

M The Ontario Fire Service Messenger

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Inside:

Provincial HUSAR heads north

Public Educators 'Get to the Point'

Burn survivors play important role



The Ontario Fire Service Messenger

Published in the interest of fire protection and fire prevention in Ontario.

Comments, suggestions, questions and articles are welcome. Please send them to the attention of:

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Bob Baker President & CEO, SMARTRISK

Aiming to increase our impact



Coming into 2009, it seems natural to reflect on the year just completed and the new one just begun.

Our New Year's resolution at SMARTRISK is to increase our impact in 2009. Our evaluations consistently tell us that our programs for young people – SMARTRISK *Heroes* and SMARTRISK *No Regrets* – work. Indeed, we were thrilled that *No Regrets* was recognized with the 2008 Health Promotion and Innovation Award of Excellence by the Canadian Institute of Child Health. It is a challenge, however, to present our programs to as many young people as we would wish. Like most fire departments, we have limited resources. Taking this into account, I'd like to tell you how SMARTRISK plans to invest in some new thinking to get our messages across as efficiently as possible.

Some of the changes that you will see include modifying our methods to increase our audiences with the SMARTRISK *Heroes* travelling road show for youth. The show combines a large-scale DVD presentation with a live talk given by an injury survivor, who presents positive choices to reduce the risk of injury. In its current form, we reach up to 70 high schools a year. However, as we enter our 18th year of bringing SMARTRISK *Heros* to teen audiences across the country, we would like to increase our impact and reach triple the number of students who experience this award-winning show. Another change is the new investment made to the SMARTRISK *No Regrets* program. You'll learn more about this engaging program in this issue's lead story entitled "The power of positive messaging" on page 21. Our plans include bringing *No Regrets* to many more than the 80 schools who currently host the program. A major new investment from State Farm will help us redevelop our website to communicate more effectively with schools so we can manage greater numbers. Our plan also includes reaching youth by using tools such as YouTube and Facebook.

Like the fire service, SMARTRISK is keenly aware of the challenges that come with ensuring program effectiveness. Let's work together to help youth learn smart risk taking for life. SMARTRISK wishes you and your loved ones a Happy New Year. May all your risks be smart.

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Burn survivors play important role in Tavistock and at Camp Bucko

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Update ONTARIO

News from around the province

Provincial Heavy Urban Search and Rescue Team heads north

A multi-jurisdictional disaster response exercise ("Trillium") simulating the consequences of a massive ice storm in northwestern Ontario took place from November 17 to 23, coordinated by Emergency Management Ontario (EMO). The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) coordinated a component of the exercise ("Trillium Assist") by arranging for provincial support in response to a structural collapse scenario in the City of Thunder Bay. The OFM helped to coordinate the deployment of the Toronto Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (HUSAR) team, along with the Manitoba Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team to work in support of Thunder Bay Fire Rescue service. The OPP Provincial Emergency Response Team (PERT) and the OFM's own Emergency Planning & Strategic Development (EPSD) unit were also deployed as part of the multi-agency response effort.

See 'OFM' on page 7



Pat Burke, Fire Marshal of Ontario gives a media interview at the news conference.

Stovetop fires need to be reduced says Fire Marshal

"Get a Grip on Holiday Cooking" was the title of a news conference held in early December at a Toronto fire station. While Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke and Toronto Fire Services Chief Bill Stewart gave presentations about the importance of reducing stovetop fires with this year's fire fatalities, staff from both organizations provided media with live demonstrations on how to prevent and deal with cooking-related fires.

"Cooking is responsible for starting more than 25 per cent of home fires, according to our provincial data," said Fire Marshal of Ontario Pat Burke. "And the majority of the time, cooking fires

have started because cooking was left unattended. It is clear people have to take responsibility and get a grip on fire safety in their homes for the protection of their families."

"In the last year we have seen some devastating cooking fires in the City where people have been severely injured," said Toronto Fire Services Fire Chief Bill Stewart. "These injuries can be avoided by staying in the kitchen while cooking, keeping items that can burn away from the stove and by keeping a large lid near the stove that can be easily slid over a pot if it catches fire."

See 'Cooking' on page 6

Ontario Firefighter Bravery Awards

On November 21, 2008, four firefighters and six police officers were recognized for acts of exceptional bravery and courage in 2007.

Lieutenant Governor of Ontario Honourable David C. Onley invested the recipients with medals at a Queen's Park ceremony as Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Rick Bartolucci read out each name and spoke of their acts of bravery. These medals are the province's highest award in recognition of firefighters and police officers whose actions demonstrate courage and bravery in the line of duty.

"The medals of bravery remind us of the courage and dedication of those who serve in police and fire services across the province, that each day, these brave men and women face extraordinary dangers, to keep our communities safe," said Lieutenant Governor Onley.

"It's a great honour to celebrate the bravery and courage of

firefighters and police officers who risk their lives to protect us," said Minister Bartolucci. "Ontario is one of the safest jurisdictions in the world, thanks to the selfless dedication and outstanding heroism of our firefighters and police officers."

The recipients of the Ontario Medal for Firefighter Bravery included Lieutenant John Chatterton of Ottawa Fire Services, who was headed for a drill practice when an alarm came in from a home in the city. Arriving first on the scene with his crew, Lieutenant Chatterton searched the house through a light smoky haze and determined that all the occupants had left. As they headed back downstairs to leave the home, visibility was reduced to zero. Disoriented by the heavy smoke and feeling the burn from the extreme heat, Lieutenant Chatterton led his crew back upstairs to a third floor window and told firefighters the only way out was to jump. Ensuring his crew were first to leave the building,

he waited until everyone had cleared the landing zone before he took the jump himself. As a result, he suffered second-degree burns.

Volunteer firefighter Les O'Neill of the North Middlesex



Lieutenant John Chatterton of Ottawa Fire Services stands beside The Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

See 'Bravery' on page 10



This memorial was set up to honour a 23-year old Mexican, who as an orphaned child, was raised in the fire hall, became a firefighter, but then suddenly died during a HAZMAT training exercise.

Angels for Mexico

We often take for granted the level of public safety we have in Canada.

In the fall of 2008, Carol-Lynn Chambers, OFM Operations Manager, got a first-hand glimpse at the needs of a Mexican fire department: its capabilities stood in stark contrast to the level of service and capabilities Canadians have come to expect and appreciate from our fire services.

Puerto Vallarta is the fastest growing municipality in Mexico, with a full-time population of 350,000 and more than 2 million tourists annually.

This growing population, combined with limited funding for equipment and staffing, booming construction of high-rise vacation properties, and decaying infrastructure (for example, water supply) pose significant challenges for the Puerto Vallarta Fire Department.

