

Call/Volunteers Serving Today to Protect Your Tomorrow

# Smoke Showin'

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association



## BOATYARD FIRE

# Massive Boatyard Fire Accidental

## *Spark During Boat Repair Likely Ignited Gasoline Vapors*



*Photos from Mattapoissett's Facebook page*

**T**he fire that destroyed buildings, cars, and boats at the Mattapoissett Boatyard on Friday was most likely caused by the ignition of gasoline vapors during the replacement of a boat's gas tank, said Mattapoissett Fire Chief Andrew Murray and State Fire Marshal Peter Ostroskey.

"Our hearts go out to the worker who was badly injured during last week's fire and the family business that's been a part of our community for 60 years," said Chief Murray. "On behalf of the Town of Mattapoissett, I also want to recognize the efforts of our firefighters and our brother and sister firefighters and chiefs from across the region who rushed in to help. They defied the danger of a massive, wind-driven fire to prevent it from spreading further into the community and putting more people at risk."

The origin and cause of the fire were jointly investigated by the Mattapoissett Fire Department, Mattapoissett Police Department, and State Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office. That investigation determined that the fire began inside a building at 32 Ned's Point Road, where a worker had been replacing a boat's gas tank. Investigators believe that a spark ignited gasoline vapors during this process, causing an explosion and fire that seriously injured the worker, an adult male. The fire was fed by winds of up to 25 miles per hour coming in off the water and spread to nearby buildings, vehicles, and boats. In addition to the worker who was injured, three firefighters suffered injuries related to smoke inhalation and heat exhaustion. All four were transported from the scene for medical care; the worker remains hospitalized and is expected to survive, and the firefighters have been released.

"We're extremely fortunate that Friday's fire didn't cause more injuries or worse," said State Fire Marshal Peter Ostroskey. "Nearly 900 fires have started with gasoline in Massachusetts over the past 10 years, causing nine deaths and almost \$20 million in damages. Many of us use gasoline in our daily lives, but we can't lose sight of the fire and explosion hazard associated with it. Gasoline vapors can travel a great distance to an ignition point, especially indoors."

After receiving multiple 9-1-1 calls reporting explosions at about 1:20 pm, the Mattapoissett Fire Department responded to the scene to find heavy fire that spread to 6 buildings, 47 vehicles and 14 boats. The fire reached six alarms, drawing mutual aid from across southeastern Massachusetts and additional task forces through the Statewide Fire Mobilization Plan. In total, more than 100 firefighters battled the fire with 19 engines, 12 tankers, 3 fireboats, and 2 ladder trucks before knocking it down around 6:00 pm. "This highly coordinated and collaborative effort allowed us to contain the fire to the boatyard property and save all of the surrounding homes and structures," said Chief Murray. The Department of Fire Services deployed an Incident Support Unit to assist incident commanders, a Rehab Unit to support firefighters at the scene, a Drone Unit to gather aerial imagery, a Hazmat team to monitor air quality at the fireground, and State Police fire investigators to work with local officials. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, Department of Environmental Protection, several area harbor masters, and the Coast Guard also responded to the scene. 🚒

*Press release from the Mattapoissett Fire Department, Fire Chief Andrew Murray on August 22, 2022.*





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The editorial staff of *Smoke Showin'* is always looking for topics and articles about the industry. If you have any suggestions or would like to write an article, please contact Pamela Crombie, at [pamela.a.crombie@gmail.com](mailto:pamela.a.crombie@gmail.com).

Cover photo courtesy from Captain Chip Deblois, Wareham FD.

# Treasurer's Note

When people ask what I do for work, I always say "I am an accountant in real life, but I run into burning buildings for free!" As you'll see later in this issue, I joined the Swansea Fire Department in April 2002, and joined the MCVFA E-Board as Treasurer in late 2020. My real life job is to help small businesses and nonprofits grow and ensure sustainability for the long term. I have been very vocal over the last two years about the need for the MCVFA to focus on our future, and I'm so proud to say the E-Board is in full agreement.

The E-Board met in early August to review our current financial position, and start to build our budget for the next 3 years. As I mentioned in the last *Smoke Showin'*, we are looking forward to making positive changes to this organization, including researching potential grants, as well as other opportunities for fundraising. The success of the MCVFA is critical to ensuring Call/Volunteer fire departments within the Commonwealth can stay just that - Call/Volunteer.

I'd like to remind everyone that we are no longer affiliated with any outside fundraising services. Any and all fundraising done by the MCVFA will be announced through our Facebook page, in this magazine, and at MCVFA specific events. If you receive a call or notification from anyone claiming affiliation with us, please let me, or the President know immediately.

We are in the process of redesigning our website. Currently, the MCVFA store is offline, and will be back up and running in the near future. We expect to have a wide range of gifts, clothing, and other items to choose from, and if there is something special you'd like to see us offer, let me know. Additionally, if you have a contact, or if you are a maker yourself, we'd love to offer fire department related items that were made here in Massachusetts.

When this issue comes out, our second Annual Golf Tournament will have already taken place on September 25th. As I am writing this, the golf committee is working day and night to make sure this event is a success, and we look forward to sharing the photos after the event. We have a few locations in mind for the third Annual event, so keep an eye out for the 2023 save the date announcement.

Our last fundraiser of 2022 will be a raffle of a framed 16x20 photo of the American LaFrance Engine 51 from Emergency! More information follows later in this issue, and also on Facebook. Please reach out to me, or your Region Coordinator, to purchase tickets. The winner will be drawn on December 1, just in time for a holiday gift.

Thank you all for your support, and as always, please reach out to me with any ideas, suggestions, and even complaints. I love to hear from you, even if it's not great news. I can be reached at [treasurer@mcvfa.org](mailto:treasurer@mcvfa.org), and 774-930-0026. 🍷

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## President's Message

**A**t our most recent E- board meeting, we were discussing different topics that we should write in this magazine, and we decided that this issue was going to focus on Recruitment and Retention.

So, I thought maybe I would write what got me first involved and what kept me going for so many years and the challenges that I faced along the way.

