confidential oversight is difficult when every personnel decision becomes a matter for the Board of Selectmen.

The second flaw is that many selectmen forget that they have no individual authority over the fire department and that the law only gives them authority when acting as a board, in a properly posted meeting, with a fire department item on the agenda for action. Too often individual selectmen like to give their personal advice and direction to the fire chief and expect that the chief should accept their individual comments as direction or policy. For the selectmen to make policy or use their authority, they have to vote in a meeting to do so.

The third flaw is that the weak chief scheme is slow and clunky in a fast, high-tech world. If the fire chief has to wait for monthly meetings with the selectmen to address every change in policy or every personnel issue that comes up, things are not addressed in a timely manner. Personnel problems need to be addressed quickly or they fester and get worse. All too often, personnel actions take a month to get to the selectmen in the first instance, and then the board decides to study the problem or asks for additional information and it will be a week, two weeks or another

month before the next meeting.

I've observed this slow management by committee as morale killer for call/volunteer fire departments. It's not easy for staff to adjust to the slow pace of town government when all the other elements of our lives are moving so fast. Without realizing it, many boards of selectmen are sending a message that empowers troublemakers and poor performers by moving so slowly on dealing with issues that arise.

As I've thought about this particular fire department structure, I think the best thing that fire chiefs and selectmen can do to make it work well is to have a written delegation of authority to the fire chief that spells out what issues the chief can and should handle, and what issues should be referred to the selectmen (or town administrator) and how. Many of the issues I've observed between chiefs and selectmen start, or are exasperated, because of conflicting expectations. The more that the lines of authority can be determined before there is an issue the less trouble there will be. When you start exploring who is in-charge or what the process for resolving an issue is when an actual problem presents itself, you run into trouble. First, there will be all kinds of external political pressure on the selectmen to rule or create a process favorable to certain people. Second, department members will lose trust in the chief and/or the selectmen because they will feel (rightly or wrongly) that what process is being decided upon is rigged in someone's favor. If the clear lines of authority already exist and everyone follows them consistently, then these problems are minimized.

As with the Strong Chief structure, a fire chief appointed under the Weak Chief statute is also the Forest Fire Warden in accordance with GL Chapter 48 Section 43. This law reads "The chief of a fire department shall act as forest warden in all such towns which accept the provisions of either of the two preceding sections, and shall have authority to appoint deputy wardens and fix their compensation subject to the approval of the selectmen." The two preceding sections referred to are Sections 42 and 42A. So, if your fire department is organized under either the Strong Chief or the Weak Chief statute, then the fire chief must be the forest warden, there is no other option.



WEAK



CHIEF

Board of Fire Prevention Regulations Adopts Model Fire Code

The Board of Fire Prevention Regulations (BFPR) voted to adopt a national model fire code at their August 7, 2014 meeting.



The new code adopts the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1 (NFPA 1, 2012 edition) with Massachusetts amendments. Massachusetts joins nearly 20 other states in the country that use this model code as the backbone of their fire code. The new Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code (527 CMR 1.00) will take effect on January 1, 2015.

The Board of Fire Prevention Regulations is a 16-member board responsible for promulgating a comprehensive fire safety code (527 CMR) for the Commonwealth. The board was created in the wake of the Nov. 28, 1942 Cocoanut Grove nightclub fire in Boston that killed 492 people to write the first statewide, uniform fire code. Since the 1940's, this Governor-appointed board has written, revised and administered the state's fire code.

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan said, "The adoption of a model code sets the stage for a code that is adaptable to new technologies and emerging trends, while also being easily maintained going forward. It taps into the depth and expertise the National Fire Protection Association's voluntary code development process." He added, "I applaud the board for their hard work critically reviewing each and every section and creating Massachusetts amendments that preserve key provisions of the current code that reflect the experiences and needs of the Commonwealth."

Marshfield Fire Chief Kevin Robinson, chairman of the Board of Fire Prevention Regulations, said, "This adoption reflects many years of work consisting of constituent input, community outreach and stakeholder collaboration. However, the hard work is about to begin as the fire service transitions to the new code and attends training to understand how to navigate and enforce it uniformly across the Commonwealth."

The new Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, 527 CMR 1, is designed to assist local fire prevention officers in providing effective fire prevention measures in their communities.