See 'Mexican' on page 15

Ontario Fire College Fire Prevention Officers' 2008 Seminar

BY JANA GILLIS
ONTARIO FIRE COLLEGE
INSTRUCTOR
FIRE PREVENTION OFFICERS'
SEMINAR COORDINATOR

The Ontario Fire College (OFC) Fire Prevention Officers (FPO) Planning Committee is to be commended for creating an incredible agenda that included 25 timely topics presented to a capacity crowd of fire prevention officers during the week of November 24, 2008.

The theme for the OFC FPO 2008 Seminar was "Safe and Sound", which expanded on topics from last year's seminar and included several technical topics such as water supply, generators, fire separations, spray booths, commercial cooking equipment,

fire alarm technology and fire pumps. Eric Trodgon, STEPS Canada, opened the seminar with his presentation on "Staying Sane and Finding Your Game". Eric specializes in facilitations, mediations and customized training programs. This unique session identified simple STEPS to control every day conflicts and how to work through difficult disputes and stop side stepping issues.

A very informative Courtroom Demeanour Panel Discussion, facilitated by Bruce Weaver, Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM), provided delegates with the opportunity to ask members of the panel questions on protocol and expectations in the courtroom, (as seen in the photo above).

Overall, feedback from the

seminar was very positive and included delegate comments such as "an excellent job overall by the organizing committee, well planned and executed"; "great variety of material with good presenters"; "one of the best seminars I have ever attended" and "a very useful week from all aspects from networking to knowledge accumulation".

Congratulations to the following members of the OFC FPO Seminar Planning Committee 2008 for their tireless work and commitment:

Chantelle Cosgrove, Brampton Fire, Gary Laframboise, Oakville Fire, Jeff McCormick, Brantford Fire, George Warner, Toronto Fire Services, the OFM's Peter Guiry, Beth Tate, Bruce Weaver and Ken Benoit.



From left are Jeff McCormick, Brantford Fire Department; Alex Malcolm, Ontario Provincial Police; Justice of the Peace Linda Kay; Guy DeGagne, OFC Instructor and Chris Williams, OFM Fire Investigation Services.

Continued from page 4

Cooking fires can be reduced

A media advisory and news release were distributed to all Ontario media about the importance of reducing unsafe cooking. In total 12 media outlets covered the news conference, including Global TV, CITY TV, CTV, CBC-TV, CBC Radio One (99.1), CFRB 1010 and the free daily Sun newspaper, 24 Hours. Cooking fires are the leading cause of fires and the second leading cause of fatal fires in the

province. In addition, the push to combat cooking fires comes as the province enters the holiday season, the deadliest time of the year for home fires.

In 2008 there were 108 fatalities compared with the 100 of 2007.

Denise Hynes of Toronto Fire Services demonstrates to the media how to slide a lid over a pot that is on fire. The pot can simulate a fire and was used in one of the skits at the news conference.



Continued from page 4

OFM takes part in largest provincial emergency exercise

Airlift for the HUSAR team was provided by the Department of National Defence, another partner in the broader Trillium exercise.

The combined interagency resources representing fire services, police personnel, emergency medical staff, specialists in structural engineering, hazardous materials, heavy rigging, search (including highly trained dogs) and logistics worked effectively together under the local incident command structure.

"Trillium Assist" fulfilled the annual provincial exercise for the Toronto HUSAR team as part of its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Province. This is similar to the annual provincial CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives) exercises that have taken place in Sarnia and Gananoque. Its major similarity: the requirement of a variety of multi-disciplinary skills to respond effectively to this exercise.

It was the province's largest

response exercise due to the sheer mass of equipment, supplies, personnel, and search and rescue dogs that were used to participate and it was the first time that the HUSAR team had been air deployed within Ontario.

"Each exercise is a learning opportunity for us to enhance our collective knowledge and skills to effectively respond in support of a local community dealing with a large-scale incident," said Carol-Lynn Chambers, OFM Operations Manager/Chief of the EPSD unit.

Thunder Bay Fire Chief John Hay, the overall local lead on "Trillium Assist," indicated that, "this exercise has given our community and our fire service a firsthand opportunity to demonstrate our ability to address complex emergencies such as this in a collaborative way. We have also been able to enhance our own capabilities locally through this experience."

Two other municipalities had the opportunity to meet firsthand with the Manitoba

USAR team

while en route to assist in Thunder Bay. Both Kenora and Dryden were able to benefit from a presentation by the Manitoba representatives about their capabilities as well as to involve them in tabletop scenarios involving weather-related collapses in their respective communities.

Since September 11, 2001, the Province of Ontario, the OFM and the municipal fire service have worked to develop a strategy to be better prepared for the consequences of terrorist-related activities. In 2002, the OFM established a fire service-based response system for the province and this included the capability for provincial and municipal resources to be deployed in support of local municipalities to help address complex emergencies. Chambers stressed that "It's only by learning by doing and working effectively together that we can continue to provide the most comprehensive and cost-effective emergency response support to the residents of Ontario."

In addition to the "Trillium Assist" exercise participants, more than 1,500 participants from 40 different organizations including provincial ministries, federal departments, municipalities, First Nations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector took part in the broader "Trillium" exercise.



The following are pictures of the event scenarios.



Jailtime for convicted Niagara individual

BY JIM JESSOP
ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF
NIAGARA FALLS FIRE SERVICE

A trial in absentia was held in the City of Niagara Falls on October 8, 2008 for violations of the Ontario Fire Code. The violations were noted in an inspection on May 17, 2007. The violations were: 1) failing to ensure portable fire extinguishers be located in access to exits and 2) failing to ensure combustible material not be stored in a service room.

The building in question is two storeys and contained commercial occupancies below four residential apartments. The person in control

of the commercial operation was found guilty on both of the above counts and had been previously convicted for violating the Ontario Fire Code twice in 2004.

"Enough is enough is enough," said Justice of the Peace Richard Bisson, after imposing the sentence. "The time to prevent a tragedy is now and not after a fire has occurred. This court will not put up with an individual who does not get the message and continues to show contempt for fire safety concerns."

Justice Bisson awarded the following penalties:

- 1) 140 days in jail and \$30,000
- 2) 140 days in jail and \$25,000

"The Niagara Falls Fire Service is

pleased that the courts continue to send the message that those who choose to place others at risk by not complying with the Ontario Fire Code do so at their own peril," said Assistant Niagara Falls Fire Chief Jim Jessop. "The Niagara Falls Fire Service has had a zero tolerance policy with respect to violations of the Fire Code that have an immediate impact on life safety for the last six years. The Niagara Falls Fire Service has embraced fire safety enforcement as a core responsibility and one that we will continue to diligently and consistently apply in the City."

Repeat offender gets convicted again

BY STEVE FOWLDS
FIRE INSPECTOR
PICKERING CITY FIRE
DEPARTMENT

A Pickering woman was convicted and charged October 20, 2008 for failure to install proper fire separations and closures in the shared means of egress, failure to ensure the furnace was operating safely and had incorrectly installed a fire sprinkler on the furnace room wall in a two unit residential occupancy. A pre-court inspection showed the property had finally been brought into compliance. In this case, the owner plead guilty

to the charges and was fined \$10,000.