In the early eighties just before I had graduated, my family homestead had a fire on New Year's Eve. My three younger brothers were in the house and managed to get out onto the porch roof where they were rescued by a group of firefighters that were around the corner at a friend's house for a New Year's Eve gathering.

Thankfully everything worked out and nobody was hurt, due to quick-thinking actions of those firefighters, grabbing a ladder and getting my family members off the roof to safety. Because I come from a large family (9 children), there was no mobile home that could handle the eight family members that were living in the home at the time. We had to wait until they could locate a mobile home large enough to accommodate everyone in it, and were placed into a local motel for the next month.

This was another time that I witnessed the support from the community. People were sending food and clothing to the motel and the Fire and Police chiefs would stop by and check on us to see how we were doing and ask if there was anything we needed.

This was the beginning of me really wanting to give back after witnessing the professionalism and the kindness and passion that they have given to my family throughout the situation. So, in the mid-eighties I joined the Fire Dept. and it was there I was given the opportunity to be able to give back to not only the firefighters that served my family that day, but the whole community in some way or another.

Over the years I was involved in many events that we held in the community. We raised funds for scholarships, built a drill tower and held our annual firemen's memorial services. We would hold firemen's musters, comedy nights, dances, and the town's annual Christmas event. All of this was done together as a team and the comradery and passion we had is what made the fire dept. a strong asset to the community.

It was in the early nineties when it became more challenging to continue my fire service. When I started my family and was trying to balance family, fire department responsibilities and a full time job. This is where I saw a lot of the fire personnel drop out, because they don't have the time and can't balance between the three. I have learned that it is a lot of hard work and dedication to make it all work out, but it is worth the effort. It wasn't until I was in my early twenties I had made the time to finally go and get my Firefighter I/II certification. Then in 2015 I had to make the difficult decision to retire from the fire department because my fulltime job duties had increased and I needed to focus on those duties.

So, the moral of my story is, it takes time, passion, and dedication to make all of this happen and people make choices not to get involved because they don't have the time. We need to break this pattern and make more flexibility in the way of thinking to help fill the staffing levels of our Call/Volunteer fire programs. 🚒

**Tom Burnett**  
**MCVFA President**  
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**Be safe out on the roadways keep an eye on traffic.**

# Why I Became a Firefighter

## Joe Maruca, Chief West Barnstable Fire Department



was drafted into the volunteer fire service.

It was April 19, 1977. I was a high school senior and on spring break, and I had gone to the hardware store to purchase cement for footings for our deck. When I arrived at the hardware store, there was smoke coming from the woods behind the Hu Ke Lau Restaurant (across the street from the hardware store). I walked over to see what was going on.

I found a fire engine behind the Hu Ke Lau. A firefighter came around the side of the fire engine and said “Hey you. I need your help.” Silly me, I said sure and walked up to him. He handed me the nozzle to the red booster hose and told me to drag it into the woods, following the hose already on the ground and to hand it to the firefighters I would find. I did it. Then I walked back out to the fire engine.

The same firefighter saw me and said, “I need you again” and he put an Indian Can on my back. Then he told me to follow the hose, and when I got to the fire to turn right and spray water on any fire I saw as I walked along the edge of the burning woods. An hour or two later, we were packing up and I was about to head home, when the firefighter said, “before you go home, stop at the fire station because I need some information for the report”. At the station they took my name and address, and then took me up to the attic to give me gear. I got a helmet, a coat, a pair of  $\frac{3}{4}$  boots, a pair of gloves, a flashlight, a map of town, and plug in home receiver alert radio. They congratulated me on joining the fire department. The firefighter that drafted me was J. Victor Shayeb, a paid on-call lieutenant.

Next, they told me to put the gear in my car and plug in the radio at home. They said the radio would tell when and where there was a fire. They told me that if the fire was between

my house and the fire station, to drive to the fire, park out of the way, put on my gear, and wait for the fire truck to arrive. And, if I had to drive past the fire station to reach the fire, to pull in, put on my gear, and get on the next fire truck leaving the station. No training, no meeting anyone else, no other preparation!

That week I went to two or three other brush fires (April 1977 was a big year for brush fires in the Northeast) and an attic fire (house hit by lightning). I also ended up first due to a horrific MVC where one high school friend had struck another high school friend with his car. She died in front of me in the street before anyone else arrived. I had no medical training – no training of any kind. I don’t know why I stayed on the fire department after that, and this call still comes into my mind today.

Later that summer, I pulled another high school friend from a burning car (also a MVC) and she lived. Over time, I forgot about this incident, and it didn’t stay with me the way the death did. It wasn’t until my 30th High School reunion, when she thanked me for saving her, that I even remembered the incident. It’s funny what we remember and don’t—or what’s important in our minds.... I find both incidents equally hard to talk about even today.

I spent nine years on the Longmeadow FD as a paid on-call (\$2.30/hour) firefighter and became a lieutenant. I served four of those years on weekends, holidays, and summers as a Boston University student. On my last day at the LFD, I was dropping my gear off at the station, on my way to Boston for law school, and we got a building fire – second floor bedroom. It was quite the sendoff.

Since then, I served from 1991 to 2005 as a volunteer firefighter with the Sandwich FD and West Barnstable FD. In 2005 I became the career chief of the West Barnstable FD. In April 2024, I will be retired, but the memories and experiences will stay with me forever. 🚒





# Why I Became a Firefighter

## Kevin Connolly, MCVFA Past President Northfield Fire Department

My fire service career started on Long Island at age 6 in East Rockaway, New York. My dad was a member of Liberty Hose Co. #2, which was located three doors down from our house. The engine was a 1946 Mack Model L 750.

When the fire siren went off, my dad and the other firefighters who lived in the neighborhood would run to the fire house, jump on the truck and pull their turnout gear on as they rode past the house. At that time, the engine had seating on top of a small hose bed.

This was quite exciting, not just for me, but for all the kids in the neighborhood!

