

A NEWSLETTER  
DEDICATED TO  
MEMBERS OF HALIFAX  
REGIONAL FIRE &  
EMERGENCY

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# FeedLine

Serving Canada's Largest Composite Fire Service

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## Major Blaze On Gottingen St.

Members use master streams and hand lines as fire spreads through the North End Beverage Room at 2776 Gottingen St. March 07. The building was destroyed. In the bucket are firefighters Yves Tousignant of Aerial 1 and Corey Beals of Engine 2. District Capt. Paul Irving is in the foreground. The Snorkel was filling in as Aerial 1 that day.

*More action shots on page 12*



**Acting Chief  
Director  
Bill Mosher**

## Message from the Chief's Office

### HRFE Will Study Firefighter Training Across the Province

Our department has been asked by the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS) training committee; chaired by Prof. John Benoit, to second District Chief Dave Burnet to perform a study of current training facilities.

This study includes a review of existing resources and prepare a draft plan identifying additional sites for basic training facilities at key locations throughout the province. This secondment has been approved and is expected to last up to six months. An expression of interest has gone out to fill Dave's position while he is working on this project. Congratulations and good luck Dave.

On April 2<sup>nd</sup> our budget was presented to Council. For the upcoming year (2007/08) our operational budget will see a net increase of \$3m over the 2006/07 budget. The Capital budget for Fire includes \$2.8m for fleet and just over \$3.5m for buildings (New Fall River Station, New Dutch Settlement Station, Water Supply, Potable Water, and station upgrades.)

The past few months have been extremely busy with the loss of the North End Pub on March 7 and then the major structure fire at 28 Hammonds Plains Road on March 13, not to mention the vast amount of brush fires these past few weeks. Some of these fires required a great deal of resources to control.

It's significant that the large fires on Gottingen Street and at Pier's Landing were each held to the original structure and crews were very effective in protecting nearby exposures.

During the budget deliberations with Council there were numerous comments and congratulations from Councillors on just how great a service our fire service provides to our residents. Our Executive Management Team would like to congratulate and thank the crews for all their hard work on the recent fires. We are very proud to work with such a dedicated and proficient group of people. Every day, you make a difference.

Thank - you

# CO-ORDINATOR'S CORNER

## Policies And Guidelines Under Review – Behaviour Important As HRM Representatives



by Darlene Ellis, Coordinator

Policies and guidelines that govern how we conduct ourselves as representatives of HRM and the Fire Service are being re-visited. The goal of the review is to reduce duplication of policies and operating guidelines. As these changes are made a data book memo will be issued advising of the changes. Also, as most of you are aware, the Internal Page contains the approved version that is in effect; so, when in doubt – check.

Corporate policies will be added to this section as they are approved.

One thing to note is that HRM has now posted the Illegal and Irregular Conduct Policy – Administrative Order 40 and the Ethical Conduct Policy – Administrative Order 41 as approved by Council on June 27, 2006. I have linked these policies to our Internal Page. The change from the version distributed for staff's review and sign-off originally approved by the CAO, February 6, 2006 and effective March 1, 2006 is that the Members of Council are now included.

Irregular Conduct Policy. The signed acknowledgement form is to be sent back to the Administration Office so that a copy can be placed in the appropriate personnel file as identified in the policies. No such requirement has been made of volunteers at this time. However, as volunteer firefighters you also represent the municipality while performing your duties, so please take a few minutes to review these two policies.

Presently, Policy P-008 Code of Ethics, which was actually the HRM policy, has been removed. The reason for this was to reduce duplication and to better identify HRM's Policies. We have created a section on the Internal Page in the Menu – Policies/Operating Guidelines/Procedures - once there you will find HRM Policies. The

At present, all career firefighters are to review and sign an acknowledgement form that they have reviewed HRM's Ethical Conduct Policy and the Illegal and



## Business Planning – 07/08 Budget Update

The department's new business plan is nearing completion. Once it is approved, the Business Plan will be published in the HRM budget book and will also be placed on the Internal Page. For the upcoming 07/08 Budget, Council set priorities and has identified four areas of focus for this current year known as Council Focus Areas and they are Tax Reform, Community Development, Infrastructure, and Public Safety. The Public Safety umbrella consists of By-Law Enforcement, EMO, Fire, Integrated Emergency Services, Police/RCMP Services. During the Council Focus Area meetings, Council approved the direction we proposed which was to continue to focus on further developing our long-term goals and objectives as identified in 06/07.

I am pleased to say that plans are well under way with these strategic goals and objectives. Strategic goals include the development of Fire Service Strategies aligned with Approved Service Delivery Standard and secondly, EMO Preparedness and Business Continuity. The Operational Goals identified in 06/07 are being carried forward for 07/08 and four (4) new Operational Goals have been identified.

The additional operational goals all require that a Business Case be developed to support the new goals, funding, etc. and are subject to approval before we can move forward. This work is now in the fine tuning process and the anticipated date for Budget Approval is April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

## FEATURE STORY

by John Giggey

### After 38 Years, Mike Connolly Works His Last Tour

He may have missed his first call, but Mike Connolly was not about to miss his last fire.

On Dec. 15, on one of his last shifts, Connolly's crew from E-8 caught a working fire on Wardour St. in Bedford. It turned out to be a backyard shed, fully involved. Because it was close to one of Bedford's busiest streets, Dartmouth Rd., dispatch had received numerous calls.

"He was off the truck first, grabbed the line and wouldn't give it to us," said fellow E-8 firefighter Jason Parsons.

"I knew it might be my last fire," countered Connolly. "No one was getting that #\*@### line from me until the fire was out."

Thirty-eight years earlier, Connolly was working his first shift as a rookie at the old Young St. Station in Halifax. He had forgotten to bring his lunch.

"There was a Chinese restaurant across the street and I asked my captain, Pat Nash, if I could go over and grab something for lunch to bring back to the station. He said: 'Yeah. Go ahead junior.'"

Connolly was only in the restaurant for a couple of minutes when he heard a siren. He ran outside just in time to see his truck heading down the street without him. It would have been his first call. "They got a big kick out of that. They tormented me when they got back."