This was the second conviction at the property for the same offence. The woman had previously been fined \$4,500 and had been convicted of failing to maintain a smoke alarm in operating condition at another property she owns. On this, she was fined \$500 plus a conviction registered with no fine for having a basement apartment that did not meet Code requirements. In total, she has four convictions on her record.

\$40K in fines leveraged

BY SHANE EDWARDS
FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER
BARRIE FIRE & EMERGENCY
SERVICE

In November 2006, the Barrie Fire and Emergency Service laid charges against a downtown bar for obstructing an exit and failing to repair a fire separation.

On September 19, 2008 in a provincial court, the owner and the Corporation were found guilty on both charges and fined \$40,000. The Justice of the Peace fined the defendant \$5,000 and the Corporation \$15,000 for each charge.

Apartment landlord in Oakville fined \$6000

The landlord of a triplex residential apartment building located in Oakville appeared before the Ontario Court of Justice in Burlington on November 18, 2008 and was found guilty of three Fire Code violations and fined \$6,000, plus victim surcharges.

The landlord was found guilty contrary to Section 28(1)(c) of the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act* of failure to maintain the fire alarm system in operating condition; failure to maintain lighting for illumination in operating condition in access to exits; and failure to in-

stall a smoke alarm inside a dwelling unit.

Gary Laframboise, Chief Fire Prevention Officer of Oakville Fire Department anticipates that these fines will act as a wakeup call for landlords and building owners of residential buildings.

"Building owners and landlords have a responsibility to make sure that their residents are kept safe from fire," stated CFPO Laframboise. "Owners and landlords must ensure that they comply with the requirements of the Ontario Fire Code."

Third conviction results in substantial fines and probation

On September 18, 2008, a Hamilton Justice of the Peace sent out a strong message to the registered owner of a local automotive salvage yard; that continued violations of the Ontario Fire Code will not be tolerated.

The numbered company, and an Officer of that company, pled guilty in Provincial Offences Court to five violations of the Ontario Fire Code and were fined a total of \$25,000 along with being placed on probation for two years.

The registered owner was convicted of failing to provide access gates with a clear width of at least 3.5 metres to allow access

by fire department vehicles, failure to install no smoking signs in the salvage yard, failure to post the location of the nearest telephone and contact number for the fire department within the yard, failure to arrange storage piles so that they are at least 3 metres from property lines and not in excess of 3 metres in height and 100 m² in area and failure to maintain a space of 3 metres, clear of grass and weeds, between combustible salvage piles.

This was the third time in the past four years the Officer of the company had been convicted and fined for Fire Code violations.

Convictions in St. Catharines

The owner of a three-storey apartment building was convicted of a Fire Code violation involving failure to maintain smoke alarms in operating condition and for failure to comply with an inspection

order. Failure to comply with the Fire Code resulted in a fine of \$4,000 while failure to comply with the inspection order resulted in a fine of \$60,000.

**Got conviction
information?**

Let's hear about it!

The *Ontario Fire Service Messenger* would like to inform all readers about recent convictions and other successful enforcement initiatives in Ontario.

Visit www.ofm.gov.on.ca, then click on the **Prosecutions & Convictions Form** link in the *Legislation* box. Please send information to carol.gravelle@ontario.ca.

\$30,000 in fines for unsafe conditions in grow house

In November 2008, the City of Toronto obtained convictions for two unsafe conditions created by a marijuana grow operation at a Scarborough home.

The city said the grow op created a hazard that was not permitted in the original design of the home and that this resulted in a \$20,000 fine. Other issues included the use of non-approved wiring methods, extension cords and electrical devices resulting in a \$5,000 fine and failure to install a working smoke alarm in the hallway where there were sleeping areas also resulted in a \$5,000 fine.

"The conviction represents a deterrent to persons who engage in grow op activities as these fines are in addition to any criminal convictions," the city said in a news release, dated December 8, 2008.

Firefighter Bravery Awards



Firefighter Les O'Neill of the North Middlesex Fire Department stands with his Bravery Award.

Fire Department was at work at a cement plant when he responded immediately to an alarm just a short distance from the plant. As



Firefighter Michael Sophocleous of London Fire Department stands with his Bravery award.

thick black smoke billowed out of the home, several bystanders told him an elderly woman might still be trapped inside. Although his fire gear had not arrived yet, he did not hesitate to force the rear door open and face the heavy smoke and intense heat. Once inside, he searched until he found an elderly person lying on the

floor. He pulled the victim out of the burning house and paramedics arrived on the scene shortly after to revive the 91-year-old woman. Sadly, she was later pronounced dead.

On a Sunday evening in December, Firefighter Steven Reynolds of the Milton Fire Department was filling up his vehicle at a service station when he spotted a woman calling for help near the parking lot. Firefighter Reynolds approached the distraught woman and noticed she was holding a samurai

sword. He asked her to put the sword down and then she quickly became aggressive. He ran into the gas station to call 9-1-1 and held the doors closed, but she used the sword to break the glass windows and doors to get inside. As she moved toward the two attendants, Firefighter Reynolds seized the opportunity to pin her against



Firefighter Steven Reynolds of the Milton Fire Department stands with his Bravery Award.

the counter. Although she cut his arm severely in the process, the attendants then had the chance to take over and restrain her until the police arrived.

A three-storey walk-up apartment building caught fire during the early morning hours of a December day. Everyone was accounted for except for a woman who called the fire department to say she was trapped in the apartment directly above the fire. From the scene, Firefighter Michael Sophocleous of the London Fire Department, spotted her in a window. Moving into a position to rescue the woman, Firefighter Sophocleous climbed a three-foot fence with a 12-foot ladder in hand. He landed in a shallow hollow filled with snow, stumbled and fell and injured his shoulder. Despite suffering from what was later diagnosed as a broken left shoulder, he regained his foothold, set the ladder in position and climbed up to the window, successfully rescuing the trapped woman and bringing her to safety.

Reaching youth and older adults: focus of 2008 Pub Ed conference



Ivan Tanner of Ottawa Fire Services asks a question during one of the presentations.



Mary Lambert sings out fire safety songs with Bill Cronin of Township of Woolwich Fire Department.

"Get to the Point" was the title of this year's Public Fire & Life Safety Educators' conference. Held in Point Edward from November 26 to 28, the conference was attended by more than 140 fire service personnel from across Ontario.

The conference began with an eye-opening presentation about YouTube and risky fire behaviours from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) representatives. In her segment, Dr. Sherri MacKay talked about how media violence may contribute to violence in children and youth. In particular, she said that the fire service should be concerned about teens watching fire-setting videos on the Internet as studies have indicated that this behaviour can lead to youth identifying with others in what seems like a normal environment. Other representatives spoke about the popularity of Internet video-sharing sites, in particular the rise of the number one video-sharing site, YouTube, and the need to involve youth in producing fire safety messages.