One of the more interesting times was attending the firemen's parades and drill team competitions held at a local park in town. It was quite an experience to see the bands, marching firemen and what seemed to be an inexhaustible amount of fire engines. It was also quite exciting to watch the competitions as the firemen ran down the street with a hose, hooked it up to the hydrant and shoot the water to hit the target! Or run with a wagon and ladder and throw it up on the arch as a fireman would climb to the top!

In the early 60's, our family moved to Port Jefferson, New York. Soon after our arrival in town, my dad joined the Port Jefferson Fire Department. There was always something going on at the firehouse; it basically was the social center in town at the time. When dad ran out to a fire call, we would gather around the "squawk" box, later a Plectron, and listen to the fire chatter.

In 1970, upon graduation from high school, I joined Suwassett Engine & Hose Co. #2, which my dad also belonged to. I climbed the officer's ladder to become Captain in 1982. During my time here, I became interested in attending the multiple local, county and state fire associations.

I, like so many of my age at the time, aspired to become members of FDNY. I did take the test in 1972, but did not make the cut! Life, as it seems, had a different path for me.

Three years in the military did not stop my interest in the fire service. After the military, I started working at the post office. I transferred to Brattleboro, Vermont from Long Island, moving there with my growing family in 1985. Shortly thereafter, I became a member of the Brattleboro Fire Department. This was my first encounter with a combination department and as a

"call" firefighter, was paid a yearly stipend! I also became a delegate for the county and state fire associations.

Two years later, we moved to a new house in Vernon, Vermont. At Town Meeting in 1987, I approached the fire chief and asked to join the local fire company. As in most small towns, the fire department is always looking for new members. In my case, having previous experience helped me join this group of dedicated volunteers.

After a short hiatus from the fire service (and divorce), I moved next door to Northfield, Massachusetts in 2003. After painfully listening to the fire trucks roll past my apartment on Main Street on their way to incidents, I spoke with the chief about joining the department. After presenting my name to the department, I was voted in as a member in 2004. In time, I also became the delegate to the state firefighters' association. In October 2014, I was elected as President of the MCVFA.

I have long supported the argument that there is more to the fire service than just fighting fires. There are many tasks that can be performed and many committee assignments that need support within a fire department or association.

While no longer an interior firefighter, I continue to serve both the Department and State Association in whatever way I can. I never thought of this as a job, but more of a calling. As I continued my fire service career, it became a sort of passion. I truly have enjoyed the experiences and comradery that goes with this. 🧯



# Why I Became a Firefighter

## Mike Goldstein, Region 3 Vice President Sherborn Fire Department

I live in Sherborn, a small, semi-rural town of about 1100 families (4400 people). Although it is within I-495, it is rather rural, with no town water at all and no town sewer – all of the families have wells and septic and there are NO pressurized fire hydrants.

The main Fire Station is right on Rt. 16/27, so I pass it every day at least twice a day. Sometime in spring or summer 2015 the Fire Department put up a notice on its sign it was looking for volunteers. Since I was active in my town and a former Eagle Scout, I called the department and asked about it. But when I mentioned to the person on the other end of the phone that I was going to be out of the country for the first half of 2016 I was told not to bother filling out an application and just contact them again when I returned.

Of course, this wasn't the first thing I thought of when I returned, but it did stay on my mind.

Then one Wednesday morning the local private company trash truck arrived to pick up my trash, as it did weekly. On the side of the trash truck was a metal sign recruiting for the Fire Department! I thought "Boy, our town must really be in a lot of trouble if they have to advertise on the side of the trash truck." I asked the driver (who I knew and spoke with each week) about it. He knew me rather well by then and often saw me going for a run. He looked at me a bit, and then said "Hey, wait a minute, you are here every day midmorning when I pick up the trash which means you are in town midday at times. We really need you. You should join." I later learned he was a Lieutenant and Paramedic and his father was a former Fire Chief in our town.

So I called again and filled out an application (which was ridiculously and unnecessarily long). This time the Chief called me back and asked why I wanted to do this and I said to give back to the town. He said to come to a drill they were having in late August and see what it is like.

Well, what a drill – they had an abandoned structure which they filled with smoke using a smoke machine. I got to watch and then go in with the Deputy Chief and see what it was like – then go on the ladder and move the stick a bit. Hard to say no then!

The day I am writing this marks six years since I went to that first structure drill. After about six months, I said to the Chief that while I have a full-time job I was willing to train up in one



area. While I was expecting he would ask me to be Firefighter I/II, instead he said they really needed EMTs who lived in town. So I found an accelerated EMT program and started in February 2017 and passed the written and the practical by March 10th.

In February 2020, I entered the Mass Fire Academy as part of Call/Vol class 083, but we were canceled due to Covid by mid-March (just after Exam 1 – we had finished about 17% of the class). So I had to re-enter in July 2020 as part of Call/Vol class 086. In our class we had six people over 50 and three people over 55 when we graduated in November 2020.

So it is never too late and you are never too old to join up and make a difference. 🚒



# Why I Became a Firefighter

## Frank M Speth III, Region 5 Vice President New Ashford Fire Department

I had started out in the Fire Service/Emergency Services back in 1995 in the Pittsfield Emergency Management Agency in the Staff division under the direction of Thomas Grizey, Emergency Management Director.

I joined the Pittsfield Emergency Management Agency to give back to the people of the Community and to learn from the many experienced members of the Pittsfield Emergency Management Agency.

In late 1998 I moved to Hinsdale and joined the Hinsdale Volunteer Fire Department, and it was here that I gained the best experience that anyone could have. We trained under the direction of Chief Larry Turner, and he was always interested in training right alongside us. The reason I had joined that department was to help our fellow human beings and if it helped just one person it was well worth being there in their time of need. I had served with the Hinsdale Fire Department until 2003 when I moved out of the Town.