Connolly became a member of the old Halifax Fire Department on Nov. 01, 1968, in what is still known as "the big hiring". This was the first amalgamation, when the communities of Rockingham, Fairview, Armdale and Spryfield all became part of Halifax. Several had their own volunteer fire departments.

To meet the needs of the larger city, 65 new firefighters were hired, the largest single hiring in the history of the department. Connolly worked his



**NO SWEAT — After getting out of his BA, Connolly chats with a neighbour while firefighters in the background overhaul the remains of a shed that was gutted on Wardour St. in Bedford Dec. 15. Despite being one of the oldest active career firefighters in the city, Connolly wasn't even perspiring after knocking down this blaze.**

last shift Dec. 31. With him retired, only District Chief Tim Bookholt and E-8 Captain Andy Comstock are still serving out of the '68 hiring.

Connolly was still a newbie when he worked his first structure fire at a restaurant on Robie St. across from the old Bloomfield School. "I was a little nervous. One of the older guys grabbed the nozzle and ran and I was pulling the hose out of the bed. It didn't get flaked out properly and there was a mess in the street," he recalls.

"The captain yelled at me. But later he came aboard the other guys for leaving me alone out there."

## Connolly's Last Tour, continued from page 4

Connolly has seen a lot of changes. One that was a particular thorn in his side was the house watch – something many young members today have never heard of. It required the telephone desk to be staffed by one member 24 hours a day, seven days a week unless the whole crew was out on a call. It was usually broken into shifts and shared by the entire crew except the officer.

In the early years it was necessary because fires were often reported by someone running in from the street. But with the advent of the dispatch system and street alarm boxes it was no longer needed. But it was maintained anyway out of tradition. "You would wait up all night and wait for the bloody fire phone to ring," says Connolly. "Eventually some of us would drag a mattress downstairs and sleep by the phone." That duty finally went by the wayside in the early 80's.

Another was the uniform. Firefighters had to keep their

uniforms fully on, including a buttoned tunic and cap, all day. They could not get rid of the tunic and cap until 9 p.m. There was no logical reason or any practical purpose served. It was just tradition. That rule also went out the door over a quarter of a century ago.

Some of the new technology, like breathing apparatus, was slow to catch on. "A lot of guys didn't believe in BA's and went in without them. But part of the problem too was that the early models were kept in a case and it took a few minutes to put on. Eventually we got so one guy would take a line into the fire right away. He would take a beating while the others got their BA on, then they would come and relieve him."

Years ago firefighters had a club on North Park St. Every Christmas they would auction off a live goose at Christmas time. Of course it became known as the Goose Club and there is still a gathering once a year at

*Continued on page 6*



**INTERVIEW – The Halifax Herald's Bill Power interviews Connolly at Station 4 during his last day on the job.**

Photos by John Giggey

## Connolly's Last Tour, continued from page 5

the Police Club on Cogswell St. On his retirement the group gave Connolly a special plaque for never being a financial burden to the club. "That's because I never, ever won the 50/50 draw in all the time I was on the job."

Connolly served at many stations over the years, but especially enjoyed the time at Bayers Rd. "A reported fire was called a 5-1," he says. "A 5-2 was a working fire, and a 5-3 was a call for additional equipment. A 5-4 was a second alarm. We used to get all the 5-3 calls and so got a lot of good fires."

Having gone through two strikes and the 1996 amalgamation, Connolly is proud of what the department has become. "I think we have a great fireservice in this city today. I'm very proud of it and I think the citizens of this city can be proud of it."

And he has loved his job. "I want to thank the city of Halifax for giving me the best career I could have. I don't think there is any career you could be more proud of than being a firefighter. If I could live my lifeover, I'd do it again. But it's time to step down andgive another young person a place in this department."

Connolly's working days are not over though. He's been a part time employee of Snow's Funeral Home for some time and will continue to work there.



**GREAT CAREER** - On one of his last shifts, Connolly poses next to E-8 with his gear beside him ready for the next call. A few hours later Connolly got to knock down his last blaze – a shed fire on Wardour St. in Bedford.

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### Burn Treatment Winners Announced

The winners of the annual raffle fund-raiser by the Nova Scotia Firefighters Burn Treatment Society were drawn Dec. 16.

The first prize, a Smart car, went to Art Webb of Hants County.

Second prize, a \$2,500. travel voucher, went to Dennis Kaiser of Lakeview. Lou Ryan of Elmsdale won \$500. worth of lobster.

The Society thanks all those who helped make the annual draw a success.

**VIEWPOINT !**

Divisional Chief John Verrall

## Canadian Honours and Awards – Something We Can All Take Pride In

I've thought of writing this for some time. I found it hard to believe that there could be some in our ranks who would make derogative remarks about the Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal. I thought it was "just talk"; that none of us would actually show a lack of respect for these awards.

But recently I found out that it is true. There are some in our fire service that don't seem to understand what the Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal is or what it means to be 'recognized' with one. Some have said the medal doesn't mean anything, that it is just a 'years of service' award.

The fact is this award is part of the Canadian Honours System. When someone is awarded this medal, the Government of Canada is stating that it and the citizens of Canada are recognizing someone's dedication in "preserving Canada's public safety

through long and outstanding service."

There are some careers that are totally different from the things that the far majority of people spend their lives doing. The medal awarded fire fighters is in the same Exemplary Service category as the Canadian Forces Decoration and the Police Exemplary Service Medal.

These three services in particular serve to protect our country and our people. It's unlikely there is anyone who has served as a firefighter for 20 or more years who has not placed their life on the line numerous times to protect the people they serve. People in other professions simply do not do this.

Then there are our volunteers who take the same training, take the same risks, and do the job just as well – and they do it for virtually no



monetary reward. They will never get a pension for this work. They do the job, sometimes for decades, just to give something back to their community. Whether career or volunteer, when our people are recognized for their dedicated service, it means something.

When our members wear this medal, or any Canadian Honour or Award, they are also honouring others who have given so much to their community and their country. It's an honour to wear these medals. But it also involves the honour of all others who have served, are serving, and will serve. Those of us who understand this have a responsibility to help educate any who "put down" any Honour or Award that pays tribute to anyone's service.