In keeping with the theme, Jennifer Wilson of SMARTRISK spoke about *No Regrets*. The program, currently in its sixth

year, has been implemented into 80 schools across Canada. The purpose of the program is to develop activities to educate others at school about injury prevention. In high schools, it is based on peer leadership. Specifically, the youth develop the program for themselves. And it is working. This year, Canadian schools hosted 53 events that reached approximately 8,000 students. There was a 17 per cent reduction in injuries as a result. Perhaps the most important source of its success is its avoidance with traditional messaging pitfalls such as using fear and rules to motivate.

"Fear messages can push people into denial," said Wilson adding the need to know more about youth will help others reach them effectively.

From the Office of the Fire Marshal, Denise Wallace spoke on a new safe cooking program that is being developed for high school students aged 13 to 18. The program is currently in the research phase with focus groups still ongoing. Its focus will be on the importance for teenagers to recognize and identify hazards, describe safe cooking behaviours, be able to describe the law for

smoke alarms, understand the testing and maintenance of smoke alarms and what to do in an emergency.

On the last day of the conference, Dwayne Wessel, Essential Autism, spoke about the fire and life safety approaches for communicating effectively with children in the spectrum of autism. Some of the approaches included having a clock that shows the length of time your presentation will take (many children with autism do not understand time as a concept) and using social storyboards to demonstrate what to do in a fire.

Following Wessel, Fire Marshal Pat Burke spoke about rising fire fatalities. At the time of the conference there were 95 fatalities, two more than at the same time in 2007. He communicated that this information was disturbing given the upcoming holiday season, a time when fire fatalities generally rise. To address the rise in fatalities he stressed the need for public educators to raise the fire safety awareness levels in their communities with communication that could cross generations such as

See 'Point' on page 12

Continued from page 11

Point Edward hosts 2008 Pub Ed conference

the 60 and older age group and the young adults. Using the example of the United States presidential election and Barack Obama's powerful Internet campaign to raise money and communicate messages, Burke called for the use of alternate ways to connect with youth saying, "Youth don't use conventional media."

In addition to these presentations, there were a variety of workshops which dealt with photoelectric versus ionization smoke alarms, essential resources for fire safety presentations, how to reintroduce and reinvigorate Risk Watch and holiday fire safety solutions.

To measure the effectiveness of the conference, attendees were asked to evaluate the conference. Overall, comments were very

positive and some of the most popular sessions specifically included "Risky Behaviour and YouTube", "Precious Seconds", Camp Bucko, and "Fire and Life Safety Approaches for Children with Autism."

In planning for next year, attendees provided many suggestions as to the content they would like to learn more about including Internet media relations, programs that other departments have developed and how to develop effective videos for social mediums, such as YouTube.

In terms of the general comments

received, the majority of respondents thanked Point Edward Fire Department for hosting the conference and for the presentation of their impressive Colour Guard. Others expressed their pleasure with the conference overall, one in particular saying "This is the 4th conference I have been to...and I have to say this was the best one yet."



At top are representatives from Point Edward Fire Department. In the front row, from left, are Ron Sparling, Rick McGregor and Fire Chief Doug MacKenzie.

At right Fire Marshal Pat Burke speaks to conference attendees about rising fatalities in the province.



In the bottom photo, the Colour Guard await Sparling's direction to march into the conference room for the Opening Ceremonies. It was the first time the group performed.



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Acetylene cylinder hazards for first responders

First responders, as well as fire investigation personnel, should be aware of the post-fire hazards specific to compressed gas cylinders containing acetylene.

In addition to the obvious cautions regarding the potential for weakening of the cylinder walls and damage to the valve assembly from exposure to heat and flame, compressed gas cylinders containing acetylene present additional hazards.

Post-fire explosions may result from:

- External heating that can create an explosive “runaway” decomposition of the acetylene within the cylinder; or,
- Impact - mechanical shock to the cylinder.

If an acetylene cylinder is involved in a fire, the risk of explosion can last for 24 hours after the fire has been extinguished. This is because acetylene, when exposed to heat, becomes unstable and will decompose into its base components (carbon and hydrogen). The highly exothermic nature of the decomposition of acetylene is the key hazard. High temperatures and pressures generated during decomposition may result in a deflagration or possibly even a detonation depending on the size of the vessel and the heat intensity of the initiating source. Decomposition is unpredictable and begins when the acetylene is raised to a temperature above 400°C (750F).

“Acetylene cylinders...are not readily discernible from other cylinders unless the ‘Dangerous Goods’ label is still displayed on the cylinder.”

Within the cylinder, the acetylene is dissolved in acetone (a stabilizer) to help retard decomposition. Acetylene cylinders are filled with a porous mass designed to eliminate pockets within the cylinder where acetylene can accumulate and become separated from the acetone.

Mitigation of the Explosion Hazard

First responders may test for possible acetylene decomposition within the cylinder by wetting the exterior of the cylinder. If steam is produced or if the exterior dries abnormally quickly, heating due to decomposition is likely. The acetylene cylinder(s) should be deluged with water for at least 24 hours after the source of fire has been removed or until the cylinders have remained cool and wet for at least 30 minutes with no indication of internal decomposition.

Additional Hazards

The filler material within the acetylene cylinder may contain asbestos. In a fire where acetylene tanks have exploded, the asbestos filler may become friable and

represent a respiratory hazard.

The use of asbestos within the filler material was banned in Canada several years ago; however, since acetylene cylinders have a life expectancy of 30 to 50 years or more, personnel must assume that the subject cylinder probably contained asbestos. In the event of an explosion and dispersion of the asbestos, use of the appropriate level of personal protective equipment would be required by personnel working within the affected zone.

Acetylene cylinders are not universally colour-coded. They may be red, black, yellow or whatever colour the manufacturer has chosen. They are not readily discernible from other cylinders unless the ‘Dangerous Goods’ label is still displayed on the cylinder.

For additional information about acetylene cylinders, first responders may wish to review the 2008 *Emergency Response Guidebook – Guide 116 Gases – Flammable (unstable)* or visit the Praxair Material Safety Data Sheet at www.praxair.com/praxair.nsf.

Compiled with research files from the OFM Fire Investigations Unit.

The Messenger needs your news

If you have an item you would like to see published in Update Ontario, please send it to: The Editor, The Ontario Fire Service Messenger, Office of the Fire Marshal, Place Nouveau Building,

5775 Yonge Street, 7th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M2M 4J1.
Tel: 416-325-3138, fax: 416-325-3162 or email
carol.gravelle@ontario.ca

Carbon monoxide deaths spark action

In connection to the high-profile carbon monoxide deaths of OPP Constable Laurie Hawkins, her husband and two children in their Woodstock home in December, fire departments and the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) have been asked about the importance of carbon monoxide alarms and their requirements in municipalities.