I worked as a Telecommunications 911 Dispatcher for the Lee Communications Center in February 2003 until October 2017 and worked under 3 different Chiefs of Police. In October 2017 the Dispatch operations were closed and moved under the Berkshire County Sheriff's Department. I then attended the MA 911 Department academy to train and work under the Berkshire County Sheriff's Department. It was in 2019 that I was offered a position in another 911 center which I had accepted. In 2008 a good friend and mentor, Vicki Sorrentino had talked me into taking the EMT course with Lee Ambulance Service. I had taken the EMT-B course and passed the exam to become an Emergency Medical Technician-B. I had served with the Lee Ambulance squad as a volunteer EMT until the Ambulance Service became a 24/7 paid department. This was by far the greatest learning experience for me, and I had learned a lot from my instructors, Scott Rockfeller and Vicki Sorrentino. They are both awesome instructors and mentors, I could not have done it without their help and pushing me.

In 2019 a retired member of the New Ashford Volunteer Fire Department had urged me to come

to a meeting at the Department. I joined the Department and served as a firefighter for 3 years until being promoted to the Deputy Chief under Chief Buckley. When the Chief retired I was appointed to Fire Chief. This has been a wonderful and awesome learning experience for me. From working alongside the members of the Department to meeting the residents in the community. The greatest hurdle is recruitment of new members to the Department, all across the country there is a shortage of volunteers to join the local fire department. This presents a challenge of recruiting new members and retaining them. The biggest positive thing that we can take home is when we help our fellow community and when at times it might not be the best outcome we tried our best in light of a bad situation/event. I would like to say a big thank you to all the members of the New Ashford Volunteer Fire Department for serving the community and working together as a team, we would not be able to do what we do without their continued assistance. 🚒



# Why I Became a Firefighter

**Pam Crombie, MCVFA Treasurer, Editor  
Swansea Fire Department**

Volunteering and giving back has always been in my blood. My mother, sister and I were all Girl Scouts, and we spent countless hours growing up doing service projects, volunteering around town, and coordinating the annual cookie delivery - my mother, sister, and I used to unload a 53 foot trailer truck full of cookies into waiting minivans in the freezing cold every year! The truck drivers always complimented us on our drive and work ethic, but to us, it was just something we loved.

When I was a senior in high school, I noticed a bunch of my guy friends were often leaving school early and coming in late because they were on the Swansea Fire Department, and there had been a call where they were needed. I remember one commercial fire in particular, my friend came into class in the middle of the last period and he said he was exhausted because they had been on scene since the early morning and he barely had time to shower and make it to class on time so as to not be considered absent for the day. I was jealous, not because they were 'skipping' school, but because I saw my friends were able to give back to the town in a way that I was not able. I mentioned to my boyfriend at the time that I was interested in joining the department, and he told me I couldn't 'hack it'. I marched myself into (now retired) Chief Burke's office, filled out an application, and officially joined the Swansea Volunteer Fire Department on April 1, 2000. Naturally, that boyfriend didn't last much longer after that.

Throughout my volunteer service, I had countless experiences that I could never have imagined. We've had crazy accidents that make you scratch your head wondering how the cars ended up the way they did, we rescued cats from trees, helped far more than a handful of injured hikers out of the woods, and pumped way too many basements, among all the other calls. But what really kept me around was the community aspect, and the immense pride that our town has for our volunteer department.

Swansea is the largest community in Massachusetts by both land mass and population that is served by a 100% volunteer fire department (with the exception of our Chief and Deputy Chief, of course). Townspeople are always quick to praise us for a job well done and thank us for volunteering, and it's a huge feeling of pride to know that I play a small part in protecting our town, and preserving our department.

Since I joined the fire department, there have been about 10 other women that volunteered over the years, along with all



the guys of course! While I (and the rest of us women) have always been welcome in Swansea, it is well known that not many women are in the fire service. Whenever I am at a call or a public service event, I make a point to say hi and give a warm smile to any and every young child that is interested in what we are doing - especially the young girls. One of my favorite memories is from just a couple of years ago. There was an alarm at a restaurant in town, and when I walked in, a little girl's eyes lit up and she exclaimed 'Mommy, look! It's a GIRL!!!!'. I smiled and laughed and said absolutely, and in just a minute another girl is going to walk in right behind me. This little girl was so excited that there were two female firefighters on scene that she got to chat with for a few minutes, and I told her that I hope she will be able to join our ranks once she gets just a bit older.

The volunteer fire service has changed dramatically since I joined. We used to have a force that was nearly double what we have now, yet we have more calls, more homes in town, more construction, more accidents, and more businesses in town to serve. It is difficult to find the time to volunteer, no one disputes that fact. But we all must do our part, to show up, to train, and to recruit the future generation of call/volunteer firefighters. 🚒

## Editor's Note

**As** I worked through my second issue as interim editor, I realized a few things: *Smoke Showin'* is hard work, there is always room for improvement, and I am very thankful for everyone who has contributed to this issue, and every issue in the past.

There are countless topics that we can cover in *Smoke Showin'*. For this issue, I asked my colleagues to tell their stories of why they joined the fire service, and what their experiences have been over the years. All of us know recruitment and retention is critical to the call/volunteer fire service, and this is something, among many other topics, that the MCVFA wants to cover in the near future. I am one of the youngest members of the MCVFA E-Board, and hearing stories from all the firefighters that came into the service before me is motivating. It makes me want to go to more calls, attend more training opportunities,

and do everything in my power to recruit and retain the next generation. The Call/Volunteer fire service can only succeed if we all do our part.

Thank you for doing a sometimes thankless job, for little to no pay. Thank you for missing family dinners and holidays and important events because of a false alarm, or even worse, because another family lost their house to a fire. Thank you for getting out of bed in the freezing cold, for fighting brush fires in the blazing heat and humidity. Thank you for putting your life on the line every time your pager goes off. We are all better humans because of our service to our neighborhoods.

If you have an idea you'd like to see us cover, or if you'd like to write an article, please get in touch! I can be reached at [treasurer@mcvfa.org](mailto:treasurer@mcvfa.org), or 774-930-0026. 🚒

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## Emergency! Fundraiser

**O**ur last fundraiser of 2022 is a custom framed 16x20 photo of the restored 1973 Ward LaFrance Ambassador from the show "Emergency!"