The base code for 527 CMR 1 is the National Fire Protection Association 1 (NFPA 1). Effective fire prevention is critical to keep our communities safe from fire in homes, schools, workplaces, and at

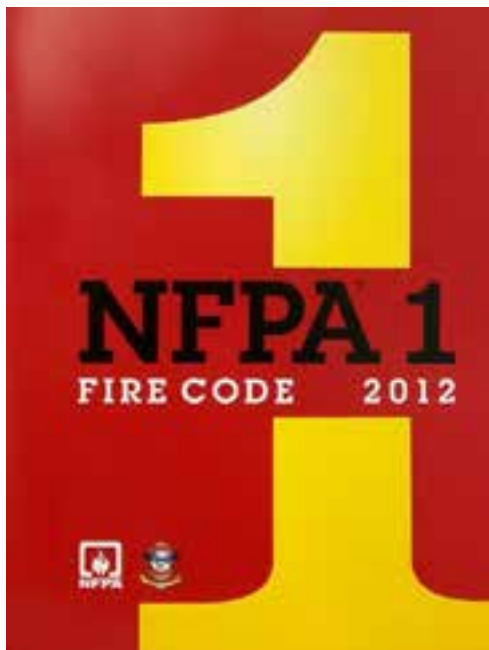
recreational facilities.

Training

Training is critically important for code enforcement officials because 527 CMR 1 references, and is used in conjunction with, other standards. The Department of Fire Services and the National

Fire Protection Association (NFPA) are offering a number of two-day training opportunities this fall and in the early part of 2015 to prepare fire service personnel for the implementation and use of the revised code document. Fire chiefs, fire officers and code enforcement officials should be well-versed in the new code. These two-day, 16-hour seminars will provide local fire officials with a basic understanding of the significant changes in the new fire code. The first day of training introduces the National Fire Protection Association's fire prevention code (NFPA 1, 2012 edition) because it is the base code for the new Massachusetts code. NFPA instructors will orient participants to the document and will explain how NFPA codes and standards are formulated and utilized. Day 2 of the seminar features instruction on Massachusetts-specific code amendments

by instructors from DFS. The training covers the code's general scope and layout. Students should not anticipate an in-depth discussion of technical aspects of fire prevention regulations during this training. Workshop participants receive a complimentary copy of the 2012 edition of NFPA 1, and a copy of the Massachusetts amendments. Register online or by mail through the Mass. Firefighting Academy. Complete a standard DFS/MFA student application and mail to Registrar, Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, P.O. Box 1025, State Road, Stow, MA 01775.





I hope everyone was able to spend some time with family and loved ones this Holiday Season.

At this time, I would like to invite you to our next Region 1 Meeting on Thursday, January 22, 2015. The meeting will be hosted by the Westport Call Firefighters Association and will be at 54 Hixbridge Road Westport, MA 02790. Please RSVP to vpregion1@mcvfa.org by January 16, 2015. A head count is needed for the meal. Topics to be discussed at this meeting include the 25th Anniversary update, report from the October 2014 State Meeting, and a possibly a presentation on firefighter health and wellness.

The Massachusetts Fire Academy will be conducting a Call/Volunteer Recruit Firefighter Training program this year in Fall River. Good luck to all the recruits.

In September, the election for Regional Vice President was conducted at our regional meeting in Onset. I was reelected as your Vice President and look forward to serving for the next 2 years. Additionally, Rachel Rawlings was appointed as our Regional Secretary. I welcome Rachel to this role and look forward to working with her and our Regional Coordinator to continue moving the region forward.

Membership, I have received feedback from around the region that the communication from the MCVFA is not what it once was. The MCVFA has gone through some great changes this year; first, our long-time office assistant retired and many of us took what she did for granted. Second, we have transitioned the processing of membership to in-house. With these transitions, we have experienced a few growing pains so I ask you to please be patient with us as we settle into our new business model. One method we are reconsidering is if we should return to mailing out meeting notices in addition to email notifications. Let me know if you have a preference. The Associations other communication tools include the website, www.mcvfa.org, and our Facebook page. Meeting announcements, events, and other items of interest are regularly posted to these sites.

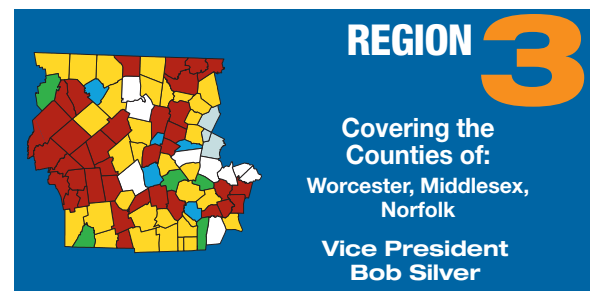
If you have any questions or comments about MCVFA State/Region 1 business, please feel free to contact me. My email address is vpregion1@mcvfa.org and my phone number is 508-509-3531. You can also contact your Regional Coordinator, Tom Rose, at reg1cor@mcvfa.org.