For more information on these Awards and how to wear them, go to the following web sites:

[www.gg.ca/honours/pdf/wearing\\_e](http://www.gg.ca/honours/pdf/wearing_e)

[www.gg.ca/menu\\_e.asp](http://www.gg.ca/menu_e.asp)

### What's Your Viewpoint?

With this submission from Divisional Chief John Verrall we introduce what we hope will be a new regular feature of Feedline called **Viewpoint**.

We hope to dedicate one page in each edition for this feature. It is an opportunity for any member, regardless of rank, career or volunteer, to express themselves on an issue they feel is of importance to the department.

All we ask is that any issue raised be of wide interest, in good taste, and any contributions be constructive. Submissions will be subject to editorial control and no anonymous letters will be printed.

(Send submissions to any of the Feedline staff listed on the back page)

## Fleet Division

Paul McCulley

### New Vehicles Now In Service; Preparations Being Made For 2007 Order

All 2004 and 2005 vehicles have now arrived and are in service. New vehicles ordered in 2006 will begin arriving in August and September. Fleet is now putting together tenders and a truck committee to prepare for the purchase of 2007 trucks. They will include a 75-foot Quint and four custom pumpers.

The new 14-hundred-gallon tanker for Station 48 in Beaverbank has arrived six months early. The '92 Ford F-800 pumper tanker, which used to be Beaverbank's Engine 49, will be

going to Station 61, Herring Cove's substation in Ketch Harbour.

Station 58 will soon take possession of its new rescue pumper which includes a five-man crew cab. The old E-58, an '82 Pierce, will go to Station 62 in Harrietsfield. What is now Engine 62, a 2000 International Pumper, will be refurbished and redeployed to the Eastern Shore. The new truck for the Investigation and Explosion Division is also now in service.



Mechanical has received a new six-foot brake, and a 50-ton press has gone to tender. The new equipment will enhance the division's ability to do fabrication and maintenance work.

A new van for stores is on order, and a new BA technician truck will also be ordered. Two Dodge Caliber sedans will soon be arriving for administration.



#### THIS WAY! COME THIS WAY

Acting Chief Director Bill Mosher leads the way along Almon St. during White Cane week. A number of people turned out for the 'Walk a Block' event in which participants tried to negotiate their way along a single city block while blindfolded and using a white cane. The annual event is to raise public awareness for the blind. Engine 4 crew also participated. Off course in the background is another participant, Divisional Chief John Verrall.

Photo by Jeanette MacKay

## Human Resources

Senior HR Consultant *Audrey MacLean*

### New Recruitment Campaign Coming Up

Eighteen people on the hire list are expected to be brought in to the department by early spring, provided they pass re-testing. A swearing-in ceremony is scheduled for May 14th.

This means the department will be going into a new recruitment campaign this spring and information sessions are planned to reach as diverse a group as possible.

The department attended a career fair in Truro Feb. 23 and 24 which was sponsored by the Canadian

Armed Forces Training Centre in Halifax. Its focus was on high school and post-secondary school students as well as unemployed civilians from four counties. Representing HRFE over the two days were Drew McCullough, Beth VanGorder, Heather McKay and Rob Belliveau.

HR also participated at another career fair at the World Trade and Convention Centre Feb. 27 which focused on Aboriginal youth. The fair was called "Blueprint for the Future, Aboriginal Youth Career Fair". Firefighter Sean Harrison of

Station 13 and Beth VanGorder of HR helped represent the department.



The interviews for the Captain's promotional routine were completed by the end of February and were to be followed by practical tests. Results of the Captain's routine should be known by the end of March.



**SMILE - A military photographer takes a shot of firefighters: Drew McCullough of Station 54 (left) and Rob Belliveau of Station 50 at the HRFE display at a job fair in Truro.**

Photo by Beth VanGorder

**ABORIGINAL JOB FAIR - Beth VanGorder of Human Resources and Quint 13 FF Sean Harrison encourage Brennan Peters (left) and Evan Toney to give some consideration to the fire service as a career choice. They visited the HRFE booth during a job fair which focused on aboriginal people at the World Trade and Convention Centre Feb. 27. Both boys are 16 and are from Whycomomagh.**

Photo by John Giggey



**Safety***Dist. Capt. Dave Meldrum*

## Department Becoming Lead Agency As HRM Reorganizes Its Safety Initiatives

An audit of HRM's Occupational Health & Safety program has led to a change in the city's OH&S management system, with Fire playing a leading role.

A Corporate Safety Group has been formed and three Corporate Safety Officers appointed. They will soon be working out of second floor offices at Station 13 on King Street. The three officers will wear distinctive

uniforms and have their own specially marked vehicles. The Corporate Safety Group is under the supervision of Deputy Director of Safety and Strategic Initiatives Roy Hollett.

Chief Bryson Wilson has been reassigned to the Fire Prevention Division. Safety within the department will be coordinated through the Divisional Captain of



Safety. The Safety Division office remains in the Eric Spicer Building next to Emergency Measures.

**CISM***Capt. Art Vidito*

## Firefighter Peers Volunteer Their Time For You

John had worked very hard at keeping his body physically strong and healthy for his demanding job as a firefighter. But he had overlooked the emotional and psychological impact that the traumatic events he would witness in his career would have on him and his family.

After returning from the medical call of "infant not breathing" his thoughts kept going over the events of this crib death. There was the pain and grief the parents were having and the feeling of helplessness to do anything for them or the child. There was doubt as to whether he did everything right. Was there something else he could have done? What if they had arrived sooner? There was self imposed guilt for the child dying and last but not least, the transference of pain and grief to himself, imagining this was his own new born baby boy.

One traumatic event may or may not cause an individual to experience symptoms of Critical Incident Stress. However, repetitive events can eventually overburden us.

Studies have proven that immediate intervention after a traumatic event lessens the stressors on individual firefighters and provides them with mechanisms to cope with any symptoms they might encounter. These stressors for this imaginary firefighter are some of the reasons why the **C.I.S.M.** (Critical Incident Stress Management) team was formed.