In response, fire departments have issued news releases to educate their communities about the importance of carbon monoxide alarms in homes, and municipalities have offered discounts on the alarms. Of

particular note, the OFM fielded numerous media calls from major media outlets about the requirement of carbon monoxide alarms in the Fire Code.

"There is no regulatory authority under the Ontario Fire Code to mandate the use of carbon monoxide alarms since they are not fire safety devices. The *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* does not contain authority to regulate public safety matters that go beyond the scope of fire safety," said Beth Tate, OFM Fire Protection Engineer.

However, in the Building

Code, carbon monoxide alarms are required in new residential buildings from 1997. In addition, municipalities often have bylaws for carbon monoxide alarms.

The deaths spurred Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman to present a bill at Queen's Park in December to make carbon monoxide alarms mandatory in all homes in Ontario. The bill has passed its first reading but has not yet become law.

For more information about carbon monoxide alarms, visit the OFM website at www.ofm.gov.on.ca. There is an information sheet about how to keep safe from carbon monoxide poisoning on the homepage in the *Announcements* box.

OMFPOA participates in Ontario Universities' Fair

BRIAN P. WALSH, CET, CBCO CHIEF FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER, MISSISSAUGA FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Ontario Municipal Fire Prevention Officer's Association (OMFPOA) was very proud to have been a part of the 2008 Ontario Universities' Fair (OUF).

Even the closure of the Toronto Gardiner expressway ramps and most of the streets in the downtown core for the waterfront marathon could not put a damper on the final day of the OUF. More than 100,000 people were anticipated to attend the event, running from September 26 to 28.

At this year's fair, the OMFPOA distributed 10,000 copies of the new "Fire Safe Student Accommodation 101" fire safety sheet developed by the Office of the Fire Marshal to parents and students.

With financial support from the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council, the OMFPOA was able to print 20,000 copies of the information sheet in full colour.

While 10,000 copies of the

information sheet were distributed at the OUF, the additional 10,000 copies printed were provided for distribution to the organizers at the Ontario Colleges Information Fair held on October 27 in Toronto.

OMFPOA chapter volunteers and executive members generously gave up their weekend to attend the event. The OMFPOA would like to recognize and personally thank the Ontario University Fair team consisting of Vicki Veldman and Paul Patry from Kingston Fire & Rescue, Frank Lafond from

Greater Toronto Airport Authority Fire Services, Randy Pyle from Richmond Hill Fire Department, Carlo Abballe, Alison Geronimo, Glen Misiurski, and George Warner from Toronto Fire Services, Chantelle Cosgrove from Brampton Fire and Emergency Services and Brian Walsh of Mississauga Fire & Emergency Services.

The OMFPOA looks forward to attending future Ontario university fairs, as the feedback on the participation and distributed materials has been very positive.



From left to right are Chief Fire Prevention Officer Frank Lafond, GTAA Fire & Emergency Services (OMFPOA Director), Dr. Helene N. LeBlanc, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Faculty of Science, Inspector Carlo Abballe, Toronto Fire Services and Acting Capt. George Warner, Toronto Fire Services (OMFPOA President).

Propane safety recommendations implemented

In December 2008, the Province put new regulations in place to improve the safety of Ontario's propane system.

"Our government remains committed to ensuring that Ontario has the highest standards and best systems in place, and we are moving quickly to implement the remaining recommendations from the Propane Safety Review Panel report," said Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services Harinder Takhar.

With the regulatory changes put in place, more than 30 of the Panel's 40 recommendations have now been acted upon.

These regulatory amendments to enhance safety include:

- A minimum of annual inspections for propane facilities
- Additional requirements for licensing of propane facilities
- Stricter limits related to the storage and inventory of propane
- Enhanced safety equipment and training requirements, and
- Public availability of a facility's emergency preparedness plan.

These regulatory changes come quickly after the Propane Safety Review Report released in November. Prepared by an independent panel, the report stated the building blocks for

propane safety are in place in Ontario and have served people well over the years. The report provided 40 recommendations to further improve the propane system in Ontario and the government committed to move on implementing all of the recommendations.

The government will continue to work with the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, the propane industry, municipalities and other safety agencies to maintain the confidence of all Ontarians in the propane system, moving to act on the remaining panel recommendations without delay.

Excerpted from a December 11, 2008 Ministry of Business and Consumer Services news release.

Continued from page 5

Mexican FD makes the most of their limited resources

ment and its approximately 42 members. The fire department has been fortunate to receive some donations, including an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) courtesy of an American tourist, once he discovered there were only three in the municipality. In addition, there are few fire safety requirements for high-rise and other occupancies, limited prevention and public education programs, and insufficient resources to support fire-fighting training and operations as well as the myriad other services demanded of the fire service.

When Chambers visited the department, First Officer Garcia provided an educational tour of the single fire station serving the city. He and others spoke with



From left is Carol-Lynn Chambers, OFM Operations Manager/Chief of the EPSD unit., Adrian Bobadilla Garcia, 1er Oficial Bomberos Vallarta and Gilberto Hugo Garcia Moran, 3er Oficial Bomberos Vallarta, who were representing (Fire Chief) Commander Alfredo Rivas.

pride about their existing service, how they have had to make do with very limited resources, but still proudly serve their call to public safety.

A foundation was set up last year called "Angels for Vallarta," to enlist the help of Canadians and Americans (particularly those who enjoy vacationing in Mexico) toward allocating resources to an underfunded fire service.

The program is now expanding to other parts of Mexico, but the focus still remains on assisting the Puerto Vallarta Fire Department, which continues to seek assistance with both short-term equipment and guidance with longer-term sustainable funding solutions. To date, Calgary Fire Department has been the most active in Canada in supporting Puerto Vallarta, but it is well recognized that many other fire services have donated time and resources to help fire services in other countries.

Anyone interested in getting involved with this particular cause can contact www.angelsformexico.com.

Ontario fallen firefighters remembered

BY GINA PONTIKAS
OFM PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

In October 2008, 63 names of fallen members of the fire service were added to the firefighter monument at the memorial grounds across from Queen's Park in Toronto.

Ontario's Lieutenant Governor David C. Onley, Premier Dalton McGuinty, Minister of Community Safety & Correctional Services Rick Bartolucci, Fire Marshal of Ontario Pat Burke and Ontario Professional Firefighters Association (OPFFA) President Fred LeBlanc were a few of the dignitaries in attendance to provide remarks and lay wreaths on the memorial monument on behalf of the provincial government and fire service associations.

"This annual memorial honours

the memory of a dedicated group of individuals who held devotion and duty above their own personal safety. Their unselfish actions and supreme sacrifice are humbling to us all, and we are deeply grateful," said Rick Bartolucci, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

As each new name was called, the traditional fire bell was rung symbolizing the fallen firefighter's final call to duty. Included in this year's list of fallen firefighters were two Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) fire investigators, Paul McKerracher and Dave Marcellus.