The photograph was donated by Michael Boynton (MAFireTrucks.com) and framing was donated by Swan Framing & Gifts in Dartmouth, MA ([swanframingandgifts.com](http://swanframingandgifts.com)).

Raffle tickets are available for purchase at \$5 each. The winner will be drawn on December 1, and the framed photo will be delivered to the winner prior to the holidays.

Please contact Treasurer Pam Crombie at [treasurer@mcvfa.org](mailto:treasurer@mcvfa.org), 774-930-0026 or your Region VP for tickets. 🚒



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## MCVFA Does Not Use Telemarketing

**T**he Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association, Inc. (MCVFA) no longer uses telemarketing to solicit donations. Any calls that you

or residents of your community may have recently received or receive in the future are not from the MCVFA, are not authorized by the MCVFA and do not benefit the MCVFA. 🚒



# Executive Vice President's Note

ello my MCVFA family. Let me formally introduce myself. My name is Lieutenant Christopher J. Hajder of the Swansea MA Volunteer Fire Department. I was formally known as the Region 1 Vice President, and at our August 6 E-board meeting I was appointed to and accepted the vacant position of Executive Vice President.

I'm excited to get to work with our executive board and members throughout the state to continue to strengthen this organization through the ever changing political and social environments. As we adapt and overcome to continue to do the business of the members of this association, I vow to do whatever I can to ensure the volunteer voices will continue to be heard.

I tried to come up with an inspirational message for my first report but struggled until I read an article penned by a true leader in today's fire service.

NYFD Deputy Assistant Chief Frank Leeb wrote an article for Firehouse on July 18, 2022. This article was regarding giving new firefighters advice when starting their careers; he called the following "simple rules and virtues to live by for your entire career, not just as a new firefighter."


- Be ready to go to work—always. This includes properly hydrated with adequate sleep and proper nutrition
- Learn something new and fire-related every day
- Respect comes from knowing your job
- Be loyal: always remember where you came from
- Remember our greatest resource is our firefighters—and our families; we must take care of both
- Maintain a healthy work-life balance
- Be into the job; the more involved that you are, the better the experience
- Maintain your physical fitness; cardiac incidents are a leading killer of firefighters
- Protect yourself from occupational cancer; there are many simple no-cost steps to take; be your own best advocate
- Look out for each other, seek out help when needed, understand the importance of maintaining your mental health and well-being; seeking help is a sign of strength, not of weakness
- Always look out for and take care of your brother and sister firefighters
- Remember why you are here: to protect and serve the citizens; it always is about them
- You can learn something from everyone; sometimes you'll learn what not to do

- Never Forget: this is so much more than a saying—never forget our history, our retired members, our fallen
- You are an ambassador of the department; this includes both in and out of uniform and on and off of the fireground; be proud—and represent proudly and respectfully
- The department name on your bunker coat stands for so much; always be worthy
- Read LODD reports; they honor and remember our fallen while teaching many often repeatable lessons
- Listen and learn from the fire stories of retired members; they have many teachable experiences; experiences are transferable
- Listen to other firefighters; this is how you become a seasoned veteran firefighter
- Trust the people you work with; they will do amazing things with you and for you
- Surround yourself with good people
- Mentor newer firefighters; we owe it to the next generation; before long, there will be newer firefighters than you
- Do the right thing, even when nobody is watching, but remember, someone can be watching and, likely, videoing your actions, too
- Be a student of your profession; stay learnable; read or watch something fire-related every day
- Love the job; it will love you back

As a member of the fire service for over 35 years, I took these thoughts to heart. As I read them line by line and think back at my own experiences throughout the years, I began to see that I was a different firefighter now. As an 'old guy' I struggle to be the one with all the answers in the firehouse. I'm still fixated on my mentors and wish they were still around to teach me what to do. Here is what the chief's "Advice for a New Firefighter" looks like.

My questions to you are, what are your thoughts after reading these points? Anyone think he's off his rocker? I ask this to provoke conversation in the firehouse with everyone from the junior firefighter to the senior officer. Let me know, and maybe we can do a story together for a future issue.

Let's remember this saying: Teamwork is coming TOGETHER in the beginning. Keeping TOGETHER is the progress. And working TOGETHER is the success.

I thank each of you for doing what you do for your community each and every day! 

# NVFC RESOURCES

## Recruitment & Retention of Call/Volunteer Firefighters

By Chief Joe Maruca & FF Michael Goldstein

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) has an excellent call/volunteer firefighter recruitment website called **MAKE ME A FIREFIGHTER.ORG** and it can be found at <https://makemeafirefighter.org>. Check it out.

There are two major parts to the Make Me a Firefighter website (MMF). A popup asks if you want to “Enter as a Department” or “Enter as a Volunteer”. The first choice brings you to the Department Portal (<https://portal.nvfc.org/>) which allows any fire department to post your volunteer opportunities online on the site. You can then link your volunteer opportunities (“job listings”) to social media advertising campaigns. When someone visits the MMF page, their zip code will link them to nearby volunteer fire & EMS departments. A number of volunteer, call, and combination fire departments are using the MMF Department Portal to recruit new members.

The MMF Department Portal also has a section that allows you to create custom advertising materials. You can design and post Facebook and Instagram ads that you create on the portal. You can create posters, table tents for events, flyers to pass out, and postcards to mail to households.

The second choice “Enter as a Volunteer” is more for the public, and is the default for <https://makemeafirefighter.org>. This site is designed to allow anyone to learn about being a volunteer firefighter and lets them find volunteer fire departments near them that need members. All they do is put in their zip code and your department will come up if you’ve registered on the Department Portal.

Your department can use all the services on MMF for free. Give it a try. It’s easy to use.

Chief Maruca & FF Goldstein are members of the NVFC Board of Directors. 🔄



<https://makemeafirefighter.org>

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# Cameron Evans Scholarship Application

The MCVFA Scholarship committee reads every scholarship application received. While every potential recipient has a great story, some stories stick out just a bit more than others. We are honored that Cameron gave us permission to share his story with all the members of the MCVFA, and we cannot wait to see what the future looks like for you, Cameron. Best of luck in college this fall, and we hope to see you on the roster in West Newbury very soon.