Your Critical Incident Stress Management Team is made up of peer firefighters and volunteers from other Emergency Service Divisions. We are all volunteering our time to take the necessary training to allow us to provide **YOU** the best



quality of intervention services.

All interventions are conducted with strict confidentiality between the team members and the group or individual. They are not operational critiques and are not designed to cast doubt or blame on anyone. They are designed to support individual as well as group symptoms and educate the group in stress management techniques.

There are eight criteria under which our team will automatically be dispatched. We can be requested by any individual. **Call 233-6804 or 240-7536.** These numbers are manned **24/7.**

## Training

Div. Chief Scott Shaffner

### Training to Focus on the Critical Skills that Keep us Alive . . .

**"The only constant is change"**  
**Lucretius**



As all of us have noticed over the last few years, our organization has been in a state of constant change. The Training Division is no different. The Training Division has had to react to the changing environment in which our organization has evolved. In the Training Division, we look at this change with hopes of improving the delivery of training we provide for all firefighters within HRM.

The training we do in our Division can be categorized into two entities - the training that we obtain requests for; and the training that originates from the Training Division.

The training that we obtain a request for comes from either our internal or external customers. That is, the 'client' (volunteer, career, or external agency) completes a needs assessment to determine what training they require. This information is delivered through the chain of command to the Training Division via our 'Training Request Form'. This formalized system of request allows the Training Division to efficiently track, monitor, and record all training completed. Further, it ensures that all training requests are processed in a timely manner.

In contrast, the training that originates from the Training Division begins with a needs assessment process conducted from within our Division. As such, our current needs assessment was initiated from an analysis of firefighter fatalities to determine what training is required the most. Our needs assessment, originating from statistics provided by NFPA and NIOSH, show that firefighters have the greatest chance of being killed either by a fireground emergency (35%) or while responding to and returning from a call (26%). Accordingly, we are

initiating training in what we feel is most critical - keeping our firefighters alive.

To address these major areas of concern, the Training Division is both expanding on our driver training program and developing a series of 'monthly drills' to better equip our firefighters in case of a possible fireground emergency. These 'monthly' drills, which are designed to be mostly hands-on, are located on the Training Division internal website. The responsibility for the proper delivery of these drills is left in the hands of the station officers. Remember: "training is not mandatory - neither is survival".

In addition to the delivery of the above mentioned programs, we are constantly improving all of the training programs we provide. This involves organizing our programs into a 'course training standard' format which will ensure that the training objectives, training content, training methods, and training principles of all courses are delivered in a consistent manner, regardless of the instructor.

Other notable activities in the Training Division include the establishment of our new CPAT / classroom facility at 40 Borden Ave. in Burnside, and the preparation for our latest batch of new recruits who are scheduled to start on May 14. We can certainly expect to be busy this Spring in Training Division...

## Major Blaze On Gottingen St.



Overall view of the fire from the roof of B Block, CFB Stadacona, across the street. The crew of 5 Quint use hand lines from the front while Aerial 1 (Snorkel) uses a master stream from the bucket at the right of the photo to protect the primary exposure.

After repositioning, E-3 prepares to use its deck gun to help protect an exposure on Bloomfield St. as the south end of the building is engulfed. In the foreground are Bill Murphy (left) and Steve Nearing of Fire and Explosion.

Photos by John Giggey



Firefighters Yves Tousignant of Aerial 1 and Corey Beals of Engine 2 attack the fire from the bucket. District Capt. Paul Irving is in the foreground.



Minutes after the interior crew was withdrawn, the fire is close to flashing over. Deputy Director Steve Thurber is in the foreground.

Photo by Paul Irving

Still early in the fire, most of the blaze is in the south end of the building but spreading rapidly. Handlines are being set up in the street for the exterior attack after the interior crew was withdrawn. In the foreground is Capt. Kevin Slaunwhite of Quint 5.

Photo by Paul Irving



Larry Fillmore and Jim McKenna of 5 Quint use a 2 ½ handline to protect the side B exposure, a multi unit apartment building.

Photo by John Giggey

## New Core Volunteers Sworn In



**FIREFIGHTER DAD** – New volunteer Robert Sandeski and his daughters, Hayleigh, 8, and Madeline, 5, pose with Steve Thurber, Deputy Director of Core Operations, following the induction of 11 members into the ranks of core volunteers. Sandeski will be assigned to Station 16 in Eastern Passage.



**THE GROUP** – New core volunteers pose for a group picture following their induction into the department. Front row from left are: Scott Fahie, Sebastien Robichaud, Aaron Wight, Cory Detchkoff and Scott LeBlanc. Back row: Station 8 volunteer Capt. Doug Tidgewell, Mike Hedden, Robert Sandeski, George Kepenyas, and Station 16 Volunteer Captain Ken Morrow. Missing is Sara Gofton who was not able to attend the ceremony which was held Nov. 21st at Station 16 in Eastern Passage.



**IT'S OFFICIAL** – New core volunteer Mike Hedden is presented his cap and pager by Deputy Director Steve Thurber to officially make him a new member of the department. Hedden will be going to Station 8 in Bedford. Eight of the nine new members will be assigned to Eastern Passage. Another potential new recruit was Darren Barker, who is also with the DND. He had to interrupt his training when he was shipped out to Afghanistan.

Photos by John Giggey

## Hester St. Home Gutted



**HANDS ON** – Student firefighter Chris Deagle (above) gets some hands with a 2 ½ line extinguishing hot spots while Capt. Colin Lye of 12 Quint looks on. At left Todd Parker tears down some soffit while Ed Kennedy foots the ladder. Both are from E-15. The structure was fully involved when the first units arrived.

## Crews Make Quick Work Of Tall Ship Fire

**CHECKING THE HATCH** – Quint 5 Capt. Sandy Glennie checks a hatch aboard the tall ship Caledonia after a fire broke out aboard the vessel at Pier 21 on March 2nd. Capt. Stephen Loughnan of E-2 reported black smoke showing on arrival. The crew cut the locks on a gate to gain access and stretched a 1 ¾ inch line two decks down before locating and extinguishing the fire. Engines 2 and 3 and Quint 5 responded, along with the platoon chief and district captain. The Caledonia was tied up at the wharf for a refit.