Earlier in the year, in May 2008, the monument and memorial grounds were vandalized. On October 3, the OPFFA kicked-off a fundraising initiative to raise money to restore the memorial site. On that same day, the

provincial government announced a commitment of \$100,000 towards the restoration.

During his speech, OPFFA President LeBlanc stated, "Together we stand tall and proud despite the heinous attempt to deface our monument and discredit those memories of our fallen. I'm confident that the persons responsible for those cowardly acts of vandalism earlier this year on these sacred grounds will be brought to justice, if not within our judicial system, perhaps within their own conscience."

If anyone is interested in contributing to the memorial restoration fund, donations can be made at any TD Canada Trust Branch in Ontario. For additional information, visit the OPFFA website at www.opffa.org/.



From left, Fire Marshal of Ontario Pat Burke, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Rick Bartolucci, President of Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs Richard Boyes and Premier of Ontario Dalton McGuinty pay their respects to fallen firefighters.. Photo taken by Gina Pontikas, Office of the Fire Marshal.



Fire service personnel and members of the Fire Marshal and Ontario Fire College march in honour of fallen firefighters. Photo taken by Gina Pontikas, Office of the Fire Marshal.

In Detail: Fire performance of solid wood and engineered floor joists

BY ED GULBINAS, P. ENG.
OFM MANAGER
APPLIED RESEARCH

The results of a recent National Research Council of Canada Institute for Research in Construction (NRC-IRC) study reinforce the importance of having interconnected smoke alarms located on each storey of a house and outside all sleeping areas. The study also highlights the importance of continued public education about home fire escape planning and fire services having SOP/SOGs that require firefighters to assess risk of floor failure, prior to attempting interior attack/rescue, where a fire is in the basement of a residence.

Completed in 2008, the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes (CCBFC) and the Canadian Commission on Construction Materials Evaluation (CCCME) requested the NRC-IRC to undertake the study to look at the fire performance of commonly used residential floor assemblies when exposed to a challenging fire originating in the basement. The request was based on the need to evaluate how new materials and innovative construction assemblies would impact occupant life safety and to demonstrate how these materials and systems would hold up in residential occupancies.

The test facility was set up as a typical two-storey single-family house, which complied with the minimum code requirements of the National Building Code of Canada (NBCC). Scientists then simulated two scenarios; creating a fire in the basement when there was an open basement doorway and creating a fire in the basement when there was a closed basement doorway.

Results showed that in the scenario with the open basement doorway, from the time of fire initiation, it took 30 to 48 seconds

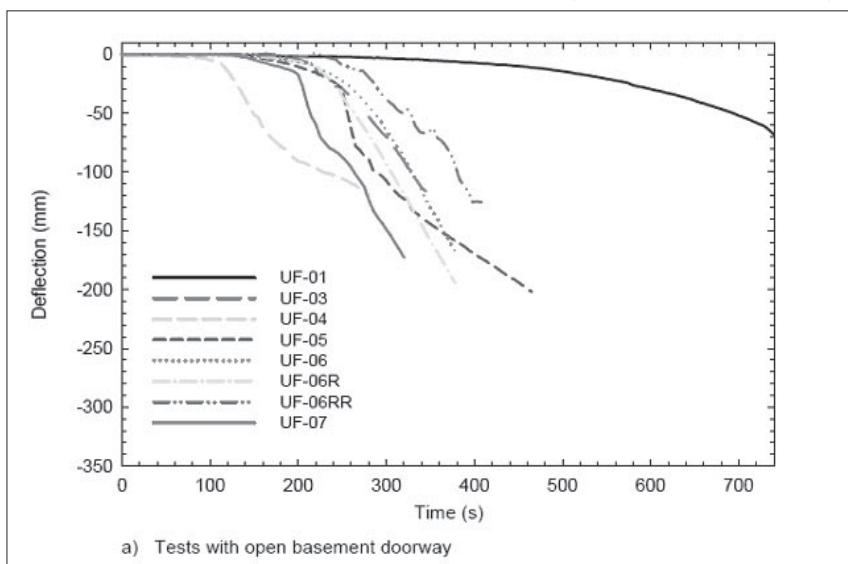
for the smoke alarm on the main storey to activate. Smoke obscuration was reached between 161 and 195 seconds. For the main floor, heat incapacitation occurred prior to CO incapacitation except for one experiment. For the second storey corridor, CO incapacitation occurred prior to heat incapacitation except for one experiment. From the time the smoke alarm activated, occupants had a little over two minutes to escape under these test conditions!

In the scenario with the closed basement doorway, from the time of fire initiation, it took 42 to 50 seconds for the smoke alarm on the main storey to activate. Smoke obscuration was reached between

297 and 360 seconds. The closed door to the basement limited the air available for combustion and reduced the transport of heat and combustion products. Time available to escape was roughly doubled and time to structural failure increased by about 50 per cent.

On the second storey of the test house, the conditions in the bedroom with a closed door did not become untenable in any of the experiments.

From a structural standpoint, it was found that the engineered trusses failed very quickly after the onset of floor deflection, while the more traditional solid wood joists stayed in place throughout the scenarios (see illustration below).



Deflection and time to failure is noted in the figure above for:

UF-01 - solid wood joists

UF-03 - wood I-joist sample A

UF-04 - steel C-joist

UF-05 - metal plate wood truss

UF-06, UF-06R, UF-06RR - wood I-joist sample B

UF-07 - metal web wood truss

See 'NRC-IRC' on page 18

Continued from page 17

NRC-IRC report released

Two key differences in failure mode were found when comparing solid wood joists and engineered joists: 1) much shorter time to failure for the engineered joists; and 2) different failure mode i.e., the engineered joists failed with little warning while the solid joists held up even after the floor sheathing above failed allowing cinder blocks (used to load the floor) to drop into the basement.

The OFM sent out Communiqués to ensure firefighters take precautions when dealing with fire situations that may involve lightweight engineering framing systems in

1991 and February 13, 2007. The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) also had an article on this issue in the *Ontario Fire Service Messenger* in 1998.

The OFM strongly recommends that the fire service assess their SOPs/SOGs that address interior attacks/rescues when responding to a well-developed basement fire in a home with unprotected lightweight engineered floor joists.

In conclusion, this research provides valuable input into the body of knowledge regarding home fires. Further research is

underway to determine the impact of protecting these lightweight floor joists with drywall and sprinklers.

Note: The definition for tenability for the purposes of this study was defined as the point after which occupants are incapacitated and unable to escape under their own effort. It is important to note that the report uses median values where 50% of the occupants would be incapacitated. However, this means that a large percentage of occupants could still be attempting escape. It also does not provide time estimates between incapacitation and death which often is the window of opportunity for a rescue..

ONTARIO FIRE WATCH: Fatal Fire Summary

The OFM compiles statistics on all fatal fires that occur in Ontario. These statistics can assist the fire service to determine fire trends, plan fire prevention initiatives and target public education activities. Due to the methods and criteria used in reporting fire deaths, statistics are subject to change.