I am currently a senior at the Landmark School in Beverly, MA and will graduate in June 2022. I live in West Newbury with my mom, dad, older brother Tyler and my Uncle George. I come from a very public safety and community-oriented family. When I apply (and hopefully get hired) as a call firefighter in West Newbury, I will become a third-generation firefighter. My grandfather, Arthur Evans, was a well-respected public servant in Merrimac, Massachusetts for over 47 years. He served on many boards and community posts, but felt he gave more at his position as full time police officer for 47 years and for his 15 as a call firefighter.

My mom Lisa, and dad Dave, are both firefighters for the Groveland and West Newbury Fire departments and have been members of the MCVFA for many years. I have three uncles and an aunt that are current or retired firefighters: George Evans, currently a member of the Groveland FD, Steve Evans, Retired Merrimac and West Newbury FD, Rich Evans, Retired West Newbury and Georgetown FD and aunt Tammy Evans, Retired West Newbury and Merrimac FD. I have been a member of the West Newbury Junior Firefighter Program and MCVFA Junior member for the past five years and look forward to joining the West Newbury fire department after graduating in June.

I have donated many hours of community service to the departments over the past five years as well, taking part in multiple Groveland Turkey nights, West Newbury pancake breakfasts, food drives, fundraisers, community bandstand concerts and cookouts, and multiple raffles. I will be attending Northern Essex Community College in the fall and if awarded, the Robert J. Hindley Memorial Scholarship funds will be used to further my education, which will allow me to give back to the departments and communities.

Thank you for considering my application, and please take a moment to read more about my journey and focus on the future.

*Respectfully,  
Cameron Evans*

As someone who loves to learn, the most infuriating thing is how difficult school has been for me. Imagine trying to ride a unicycle, but there is no wheel, and the unicycle is on fire. This about sums up what learning felt like for me while I was in public school. When I was in elementary school, it became very clear to me and others early on that I was struggling with a learning disability. Shortly after I started elementary school, I was diagnosed with a language based learning disability, dyslexia, and ADHD. My teachers and I tried to navigate these struggles, but as time went on I felt that I stuck out as a student who learned differently. My peers were reading chapter books while I was still stuck on Dr. Seuss. They were excelling in the classroom, while I was having a hard time keeping up with the daily routines. It became painfully obvious that something was wrong when I was removed from my classes and moved into special classrooms for support. The educational experience that I was subjected to was one that had me questioning myself greatly. School was hard, draining, and left my future uncertain.

Landmark, a school for students like me with language based learning disabilities, was a new beginning for me and the answer to all my unanswered questions about who I was and who I wanted to be. Starting at a new school is never easy, but Landmark just felt different. I was boarder on the campus and was immediately accepted in the Landmark community and culture. The environment and teaching styles that I experienced were a great contrast to my previous school. Landmark gave me an academic advisor who for the first time in my scholarly experiences saw a potential in me. Because of my first academic advisor, I was able to start my high school career in all sophomore level classes, and I even excelled in them. For the first time ever, I had teachers and advisors who pushed me to be a better student. For instance, I feel like I now have the skills to pursue my dreams, whatever they may be.

Through my hard work at Landmark, I now have an equal shot as my peers to succeed in college. I honestly don't have a clear idea of what I want to major in; however, I have a plethora of interests I'm excited to explore. MY interests range from game development, music composing, voice acting and genetic engineering. I know that applying the skills that I have learned at Landmark, I will succeed at all my academic pursuits.

My academic life has been a struggle, and I have gone through many hardships; however, I have crushed all challenges that impede my progress. Landmark was the spark I needed to become a raging fire on a quest for knowledge. Because of this, I believe that I would be a valuable asset at any institution. I truly believe that I am ready for college life whatever it may entail. Ultimately, the lesson that I have learned and that I will take with me to college is to never lose hope and to keep pushing forward. 🌹





# Robert J. Hindley Memorial Scholarship

## 2022 Scholarship Winners

The Executive Board of the MCVFA is pleased to announce and congratulate this year's recipients of the Hindley Scholarship.

### Region 1

**Emma Mayhew**  
West Tisbury Fire Department  
Bridgewater State University

### Region 3

**Nicole Barakian**  
West Boylston Fire Department  
Wentworth Institute Technology

### Region 5

**Nathan Brown**  
Hinsdale Fire Department  
Berkshire Community College

### Region 2

**Cameron Evans**  
West Newbury Fire Department  
Northern Essex Community College

### Region 4

**Adrien Neven**  
Goshen Fire Department  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

## Application Period Opens / January 1, 2023

The Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters' Association (MCVFA) will be awarding five (5) \$750 Robert J. Hindley Memorial Scholarships. The scholarship is available to an MCVFA member or immediate family member. We encourage you to apply.

The Hindley Scholarship application period begins on January 1 and ends on June 1 of each year.

### How to Apply

Application forms can be download at [www.mcvfa.org/scholarships](http://www.mcvfa.org/scholarships)

Send your application form along with supporting documents to: [scholarship@mcvfa.org](mailto:scholarship@mcvfa.org) or

**MCVFA**  
**Robert J. Hindley Scholarship**  
**PO Box 1015, East Wareham, MA 02538**

Download the application at [www.mcvfa.org/scholarships](http://www.mcvfa.org/scholarships)

## REGION 1

Covering the counties of Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Middlesex, Nantucket, Norfolk, Plymouth

Vice President Christopher J. Hajder, Swansea

Hello everyone and welcome to fall! It truly has been one of the hottest and driest summers that I can remember. From the crunchy yellow lawns to the dried up ponds, Region 1, like many of you, has not been spared the wrath of Mother Nature.

Looking back at a few past issues of *Smoke Showin'*, I noticed that I seem to have a bad habit of not including more on region department updates and news. To be brutally honest: it's hard to do without me doing the work. WE NEED YOU. We need your news and photos from incidents. Good news stories, retirements, graduations, are all welcome. If you put it on Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, etc., take another minute and send it to Susan at [susan@sdyerdesign.com](mailto:susan@sdyerdesign.com). BUT, here's a few I was able to find.