Photos by John Giggey



## Christmas Activities



**SANTA'S VISIT** – Four-year-old Patrick Bolivar of St. Margaret's Village in Upper Tantallon holds the candy cane he just received during a personal visit from Santa. With him is his dad, Brian, and dog, Maxx. In the Santa suit is firefighter Nick Etheridge of Station 59. The Bay Road volunteers visit children in their community each year distributing candy canes and wishing their residents a happy holiday.

**HAVE YOU BEEN GOOD?** – Santa asks the traditional question before handing out treats to some children in Haliburton Hills in Hammonds Plains. The volunteers at Station 50 also make their annual "Santa Drive By" a charity drive for underprivileged families. Besides heaps of toys and food for local food banks, they also collected \$450. in cash donations. In the Santa suit is firefighter Stewart Jordan. With him are firefighters Scott Keck (centre) and Aaron Baillie. Santa's chauffeur is Lt. Chris Claridge in the background.



**SANTA'S ESCORT** – Firefighter Chris Bowers waves at some children from the cab of Tanker 50 as he escorts Santa into a neighbourhood in Haliburton Hills. The Hammonds Plains volunteers spend an entire day every year visiting every neighbourhood in the community in their traditional Santa visit and charity drive which they call "Drive by Santa".



**YEP! WE WERE GOOD**

Beginning clockwise from top left, Platoon Chief Bryan Clarke, Deputy Director Steve Thurber, Deputy Director Roy Hollett and acting Chief Director Bill Mosher all take turns sitting on Santa's lap in an effort to convince him they were good boys all year. Or is it Mrs. Claus?

Santa is Leona Worden. The pictures were taken at a Christmas Meet and Greet at Station 9 in Sackville.



**MEETING AND GREETING –** Lynda McEwan of administration and Robert Laver of Station 21 in Lake Echo chat it up with Santa (Leona Worden) at Sackville's Meet and Greet. Laver has been an honorary member of the department at Lake Echo and other stations for going on 20 years.

Photos by Jeanette MacKay



## Operations

## Platoon Chief Bryan Clarke

### More District Captains For Core – Expanded Response

The district captains now assigned to three rural zones working out of Stations 21, 45 and 50 (*Lake Echo, LWF and Hammonds Plains*) are being reassigned to the core and the district captain role is expanded HRM wide.

The changes will see two district captains per platoon, one at Station 12 (east) and the other at Station 7 (west). In addition to their normal platoon duties, the change will allow a district captain to respond to all serious incidents throughout HRM where they will assume responsibility for scene safety. When arriving in rural areas where a safety officer has already been appointed by the incident commander, the district captain will assist the safety officer and act in an advisory capacity.

A district captain will also be assigned during their tour to attend meetings of Boards of Chiefs,

Composite Chiefs, and Rural Management Committees. This will allow them to become more familiar with activities of volunteers in the zones.

The district captains will be responsible for the monthly planners from stations in all career and composite stations in their areas.

Captains will be appointed to Stations 21, 45 and 50 (zones 1, 4, and Western Region). They will circulate through zone composite stations that do not have captains and organize training activities, station activities and respond to emergencies, assuming incident command when required.

The changes are expected to take effect once the current captains' promotional routine is completed.

Core stations are now routinely



being called out to composite stations in the rurals for coverage. This to assist the Training Division which is moving to standardize training of members assigned to core and composite stations.

Responsibility for FDM (*Fire Department Management*) and CAD (*Computer Aided Dispatch*) has been transferred to Divisional Chief John Verral, allowing the Operations Coordinator to focus on operational-related issues in all core stations. Responsibility for daily rostering in the composite stations has been transferred from the district captains to Doreen Cordeiro.



**ANOTHER MILESTONE –** Lt. Gina Jones-Wilson of Stations 50/51 (Hammonds Plains and Upper Hammonds Plains) is presented her Firefighter Level One certificate during the annual Station 50/51 banquet on Nov. 18th. Lt. Jones-Wilson is the first female African Canadian to achieve Level One certification in HRM, and she's believed to be the first in the province. From left are provincial Fire Marshall Robert Cormier; John Cunningham, executive director of the Waverley Fire School and Deputy Chief of Station 59 (Bay Rd.); Lt. Jones; Bill Mosher, acting Chief Director; and John Siggers, Station 50/51 chief.

## HRFE Apparatus To Display Partnership With Muscular Dystrophy

There has been a long partnership between Muscular Dystrophy Canada and Canadian firefighters. Our department is no exception. Various fund-raisers are held annually by stations throughout HRM.

Now the partnership is going to become more visible. Muscular Dystrophy has designed a new decal for departments working with the group, and management has approved its placement on our apparatus.

**In the photo** Shelly McWilliams, Atlantic Coordinator for MDC, shows the new decal to Acting Deputy Director Dave Smith (left) and Lt. Dana Eisan of the Sackville volunteers, who is also a firefighter advisor with MDC.



McWilliams says firefighters do much more for Muscular Dystrophy than fundraise. "They are also the best ambassadors we have," she says.

"Through education, support, and media relations they generate awareness of muscular dystrophy with the public, like no one else."

## 2007 Combat Nationals Coming to Halifax

Our department is hosting the national Firefit Combat Challenge this summer, and TSN will cover the event.

The competition will run from Aug. 31 to Sept. 02 on the Halifax waterfront and will draw top firefighter athletes from across the country.