September 2008: 7 fatal fires resulting in 7 fire deaths

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-15	0	0	0
16-64	2	2	4
65 and over	1	2	3
Total	3	4	7

Fire Cause	Time of Day
Accidental.....2	0001-0800.....1
Undetermined.....1	0801-1600.....3
Under Investigation.....4	1601-1800.....1
Incendiary.....0	1801-0000.....2

Location of fatal fire: Plympton-Wyoming (1), Ottawa (1), Oshawa (1), Innisfil (1), Georgian Bluffs (1), Clarington (1) and Port Colborne (1).

October 2008: 6 fatal fires resulting in 7 fire deaths

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-15	0	0	0
16-64	2	2	4
65 and over	2	1	3
Total	4	3	7

Fire Cause	Time of Day
Accidental.....1	0001-0800.....3
Undetermined.....0	0801-1600.....0
Under Investigation.....5	1601-1800.....0
Incendiary.....0	1801-0000.....3

Location of fatal fires: Toronto (2), King (1), Mapleton (1), Timmins City (1) and Meaford (1).

November 2008: 7 fatal fires resulting in 7 fire deaths

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-15	0	0	0
16-64	4	1	5
65 and over	1	1	2
Total	5	2	7

Fire Cause	Time of Day
Accidental.....2	0001-0800.....4
Undetermined.....0	0801-1600.....2
Under Investigation.....4	1601-1800.....0
Incendiary.....1	1801-0000.....1

Location of fatal fire: Douro-Dummer (1), Wainfleet (2), Toronto (2), South Glengarry (1) and South Frontenac (1).

December 2008: 8 fatal fires resulting in 8 fire deaths

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-15	1	1	2
16-64	2	1	3
65 and over	1	2	3
Total	4	4	8

Fire Cause	Time of Day
Accidental.....1	0001-0800.....4
Undetermined.....0	0801-1600.....1
Under Investigation.....7	1601-1800.....1
Incendiary.....0	1801-0000.....2

Location of fatal fire: Toronto (1), Severn (1), Pickering (1), Peterborough (1), Oakville (1), Mississauga (1), Midland (1) and Greater Sudbury (1).

New in the OFM Library

Check out our latest books, videos and web resources from the Fire Sciences Library & Audio-Visual Resource Centre. We provide current fire resources to support the Office of the Fire Marshal as well as fire departments, emergency services and fire related industries. The collection consists of 9,000+ books, standards, statute law, reports, 80+ journals, and over 1,300 audio-visual resources. A full listing of new resources is available on our website!

'Fire News' website now launched

The Fire Sciences Library & Audio-Visual Resource Centre is pleased to introduce a weekly media monitoring service called *Fire News* which can be accessed at www.ofm.gov.on.ca under the *Resources* heading. This service aims to provide fire departments with articles from various regional and major newspapers on fire and emergency incidents in Ontario and Canada.

The website became a reality after the Fire Protection Advisers suggested the library share with the fire service, articles of interest from regional and major newspapers. *Fire News* allows the fire service to view articles online and see the types of fire and emergency incidents that are occurring throughout the province and Canada.

By having access to this type of information, it is hoped that fire service leaders will network with each other to discuss the incidents and share valuable lessons learned from responding to and dealing with fire and emergency situations.

Fire News coverage will include

articles on:

- Arson and fire investigation
- Fire incidents - residential, commercial, industrial
- Fire Code violations
- Fire fatalities
- Public fire safety education
- Home fire safety
- Rescues
- HazMat incidents
- Fire safety building and engineering design
- Disaster and emergency planning
- Firefighter health and safety

To receive further information about the media monitoring service, please contact Martha Murphy, by telephone at 416-325-3235 or by email at martha.murphy@ontario.ca.



The Fire Sciences Library & Audio-Visual Resource Centre are located in the Office of the Fire Marshal serving staff and residents of Ontario. We welcome visitors to come to the library and borrow from our collection: our address is 5775 Yonge Street, 7th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M2M 4J1. We will also courier material directly to clients. Hours are Monday – Friday 8:30am to 4:15pm. Visit our website by clicking on Resource Centre at www.ofm.gov.on.ca Phone: (Library) 416-325-3235/3236, (Audio-Visual) 416-325-3121, Email: firesciences.information@ofm.ca.

New Videos and DVDs

Carbon Monoxide: Invisible Killer (2008)

Explains what generates carbon monoxide (CO) and the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning. Discusses the placement of CO alarms on each level of the home and explains how to install, maintain and routinely test CO alarms.

Chlorine Emergencies : An Overview for First Responders (2007)

Explores all aspects of a chlorine first response, including: overview of a response, chlorine and its properties, site safety plan, community awareness, personal protective equipment, health effects of chlorine exposure, transport, disposal options, mitigation, and post response.

How to Prevent Home Fires (2008)

Program aims to provide a better understanding of the major causes of fires in the home. It covers a wide range of fire prevention and response topics, including: kitchen and cooking safety, space heaters, fireplaces and furnaces, electrical outlets, extension cords and light bulbs, flammable liquids, smoking safety, candles, smoke alarms and escape plans.

Preventing burns through survivor stories

BY JENNIFER ALBRECHT
PROTECTIVE SERVICES
COORDINATOR/CEMC
TOWNSHIP OF EAST ZORRA-
TAVISTOCK

Learn from our mistakes, was the central theme in a public presentation held in October 2008 in Tavistock, Ontario. Approximately 120 people came out to hear three burn survivors talk about their incident, recovery and the lasting impact on their lives. Throughout their presentations, it was evident that all the survivors had a deep appreciation for the doctors and nurses of the London Health Sciences Burn Unit.

Burn reconstruction surgeon Dr. Christopher Scilley, walked the audience through what happens when a burn survivor arrives at the hospital. After initial treatment in the emergency room (beginning with intravenous fluids immediately, securing the airway and assessment of severity of burns), the patient is then transferred to the burn unit, stabilized and then begins hydrotherapy. This process involves immersing the patient in a warm water tank to clean burns and to help to loosen the limbs for physiotherapy. If the burns begin to heal after three weeks, then skin grafting is usually not needed. Unfortunately, in many cases, this does not happen and the long and arduous process of skin grafting must begin. Once the burns are healed then the patient begins the long road of therapy and, depending upon the

age of the burn survivor, can result in years of check-ups and more surgeries.

Dr. Scilley thanked firefighters everywhere for their efforts in



Burn survivor, Dave, addresses a group of Grade 7 and 8 students at Hickson Public School.



London Health Science Centre, Burn Unit surgeon Dr. C. Scilley is pictured in the forefront. In the background is Learn Not to Burn organizer Don Junker.

getting burn survivors to them as quickly and efficiently as they do. Without the timely care and compassion from first responders, many burn survivors would not make it to them at all.

Rick Finnemore, Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) Fire Protection

Adviser, addressed the audience with a message of prevention and extended his thanks to the survivors for sharing their journey with the community.