*Fairhaven Call members Mutual Aid to the City of New Bedford*



*Lakeville and Freetown Fire/Rescue crews responded to a reported rollover MVC on Rt 140.*

On August 19, Mattapoisett had a 6 alarm fire at the Mattapoisett Boatyard, 31 years to the day that Hurricane Bob made landfall and destroyed the previous property. More than 15 local departments and over 100 career, call, and volunteer firefighters responded to the incident, including Carver, Lakeville, Rochester, Dartmouth, Swansea, and Bourne.



*Photo courtesy New England Dronalist*

The 2022 MCVFA Golf tournament is scheduled for Sunday, September 25. Since this issue went to print before the tournament, be on the lookout for pictures on Facebook and in the next *Smoke Showin'*. Thanks to the golfers and the staff at Southers Marsh Golf Club in Plymouth. To the many sponsors and donors, thank you! The proceeds from this event keep the Hindley Scholarship award sustainable. I would like to thank the volunteer committee that spent several months traveling throughout Bristol and Plymouth Counties to plan the event. Thank you to Tom Burnett, Mike Palimeri, Pam Crombie, Kathy Bird, Sam Cardin, John Wolcek and Bob Middendorf.

I would like to end this Region 1 report with some 'news from around the Commonwealth'. In a whirlwind turn of events at our Eboard meeting in August, I was appointed to and I accepted the position of MCVFA Executive Vice President. Thus, I will have resigned my position as Region 1 VP by the printing of this issue. I'd like to extend a personal thanks to my right hand man, Region 1 Coordinator Mike Palimeri from Carver Fire for all your assistance over the past few years. To the new Region 1 VP to be elected on November 5, I wish you all the success and I vow my support in keeping this region as actively moving forward as we have. As I typically do, I'd like to end with a quote and I thought this one by Helen Keller quite fitting:

"Alone, we can do so little. Together we can do so much."

Thank you for your commitment to your community and the MCVFA. 🚒

determine with your department if your apparatus is approved to travel over the bridge. Be safe. 🚒

# REGION 3

Covering the counties of Worcester, Middlesex, Norfolk  
Vice President Michael Goldstein, Sherborn

Unfortunately, we had to once again cancel our June 2022 meeting due to Covid and other issues. We are looking forward to having more meetings in person. Please contact Michael Goldstein at vregion3@mcvfa.org if your department or association is willing to host a meeting!

# REGION 2

Covering the counties of Essex, Middlesex  
Coordinator Lisa Evans, Groveland

## What is your Fire Trucks Height?

In Essex County, a bridge connecting West Newbury, Haverhill, and Merrimac has been struck for the third time in about four years due to vehicles whose height exceeded the posted limit for the bridge. The bridge is closed to all traffic and foot traffic indefinitely. The inconvenience starts with a 25-minute ride from West Newbury Center to Merrimac, MA Center of Town, with the bridge open it is less than a 10-minute drive.

We have firefighters that live on one side of the bridge who are on the volunteer department on the other side of the bridge. In addition, this has affected our local department's ability to respond to mutual aid in a timely fashion. Other inconveniences include the two school systems affected by the bridge closure, Pentucket Regional and Whitter Vo-tech, local businesses and let's not forget the cost of fuel. Eeek! This list goes on and on.

Lesson to be learned for the day? What is your engine's height, your ladder and how about their weight, empty and full? Do you know where to look on the truck for the height and weight information? Notice the signs in your area for bridge height and weight restrictions and

## MCVFA Annual State Meeting will be held in Region 3!

At the current time, it is expected that the MCVFA annual state meeting will be held in a Region 3! It is currently scheduled to be held at the Sherborn Fire and Rescue Department (22 N. Main St, Sherborn, MA 01770) on Saturday, November 5, 2022. More information will follow.



Dover Fire Chief Paul Luttazi (left) and Dover Fire and longstanding MCVFA delegate John Vounatsos (right) holding their MCVFA 2022 Cash Cards.

continues on page 18



... continued from page 17

## Cash Card Fundraiser

Dover Fire: Dover Fire has been a longstanding member and supporter of MCVFA; in fact, Dover MCVFA delegate John Vounatsos has been Dover's MCVFA delegate for 27 years and may very well be one of, if not the, longest continuously serving delegate throughout the entire MCVFA! They also bought a number of MCVFA Cash Cards both last year and this year, and had a number of winners! We thank Dover Fire Chief Paul Luttazi and Dover Fire and MCVFA delegate John Vounatsos for their help and support!

## Other Region 3 News

First, an important reminder that 2022-23 dues are DUE. As a reminder, you and your crew are not covered by the Life Insurance until this year's dues are paid.

There is a great deal of good news about Region 3 departments on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MCVFAReg3Worcester>). Please check it out! Please also forward anything you would like to have posted.

Here are some quick highlights from around Region 3:

- **Dover FD** gave mutual aid to Medfield for a brush fire in June, along with Sherborn FD (see below). On August 1, they responded to a fully-involved shed fire, with mutual aid from Westwood and Sherborn provided station coverage. The very next day, Dover provided mutual aid to Medfield in the morning and then Norwood that night. August also saw brush fires and MVAs, as well as mutual aid to Natick for a large brush fire at Audubon's Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary (along with Sherborn; see below).