The HRFE team is already making plans and if any members would like to compete or participate as a course official or support staff please contact one of the following:

Rob Hebb at Station 3, D platoon  
 Bruce Mosher at Station 8, D Platoon  
 Mike Sears at Station 16, D Platoon  
 Andrew Foote at Station 12, C Platoon  
 Adam MacNeil at Station 14, C Platoon  
 Joe Barbati, D Platoon  
 Cyril Fraser, D Platoon  
 Jeff Clarke, B Platoon



**Engine 8 FF Bruce Mosher on the Keizer course during a regional event in Fredericton in July, 2005.**

For more information, check out the **Firefit of Canada website: [www.firefit.com](http://www.firefit.com)**

## FEATURE STORY

by John Giggey

### “I Was A Lucky Guy” Capt. Bob Brown Looks Back At 29 years ‘On the Job’

It's been just over 29 years since Bob Brown walked into the University Ave. station with another rookie, Mickey MacDonald, who would eventually leave the department to become president of Downeast Communications. They quickly became good friends.

A Sydney native with a BA in economics, all Brown wanted was a secure job. He thought his degree would get him a position with the federal or provincial government, but they were looking for masters degrees. He became a loans officer for a financial group, but left when they wanted to send him to Kentville. He got a job with CN Rail, but there was no security.

Then at a social gathering he met a Halifax firefighter who was a friend of a friend. “He got talking about what a great job he had so I went to

city hall and applied.” After going through a medical and an aptitude test, he was told to report to West Street, which was then headquarters for the Halifax Fire Dept.

“There were 12 of us there. We spent the whole day doing various physical fitness tests, wearing BA. I thought this was pretty neat stuff. A month later I was told I had a job and to report back to West St.”

Brown and MacDonald were sent to University Ave. “I remember that first shift like it was yesterday,” he says. “I had no training, no fire department background. We didn't have a clue. The captain, Jack Hemsworth (*now deceased*), assigned us some house chores. Then we took the pumper to the back yard and they taught us how to run lines. We spent hours

learning about pre-connects, how to run feed lines. We did it over and over until the captain was satisfied. Then we spent all afternoon tying knots. We had one run.”

In those days University Ave. ran with an aerial and two pumpers. He was assigned to Engine 4, which did most of the calls. There were 13 men on the shift. Many were seasoned firefighters and enthusiastically shared their knowledge and skills with the new recruits.

“Going in with essentially no idea how a fire department worked, meeting these people in that station, watching how they did their day to day work” gave Brown an early education in the business that he still fondly remembers. “And the banter that went on. It was crazy! You would get fired today for some of the stuff that went on.”

Within a very short time Brown knew this was going to be his life. “I knew this was my niche. This is where I belong. It got to the point that I hated to see a shift end. You find out very quickly whether this is for you or if it's not for you. If it's not for you, it could be a miserable career.”




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**ACTING CHIEF DIRECTOR Bill Mosher and retiring Capt. Bob Brown during a reception at Station 4 Jan. 12.**

It was during those early years of Brown's career that breathing apparatus was arriving on the scene. But it took a few minutes to put on and firefighters were trained to hit the fire fast.

"We worked out a system," he says. "The crew of the first-in engine would advance a line directly into the fire without BA. The second-in engine crew would don BA and come in and relieve the first crew. The first crew would then back out, hack up all the black stuff, get a pack on, and come in with a backup line.

"That was the theory anyway. In reality that first crew would never give up the line. The attitude was: 'You can have this line when you pry it

out of my cold dead hands.' "

The only low points in Brown's career seem to have been the two strikes in the '80's and the few weeks he spent in dispatch.

"We didn't have civilian dispatchers in those days. Our own members did it and usually it was older guys or members who had come down with health problems," he recalls now.

"A couple of the guys on dispatch were retiring and they needed somebody to go in. Nobody wanted it. So who do you send? You send the snots. That was Mickey and me; the snots. We did it for three or four weeks and we

were so glad to get out of there. When you're a young guy in the department, you don't want to be stuck in there."

Brown officially ended his career at the end of January assigned to Engine 4 on Lady Hammond Rd. He had been a firefighter for 29 years and six weeks. He has two sons, one in British Columbia and the other just finishing university. His wife of 32 years, Elaine, is a financial advisor in the banking industry and plans to join him in retirement in a couple of years. His plans for now are just to relax and do some travelling.

Looking back over the years, Brown says: "I was a lucky guy. I spent 29 years doing something that many people could only dream of doing."



**SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS** – Retiring Capt. Bob Brown settles in for a group shot with some of the friends he's worked with over the years during a farewell reception at Station 4. From left are Mark Harlow of Aerial 1, Paul Shannon, Steve Rogers and Peter Andrews of E-4, Steve Koch of Aerial 1, Mark Pryde of E-3, Brad Simms of E-4, Platoon Chief Brian Gray, Chuck Bezanson of E-3, Steve Theriault of E-4, and Patrick Conrad and Len March of E-3.

## For Burn Treatment - Pennies From Colby



**A PRESENT FOR BURN TREATMENT –** Five-year-old Colby Allan of CFB Shearwater saves pennies. He has for years. He also has a health problem that frequently takes him to the IWK. During a recent visit he somehow became aware of the hospital's burn treatment program. His mother, Maureen, says he recently came home from the hospital and announced that he wanted to give all the money he had saved "to the burn people". On Jan. 11, at Station 16 in Eastern Passage, Colby officially turned over his fortune to the Nova Scotia Burn Treatment Society.

In the photo on the left, Colby hands his can of pennies over to Capt. Marc Lavoie (left) of Training Division, who is also a director of the Society in Nova Scotia, and E-16 Capt. Larry Wheaton. Looking on is Colby's older brother, Casey, 7.

At right, Colby poses with his family. From left are Capt. Lavoie; Colby; his mom and dad, Jason and Maureen Allan; his brother, Casey; and Capt. Wheaton. Also attending was DND fire captain Dave Collier, chairman of the Society in Nova Scotia.

Photos by John Giggey



**TWO AWARDS FOR CAMP COURAGE –** Engine 8 FF Andrea Speranza holds the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) award presented to her by Halifax Regional Council for last summer's Camp Courage. Speranza also won a Director's Award from council for Diversity. The Halifax Chamber of Commerce also featured Speranza on the front page of the March 2007 edition of its Business Voice magazine for her work with the camp.