Region 2 is still on its way back to where I believe it can be. I have been in touch with some departments that are looking to become active again and some that would like to join. I urge anyone in the region to please contact me if you have any questions or ideas; I am open to any and all help I can get.

We have had two meetings so far with a decent response with me being elected as the VP for the region in September. I am planning a meeting for December before the holiday chaos begins to determine what direction we should be moving in. The regional coordinator position is still open and I'm seeking anyone that may be interested.

If any department has information they would like posted or have any upcoming events, please let me know about them. This is just another way to get this region up and running again. I hope you all enjoy the holidays and stay safe



If you have the chance to catch a talk by Chief Bobby Halton, Editor of Fire Engineering and several other publications, don't miss it. His views on leadership and direction of the fire service can be eye opening. The Mid-State Mutual Aid Association brought Chief Halton to West Boylston recently for their annual Safety and Survival Seminar. As usual, he presents many valuable lessons for all levels of leadership in the fire service, interspersed with riveting and humorous stories. But, the big takeaway for me was the question of the basic motivation of many of today's firefighters: are we here to serve the public and support the brothers and sisters we work with, or are we in it for ourselves?

I'm sure we've all asked ourselves a similar question occasionally, whether in small ways in our own firehouses or after seeing media stories of those whose selfish deeds have been exposed for all to see. If we want the next generation of firefighters to be great public servants, we need to show them from the minute they walk in the door as a recruit that the reason we are here is help the public and our department rather than trying to enrich ourselves

or get ahead at the expense of those we serve. What are you teaching your recruits about the culture of the fire service?

In August, Region 3 held a regional meeting at the Sutton Fire Department. Our guest speaker was Fran Clark, President of the relatively new Massachusetts Association of Tech Rescue Specialists. He provided an excellent overview of the mission and goals of the MATRS and encouraged any firefighters with an interest in Technical Rescue to check out their website (matrs.org) or attend a future meeting.

We were also provided a demonstration of District 7 Mobile Ventilation Unit, which is housed at Sutton Fire. The truck-mounted fan provides about 10 times the air volume of a standard gas powered PPV and has been used to quickly ventilate numerous large structures and warehouses in District 7 and even in Rhode Island. Sutton Fire is willing to send the truck to any department in need of large area ventilation - just call! Thanks to Sutton Delegate Shaun Scott and Chief Matt Belsito for hosting us.

After just about eight years as the Vice President for Region 3, I decided not to run for re-election this year. This association certainly needs many dedicated volunteers to put together all of the programs and benefits we provide to our members, but increasing family and other commitments have prevented me from dedicating the time needed to properly serve the members in the region and the E-Board of this association. I do plan to stay active in the MCVFA, both locally and on committees where I can help, and will certainly assist the next Vice-President and Regional Coordinator as they lead the region going forward.

Thank you to current Regional Coordinator Bob Silver for his energetic work supporting the region, bringing in new member departments, and providing great locations for regional, E-Board and State Meetings. Thanks also to former Region 3 Trustee Chuck Waldron, current and former members of the E-Board, and all of the delegates and Region 3 who have given so much time to serve the call and volunteer firefighters of this Commonwealth.



Second Annual Kids Fire Safety Camp

by Richard Scialabba
photos by Evelyn Cornwell Hinsdale FD

The second annual Kids Fire Safety Camp sponsored by the Hinsdale and Peru Volunteer Fire Departments was held August 15 and 16. The two-day program attended by 19 boys and girls in grades 3 through 5 at Kittredge

School was aimed at exposing the participants to the basics of firefighting, fire safety and fire prevention.



Friday's session began with registration, orientation and fire safety knowledge pre-test. Each was presented with a red T-shirt to wear during the program. First year participants were labeled "cadets" while second time entrant shirts were labeled "Captains". This was followed by several presentations and demonstrations. DCR District Fire Warden Margaret O'Brien-Carnevale brought Smokey the Bear with her to discuss wild land and forest fires. She also introduced the participants to "Indian Tank fun" letting each cadet pump water from an Indian tank. Berkshire Medical Center Dr. Jed Deering provided several home EMS short subject lectures over the course of both days.