[www.facebook.com/DoverMAFire/](http://www.facebook.com/DoverMAFire/)

- **Grafton FD** has been very busy in August with smoke detector activations, an electrical fire on Logan Road, pull alarm activations, calls in from alarm companies, mutual aid to Northbridge for the August 7th structure fire, a transformer fire, CO detector activations, a big Mass Pike multiple car accident and car fire (August 11), mulch fires, brush fires, reported chimney fires, and a structure fire (August 17). See all this and more at [www.facebook.com/FriendsofGraftonFiredepartment/](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsofGraftonFiredepartment/)

- **Holden FD** had a great time working with Holden Day Rec Camp! [www.facebook.com/HoldenMassFire](http://www.facebook.com/HoldenMassFire)

- **Hopedale FD** gave mutual aid to Milford multiple times in July, including working structure fires and station coverage [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068064234505](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068064234505)

- **Millbury FD** completed a two day training with Lifelight and National Grid in July. In August, they responded to a deck fire among other calls. Also, congratulations to Capt. Peter Balkus on his appointment to the Board of Fire Engineers by the Millbury Board of Selectmen. [www.facebook.com/MillburyFire/](http://www.facebook.com/MillburyFire/)

- **Paxton FD** responded to a two car accident in front of their station on July 31, and in August gave mutual aid to the Town of Spencer for both fire and EMS. [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064667173062](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064667173062)

- **Pepperell FD** responded to a car fire with residential exposure (June 30), provided mutual aid to Townsend for a large brush fire (July 10), and provided mutual aid to Brookline NH for a large brush fire (August 16). [www.facebook.com/people/Pepperell-Fire-Department/100063510100883/](http://www.facebook.com/people/Pepperell-Fire-Department/100063510100883/)

- **Sherborn FD** gave mutual aid to Medfield for a brush fire in June, along with Dover FD (see above). Early July saw a car fire as well as a big MVA. Mid-July saw a structure fire with mutual aid from Ashland, Millis, Dover, and Holliston with station coverage from Natick. Late July had a number of MVCs – notably a train vs. car collision – as well as giving mutual aid to Milford. August includes mutual aid to Dover for a structure fire (see above), and a variety of storm calls, gas odors, and MVCs. Sherborn also provided mutual aid to Natick on a large brush fire at Audubon's Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary on August 16. [www.facebook.com/SherbornFD](http://www.facebook.com/SherbornFD)

- **Sutton FD** provided mutual aid to Oxford and Milford in July through the use of their Mobile Ventilation Unit. Sutton also provided station coverage to Auburn due to their sudden loss of active duty Lt. Paul Wood. In August, they responded to a fully involved car fire. [www.facebook.com/SuttonFire](http://www.facebook.com/SuttonFire)

- **Upton FD** responded to a major MVA with extraction in August, receiving mutual aid from Mendon, Westborough, and Hopkinton. [www.facebook.com/uptonfire](http://www.facebook.com/uptonfire)

Please pass along any news, new apparatus, pictures, or details of special events or actual fires you would like to share to [vpregion3@mcvfa.org](mailto:vpregion3@mcvfa.org) so we can feature YOUR department or association in the next *Smoke Showin'*. 🚒

# REGION 4

Covering the counties of Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire  
**Vice President Kevin Connolly, Northfield**

I hope this finds every one well. We had a meeting in August and September for elections. Some of the subjects discussed there may appear in this issue of *Smoke Showin'*.

A few topics I'd like to remind our members about are Health & Wellness, Membership and Benefits.

As far as Health & Wellness is concerned, it's up to you to keep yourself healthy, not only for yourself, but your family as well. This includes your firefighter family. I realize not everyone has great insurance coverage. However, that pain in the arm could be more than a pulled muscle. Have it checked out. Personally, mine started out as a neck pain. A year or so ago, I was seeing a chiropractor at that time. I had complained about a nagging neck ache; I was given several exercises to do. At my next appointment, I stated that the exercises did not seem to help. She recommended that I have an X-ray taken of the affected area. After she took a look at it, her suggestion was that I see a neurologist. This was after several past trips to the hospital because of tingling in both arms and upper torso.

On two instances, the tingling was quite pronounced. But at every visit to the hospital, nothing would show up at that time. It was at this point my cardiologist suggested I get an MRI. Less than a week later, I was in the hospital again, after the MRI, and was told that I needed stents because of a blockage in one of my heart arteries. The next day I was in Springfield getting two stents into a 75% clogged artery.

After my slow recovery, my neurologist set me up for an MRI on my neck. The MRI did show that I have an old neck! There is some arthritis and narrowing of some of the nerve canals. And while this had nothing to do with cardiology, it was sort of an alarm that went off.

So, if you have any kind of pain or shortness of breath or something that is irregular or out of the ordinary, have it checked out. Or at least speak with your primary care Physician. While we do not currently have a Health and Wellness coordinator to reach out to, there's plenty of

information out there in regard to health and wellness for the fire service. The NVFC has a great program that can help. ([www.nvfc.com](http://www.nvfc.com))

The next two topics, membership and benefits, basically go hand in hand. Hopefully you have paid your dues by now; therefore, this makes you eligible for MCVFA Member Benefits. This includes the \$15,000 24/7 Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance policy that is just one of the many benefits the Association has to offer.

In order for this organization to continue, we need for you to continue supporting the Association as a member. The \$20 per member (\$10 for retired, \$5 for juniors) dues, is not too much to ask. Where else can you get an insurance policy and all of the other benefits we offer for \$20 A YEAR, not a month but a year?

Thanks for your support!

If you have any questions, concerns, complaints or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to us. 🛠️

## Has your Information changed?

If your address or email has changed please let us know. To update your information, contact the Membership Secretary at [kibird@verizon.net](mailto:kibird@verizon.net) or 1-800-551-FIRE (3473).

## Like the MCVFA on Facebook

Check out the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association (MCVFA) on Facebook and LIKE our page.

The MCVFA Facebook page is a great source of training opportunities, up-to-date fire/ems methods, and political and regulatory changes that affect your department.

The MCVFA Facebook is also a great place to see what other fire departments, like yours, are up to. You can see their emergency calls, drills, and events. You'll get excellent ideas from see what others are doing.



**MCVFA**  
PO Box 1015  
East Wareham, MA 02538  
[www.mcvfa.org](http://www.mcvfa.org)

# A Reminder!

## Your 2022-2023 Dues Year are due Now

If your department has not yet paid, please make every effort to get them in as soon as possible.

The association depends on timely receipt of dues to be able to pay its bills and to facilitate the programs that the organization sponsors.

*Thank you*



Questions can be directed to the Kathy Bird, at [kibird@verizon.net](mailto:kibird@verizon.net)