Photo by Jeanette MacKay

## Zones 2 And 3 Host Dinner For New Level One Members

By Capt. Tom Silver

It was a big night at the Holy Cross Catholic Church in Middle Musquodoboit Nov. 25th as Zones 2 and 3 held a dinner to celebrate the certification of 22 new Level One firefighters in their 11 departments.

They included a number of family members. At Station 28 in Sheet Harbour, Darcey MacBain and his son Adam both obtained their Level One. At Station 34 in Mushaboom, Dawn Holman and her husband, Stephen, are now Level One. Their son, Travis, 17, is in training as a junior member. And at Station 38 in Middle Musquodoboit, Danny MacDonald, his wife, Kara, and his sister, Debbie, all finished Level One together.

Several special service awards were also presented and three peer

referral agents were announced.

Bob Ruggles, a 40-year veteran with Middle Musquodoboit, was given a standing ovation for

organising the event.

More than 90 people took part in the event including acting Chief Director Bill Mosher.



Photo by Tom Silver

New Level One Members in Zones 2 and 3



Photo by John Giggey

**CHANGEOVER** – Engine 4 Capt. Mike Rogers (C Platoon, right) takes over command from his counterpart, Capt. Brian Strangward also of Engine 4 (B Platoon), during a shift change at a complicated propane incident at Stairs St. and Kempt Rd. March 1st. With them is Divisional Chief Bryson Wilson. During the incident several streets were closed and power was shut off for blocks, resulting in a huge traffic backup around the city. The initial plan was to transfer the load of propane from the damaged truck to another vehicle. When that failed, the truck with a broken main line was placed on a flatbed and escorted to Superior's facility in Burnside by police and Quint 12.

## Fire Safety Sparks Mayor Kelly's Interest!

By Captain Tom Silver

Once again our Public Education Division played a key role in preventing fires in HRM by educating our residents on fire safety. **"Kitchen Fire Safety"** was the highlighted message presented at the NSHBA Spring Home Show at the Forum on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>. Kitchen fires still represent the majority of fires in HRM coming in at about 34% of all structure fires.



Mayor Peter Kelly and other guests drop by the fire prevention display at the Home Show. David Weatherby, a volunteer at Station 8, is Sparky.

Education messages included:

- Always use thermostatically controlled deep fat fryer when heating cooking oils.
- Never carry a pot that is on fire. Instead cover it with a tight fitting lid.
- If you have a kitchen fire that you can't extinguish immediately, leave the house and call the fire department (911) from a safe location.
- Never attempt to extinguish a grease fire with water, it will spread the fire. Instead, "Put a Lid On It".
- Keep children at least three feet from the stove when cooking.
- Never wear loose fitting clothing while cooking.

Some new kitchen fire safety technology was also displayed including the "Safe-T-Element" and the "Stove Guard".

The **"Safe-T-Element"** allows for food to cook on stove top burners but keeps the elements from reaching the temperatures required for paper, clothing, cooking oils and other combustibles to reach their ignition temperature. For more information visit [www.pioneeringtech.com/ste.html](http://www.pioneeringtech.com/ste.html)

The "Stove Guard" automatically monitors the kitchen cooking area using a built in motion sensor. If you leave the kitchen, the timer starts running and power to the stove is shut off after a preset countdown time. When you return to the kitchen, the time automatically resets and continues monitoring. For more information visit [www.stoveguard.ca/](http://www.stoveguard.ca/)

## Basement Fire Damages Home on Hammonds Plains Rd.



**SUITING UP** – Engine 10 firefighter Blair Cromwell checks his gear as fire breaks through to the main floor from the basement at a structure fire during the early evening of Feb. 11 at 1020 Hammonds Plains Rd.



**KNOCKDOWN** – Crews from 12-Quint and Engine 10 douse flames that broke through to the main floor from the basement fire. Heavy smoke and a huge amount of materials stored in the basement slowed progress early in the incident.



**STANDING BY** – Peter Williams of Tact 1 (left) and Raymond Adekayode and Capt. Colin Lye of 12-Quint keep an eye on the main floor while members from Quint 7 and Engine 8 overhaul the basement. Quints 7 and 12, Tact 1, Tanker 50, and Engines 8, 8-alpha and 10 were on the call which was under the command of Station 50 (Hammonds Plains) chief John Siggers.

Photos by John Giggey

## Paving the Way – Females Make Up 50% of the Roster in Chezzetcook

With four brothers, Wendy Smith admits she's always been a bit of a tomboy. That's why it didn't faze her to join the volunteers at Station 23 in Chezzetcook eight years ago, even though she would be the only woman.

"There had been a couple of females previously, but there weren't any when I came on." She soon began getting others interested. "We paved the way a bit. There was some old school, some opposition to female members, but it's fine now."

Pave the way they did. As of this spring, half of Chezzetcook's 22 members are female. And several play leadership roles, including Smith who is a captain. But she also gives much of the credit to the station's two chief officers, Chief Alan Duchesne and Deputy Joe Mannette.

"They're exceptional leaders," she says, "and that's one reason we have retained the female members. We've never dropped below eight (female) members for years. We have no problems working together. No one questions who is giving the orders at an emergency scene and several hope to make this a career."

Smith became interested in the fire service because she saw it as a way to help her community. "In fact a lot of calls are to help people I know; people I grew up with."

One of the people Smith recruited was Kathy Pettipas, now also a captain. It wasn't just Wendy's encouragement, but also a personal loss that moved her to join the department.

"My mom died of a heart attack. I didn't even know the signs or symptoms of a heart attack. She had all the classic signs and I didn't know. I would have

known more about what to do if I had the training. She died in October and I joined at the next recruitment."

Pettipas says looking back she doesn't know whether the training she has now might have helped then. "But at least I would have a clear conscience that I had done all I could. If I can prevent that from happening to anyone else, I want to."

Seven years later, Pettipas says she'd do it all over again. "It's one of the best things I have ever done in my life. Now I am trained and have the confidence to take charge and



**TRAINING NIGHT – Capt. Wendy Smith directs members through a “firefighter down” search and rescue scenario during a recent training night at the Chezzetcook fire hall. Smith says the acceptance of female members in that station by male firefighters has helped draw more females into the service.**

do what has to be done.”