County Ambulance owner Brian Andrews brought along a paramedic and an EMT who provided a tour of an ambulance to all in attendance explaining the types and use of the equipment carried on the rig. Students were instructed in proper treatment/boarding of seriously injured victims with second year students acting as the "victims". State Trooper Gary Spald came from Worcester with his "partner", Miranda, a Black Labrador Retriever search dog and highlighted his presentation by demonstrating how Miranda could find marijuana and very small quantities of drugs.



Lieutenant Dan Amuso and his brother, retired firefighter Pete Amuso both Certified Fire Investigators

continues on next page ►

came from the Pittsfield Fire Dept. to provide a fire safety session with insights into how investigators find fire causes.

Also on Friday the Dalton Fire Department brought in their 105-foot aerial ladder for a demonstration. The kids enjoyed climbing all over the vehicle as well as other pieces of apparatus on display.

Before leaving on Friday students were given a homework assignment to develop a home escape plan for review the next day.



Saturday was more of a participative learning experience using firefighters as safety guides. The morning session was broken down into small groups that went through a circuit that included separate activities for use of a small handline in full turnout gear squirting water at a target, time in the Berkshire County Fire Chiefs Safety House, hands on experience with the MCVFA Bullex fire extinguisher trainer and a darkened 50 foot maze crawl. This last item was done with a firefighter to simulate staying low to get out of the smoke. Participants had to locate a baby manikin and bring it to safety with them.

High angle rescue was covered by Massachusetts State Fire Academy instructor Steve Deloye who gave each participant a ride using a zip line setup.



Next Peru and Hinsdale firefighters performed a complete demonstration of auto extrication with the young cadets in full turnout gear "helping" by breaking side windows with a punch tool. Just before lunch the Hinsdale Police Department Chief Mark Smith and Officer Kerri Streibel conducted a short bike safety session.

After lunch the main event took place with Cadets in full turnout gear staffing apparatus with firefighters and responding to put out a live working house fire

(constructed of 60 wood pallets). Cadets manned hoses with firefighters and used one and a half inch handlines to extinguish the blaze.

The session concluded with a follow-up test, a participant opinion sheet and graduation with certificate and picture. Parents, Cadets and HVFD and PVFD staff then enjoyed a picnic.



With second year students in attendance some sessions were provided that gave more advanced instruction to reduce the amount of repetition from year one. Given that there were 3 more entrants this year and six of the year one "cadets" returned camp organizers have indicated it will return next year with additional information and a revised curriculum for third year participants.

Sheffield Selectmen Salute Retiring Chief Boardman

*by Derek Gentile, Berkshire Eagle Staff,
(Reprint permission courtesy of the Berkshire Eagle)*

The Selectmen this week honored longtime fireman Richard J. Boardman who recently retired with 31 years of service as a fireman, deputy chief and chief.

Chairman David A. Smith read a proclamation from the state House of Representatives lauding Boardman for his three decades of service.

In addition, members of the Sheffield Fire Department attended Monday's meeting in their dress uniforms. One by one, they rose from their place in the audience and congratulated Boardman with handshakes and hugs for his service.



Boardman's family also attended and applauded after Smith read the proclamation. "I know about community service," said Smith, "and I know what it means to give your time to the community."

Smith told Boardman, "Your service to this town has been unmeasurable."

Boardman thanked the town for its support of the firefighters.

"It's a privilege to receive this [proclamation]," said Boardman. "And to all the officers and firefighters in the department, I miss you guys, but I'm enjoying my retirement."

Boardman was appointed a fireman 31 years ago. He was named a deputy chief in 1997 and served in that capacity for six years until his appointment as chief. He served as the town's fire chief for 11 years before retiring in July.

Egremont Hosts Year's Final Firefighters' Steak Roast

*By Judith Lerner, Special to iBerkshires
(Reprint permission courtesy of the iberkshires.com)*

Fare at firefighter fundraising events range from pancake breakfasts to chicken barbecues and steak roasts.

Savoy used to do a lobster dinner and Lenox Dale has begun a kielbasa and shrimp boil. But the last firefighter's meal of the year is prepared and cooked by chef-owners of local fine restaurants.



Every year since 1982, on the Sunday afternoon following the Columbus Day weekend, Terry Moore of The Old Mill creates the Egremont Volunteer Fire Department's steak roast.

He sources and orders and shops for the ingredients.

Bakes the potatoes, Makes hot fudge sauce for 350, 450 sundaes and gets his friend Dan Smith, chef-owner of John Andrews Restaurant, to help with the grilling.

Volunteers prep the salad and decorate and set the fire station for the dinner.