Her niece, Jennifer Whalen, was impressed. “She saw what I was doing and thought it was amazing. She said she didn’t know girls could do that kind of stuff. Now she’s been a member for two years.”

Another friend, Melinda Bezanson, got curious and asked Pettispas what they did and about the training. Now she’s been a member for four years.

And so it goes in Chezzetcook. The fire service never will be for everyone. But word is getting around to the female population that if they are interested in this kind of work, they can probably be trained to do it. A big issue is the complete acceptance by the male members at the station.

“Some ask what the guys are like. Once they know there is no harassment and they will be treated fairly, they get interested,” says Pettitpas.



Photos by John Giggey

**TOGETHERNESS – Members of Station 23 in Chezzetcook gather for a photo. Of the station’s 22 members, 11 are female.**

## Getting Married to a Firefighter



**CAKE CHOPPING** – You know you’ve just married a firefighter when your new husband wants to cut the wedding cake with a fire axe. Blois Currie, deputy chief of Stations 44 and 44 (LWF), poses with his new bride, Katherine Elizabeth Hawkins. The wedding was in October but the pictures just arrived at Feedline in January.

**THE POSE** – Engine 45 was the prop for some of the wedding pictures. Capt. Wendall MacLeod acts as one of the Honour Guards during the picture taking. The reception was at the Grand Lake fire hall.

Photos by Adams Photography



## Assisted With Fire Chiefs' Conference



**RIDING IN STYLE – FREE** – Logistics personnel were able to provide first class transportation for free for some delegates to the annual Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs conference thanks to Steele Ford. The dealership loaned two Grand Marquise to transport CAFC executives to and from different venues. On Dec. 20th the department thanked them during a brief reception at headquarters. Sales Manager Dana Simonsen, (left) and General Manager Steve Smith (right) hold their gifts. They are flanked by Divisional Chief Bryson Wilson and Platoon Chief Bryan Clarke.

Photos by John Giggey

**APPRECIATION** – Officials of Metro Transit hold some presents from our department in appreciation of their assistance in making the annual Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs conference such a success in August. Metro Transit arranged for charter buses, sometimes on very short notice, and for free bus and ferry service for convention delegates. Lori Patterson, Manager of Public Affairs for Metro Transit, and Service Supervisor Jamie Cleveland are flanked by Platoon Chief Bryan Clarke (left), and Divisional Chief Bryson Wilson. The presentations were made at Station One on Dec. 20.



## X-mas Day Fire leaves family homeless



**WASHDOWN** – Firefighter Shawn Grant gets washed down by fellow E-4 crew member Mike Burton during a Christmas day fire in Fairview. Grant and other members got covered in soggy insulation while removing soffit to get at hot spots. The fire caused heavy damage to a large single family home on Brockhurst Close. Engines 4 and 5, Quint 7, Aerial 1 and Tact 1 responded. District Capt. Paul Irving, who was returning to quarters from a previous call in Fairview, was first on scene and found a heavy fire condition in the home.

## Tricky MVA on Peggy's Cove Road



Photos by John Giggey

**AWKWARD RESCUE** – Crews from Engines 50 and 59 arrived at a reported MVA with entrapment on the Peggy's Cove Rd. Jan. 29 to find this vehicle over the embankment and unstable on its side with the female passenger inside. Capt. Steve Turner of E-59 had his crew tie off the vehicle using the rear bumper of the engine as an anchor, then used blocking and wedges to support the opposite side. Within minutes they had access to the victim and had begun extrication. Above firefighter Kelvin Dion checks the line following the rescue while Rob Girard looks on. Both were riding on E-59.

## Caterpillar Planning Advertising, Promotions Featuring Halifax Regional Fire

HRFE began using Caterpillar engines in our apparatus in 2002. They have proven to be a good choice to meet our requirements in horse power to weight ratio and torque.

Now Caterpillar is planning on featuring our department in some of its international promotions at shows and in its advertising.

“It’s a very good engine,” says fleet manager Paul McCulley who, as we all know, wouldn’t keep asking for it if it wasn’t doing its job. “It has met a lot of our needs and it has very good support from Caterpillar.” There are now 41 trucks in the fleet with some version of the Caterpillar engine.

In October, the company sent an internationally acclaimed photographer to HRM for a series of photo shoots involving several members of the department. Shaun Cloud of Kansas City directed and

shot action sequences involving the trucks and crews of Engines 17 and 18 in Cole Harbour, and Engine 8 in Bedford.

There is no word on when the

advertising campaign will begin. Using Halifax Fire and Emergency as an example, the promotion is aimed at helping the company get a bigger slice of the specialty market, such as fire.



**DIRECTING** – Photographer Shaun Cloud gives some direction to Capt. Bruce MacDonald and firefighter Mike Dorey in preparation for one segment of the photo shoot. At right firefighter Scott MacKellar readies the truck.



Photos by Paul McCulley

**ACTION** – Cloud sits in the street to shoot the segment and the crew of Tanker 18 prepare to advance a line.

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

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**Halifax Regional  
Fire & Emergency**



**PROPANE LEAK** – Engine 6 crew caught an unusual propane call Feb. 26 when the driver of a Superior Propane truck realized he had some pinholes in his line as he prepared to fill a tank at the rear of a home on Pinehaven Drive off the Purcell's Cove Road. The driver shut down the truck but about 27 litres of propane remained in the line and was slowly escaping. E-6 Capt. Luke Whiting called for some backup after sizing up the situation. Power to the house involved was shut down and the dead end street was closed for about 90 minutes until another Superior Propane truck could arrive to take on the fuel.

Top Photo, Samantha Meehan of E-6 maintains an intermittent fog stream to dissipate propane leaking from the hose.



Bottom Photo, Quint 12 FF Adam Bowes and Capt. Whiting use a meter to monitor fumes downwind as Meehan uses a fog stream in the background while the remainder of the propane in the hose is bled off.

Tact. 1 and District Capt. Brian Conrad also attended, along with Platoon Chief Mike Blackburn. It was Blackburn's first day as Platoon Chief and his first call as shift commander.

Photos by John Giggey

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