"Fireman Bruce Turner flips the garlic bread. He's a master flipper," Assistant Fire Chief Jim Olmsted said. "And dessert is always a hot fudge sundae with Terry Moore's housemade hot fudge and SoCo ice cream."

Throughout the year, starting with Egremont's pancake breakfast on Palm Sunday, firefighters and their supporters in towns from tiny to merely small feed and entertain the public to raise the money to keep their volunteer departments going. Some have been doing so for 45 years or more.

Yes, town taxes pay day-to-day expenses but when a new truck — or a new fire house — is needed these classic, welcoming events bring in a few thousand extra dollars.

Moore uses his Old Mill restaurant in South Egremont to organize and prepare the finely made steak roast for the Egremont Fire Department. On the day of the dinner, Smith, from John Andrews Restaurant down the road in South Egremont, dons his chef's whites and grills the steaks.

Moore started doing steak roasts for the Fire Department in 1982 when the department needed a new fire truck.

"They came to me," he said. "I said, 'Let's get the community together and see what we can rustle up.'"

continues on next page ►

Great Barrington's New 2014 KME 100' Mid-Mount Tower

photo by Brian Mead, Great Barrington Fire Department)



photo by Brian Mead, Great Barrington Fire Department)



photo by Ed Harvey

"The dinner did not pay for the whole truck but it certainly was a help."

Acknowledging how much time has pass, Moore added with a laugh, "That fire truck has since been retired."

Moore came to the Berkshires after cooking on the old Queen Mary ocean liner and in New York City.

"I thought the Berkshires was a place needed a good little restaurant - this was '75, '76," he said. "The Berkshires are a great place. It's all to do with the people and, then, quality of life."

He came up with a really simple menu for that first dinner for the Fire Department.

"I grilled a 14 ounce strip steak. It's old fashioned," Moore said.

"I've been fortunate to be a very good supporter of the Egremont Fire Department. Really, it's for the lads of the company so they get some recognition from the community."

Smith said he's been involved with the annual fundraiser for the 24 years he's been in business.

"It's a volunteer department. They need funding to be sustainable for everything they do. That's why I support it. They volunteer their own time," he said. "The least I can do is volunteer my time for that one day."

"I go down there and grill steaks for them for the night. Terry orders the beef and cuts it and bakes all the potatoes and orders all the food for it. I've been, basically, the grunt man. I go down there and get burned," Smith said jokingly.

With the exception of the Berkshires' two cities, the county's fire departments are volunteer. A few towns, like Great Barrington and Lenox, have some paid staff.

And all the companies are looking for more volunteers.

"We could get more young people involved. We're open 24 hours, seven days a week — our doors are open," Olmsted said. "We're more than desperate. We're looking for help. There's all kinds of positions. You don't have to go into burning buildings. One of our female members has 16 years in the Army. We need pump operators, equipment handlers, safety personnel, all kinds of position are available. We all work as a team and we all do mutual aid for other towns."

"It's nice to have them given a little bit of recognition," Moore said about the dinner. "The highlight of the evening will be the ice cream sundae with our famous chocolate sauce."

50 Years of Service

This past November, the Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Company presented Harold "Bob" King a plaque in honor of his 50 years of service.



photo by Paul Vallone

Joining the fire company in 1964, Bob is only the third member since its formation in 1936 to achieve this benchmark of service.



2014 Berkshire SPAAMFAA Show at Stockbridge Train Station



photos by Ed Havey





Call Our Confidential Fire/EMS Helpline at:

1-888-731-FIRE (3473)



IF YOU SEE NO WAY OUT
THEN JUST REACH OUT

MAKE THE CALL TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

Talk to someone you love. Talk to a friend or colleague.
Or, talk to counselors trained and experienced in
the firefighter and EMT culture by calling the national
Fire/EMS Helpline: **1-888-731-FIRE (3473)**.

Find resources to Share the Load at www.nvfc.org/help.

PERSISTENT SADNESS • SUICIDAL THOUGHTS • SUBSTANCE ABUSE • WORK/LIFE STRESSES

The Fire/EMS Helpline is in partnership with American Addiction Centers. | Have questions about the Share the Load™ program? Dial 202-887-5700.



Massachusetts Call/Volunteer
Firefighters Association
P.O. Box 2163
Teaticket, MA 02536

NON PROFIT
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 21
FREEPORT, OH



WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

If you would like to reach
thousands of decision-makers
throughout Massachusetts,
you need to
advertise in *Smoke Showin'*.

Call (800) 551-FIRE
or email
smokeshowin@ljsquared.com
for details.