Earlier in the day, local fire prevention officers visited four area schools with members of the burn unit and another burn survivor. The group was well received in all the schools, with the message of prevention being heard by more than 300 Grade 7 and 8 students and their teachers. The school sessions were geared towards warning the kids of the risks associated with fire and how the many "stunts" glorified in the movies and on the Internet can lead to devastating consequences that could impact the rest of their lives. The speaker for these sessions shared his story of regret and remorse for the incident that has left him permanently disfigured.

This event was planned by the East Zorra-Tavistock Fire Prevention Committee and was intended to be not only an awareness and prevention session but also a chance for the burn unit staff to advise the public of the needs of the burn unit which are often not covered by government budgets. Most members of the public are unaware that burn patients are usually in the hospital for an extended period of time and as such, have financial needs that are sometimes difficult to meet.

Don Junker, Tavistock Volunteer Firefighter, was the driving force behind this venture and was pleased to be able to not only bring the message of prevention to the public but also to bring an awareness of the burn unit and its incredible staff who work tirelessly to help these burn survivors.

The power of using positive messaging

The power of positive messaging was one of the latest concepts in public education to be discussed at the 16th annual Public Fire & Life Safety Educators' conference. The concept has been making inroads in changing attitudes and behaviours toward public safety and it may be the way of the future for fire service public education programs.

In brief, positive messaging as it is referred to in a majority of public education circles, is about using positive language to deliver public education. Reducing the use of words like "don't" and "never" are some ways to teach people what they can do, not what they cannot do. Negative messaging, in contrast, is another concept that has been used in public education. Not only does it include the use of negative language, as seen above, but it also includes fear-based messaging, such as using videos to use fear to motivate people to change their attitude or behaviour.

Jennifer Wilson, Educational Development Manager for SMARTRISK, and a former public school teacher introduced the concept to conference attendees through a SMARTRISK program she facilitates called *No Regrets*. The program is aimed at high school students and raises awareness about the issue of injury and how to manage risk to prevent injuries related to activities such as, driving, bicycling, skateboarding, skiing, snowboarding and water sports. What is different about the program, compared to other public education programs, is that it encourages youth to learn to see the risks in their everyday lives and manage those risks in the smartest way possible. SMARTRISK doesn't

tell youth to avoid risk, but to take smart risks so they can enjoy life to the fullest. The program also recognizes the power of peers to directly effect change in their schools to prevent injury. Students that have the opportunity to get involved in the program are given the tools necessary to plan and deliver events in their community to communicate with peers about risks behaviours and how they can think critically to effectively manage risk.

"Research that SMARTRISK has completed shows that positive messaging is effective toward people having more open discussion," said Wilson. "It can also lead to participants being more likely to listen to facts and statistics. In this respect, they are more likely to use and apply this information to their own risk management approach."

Carolyn Dimitroff, Grade 2 teacher at Fairmont Public School in London, follows a similar concept, but it is packaged differently to meet the needs of a much younger audience. In her classrooms, Dimitroff uses storybooks, the Risk Watch program, videos, posters, familiar characters such as Franklin and Clifford and special guests in her classroom such as firefighters.

"These all help to facilitate positive messages within our lessons, which promote positive behaviour, because they alert students to unsafe practices and help them to identify good choices," said Dimitroff. "After a specific activity, I like to get the children into groups for brainstorming and group work. They are encouraged to come up with their good decision-making



"Positive messaging... can also lead to participants being more likely to listen to facts and statistics..."

- Jennifer Wilson, SMARTRISK

choices to put into practice. I think they feel more empowered to carry out their decisions as a result of this exercise."

One of the objectives of the current public education model is to help students to be active learners who feel they are the leaders of their own choices. Dimitroff said she has found that messages of fear only scare children and make them worry about the potential risk factors, whereas encouragement and thorough teaching help children to stop, think and make positive choices. Through this model, children are more likely to take a leadership role and become advocates for their families and friends in preventing injuries.

Some pitfalls of traditional messaging highlighted by Wilson and Dimitroff included:

- Fear-based messaging makes people think irrationally or unrealistically, which makes it difficult to make good decisions about behaviours;
- Safety's image is boring

See 'Positive' on page 27

VON and Chatham-Kent Fire partner to teach older adults to be “fire safe” in their homes

BY BARB DAWSON
PUBLIC EDUCATOR
CHATHAM-KENT FIRE
DEPARTMENT

Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) Chatham-Kent and the Chatham-Kent Fire Department teamed up in the fall of 2008 to bring fire safety education to one of the at-risk groups in the Chatham-Kent community: older adults.

The partnership began with a training session for volunteers and staff at a local VON office. The training had a classroom instruction component and practical hands-on experience. The participants were trained in assisting an older adult in checking for fire hazards in their homes and correcting them.

“VON volunteers who visit clients in their homes provide a great opportunity for the residents to have a familiar and trusted person in their home giving them guidance on being ‘fire safe,’” said

Barb Dawson, Public Educator with the Chatham-Kent Fire Department. “Between 2003 and 2005 we have had two fire fatalities in Chatham-Kent; both were older adults. This initiative is one component of our comprehensive

‘This partnership with the Chatham-Kent Fire Department is a great opportunity for VON staff and volunteers.’

fire safety education strategy being implemented in Chatham-Kent.”

The program sees VON volunteers who visit with clients in the community reviewing basic tips for fire safety, assisting residents in completing a home fire safety checklist, and offering practical tips on evacuating their homes safely in the event of a fire emergency.

This partnership with the Chatham-Kent Fire Department is a great opportunity for VON staff and volunteers.

“VON is always eager to bring essential information and services to our clients. Our goal is to find ways of helping people stay healthy and safe in their homes for as long as possible,” says Lisa Paolatto, Executive Director of VON Chatham-Kent.

Participants received certificates for completing the training. The full-time staff in charge of volunteer services has been trained as a “train the trainer” to help sustain the program.

Launched initially as a pilot program, the program has a goal of completing 25 home safety checks, filing paperwork and follow-up visits by the end of 2008. At this point, the program will be evaluated and new goals set for 2009.

Chimney fires on the rise in Pembroke

BY ANTHONY DIXON
PEMBROKE DAILY OBSERVER

It seems chimney fires are on the rise in the city of Pembroke.

Pembroke Fire Chief Dan Herback, during his monthly report to the city's finance and administration committee in January, informed the members that all of the miscellaneous fire occurrences during the reporting period of Nov. 25 to Dec. 22 were chimney fires.

There were five such

occurrences.

“That is more than I’ve seen in about the last six years,” Chief Herback said.

In fact, he believes there were more chimney fires during that one-month period from late November to late December than there were in all of last winter. Fortunately, none of the five chimney fires led to a full-fledged structure fire. He told the committee that there needs to be more public education with regards to what causes chimney fires and how they can be

prevented.

In all five instances listed in his report, he said the problem was the chimneys had not been cleaned prior to their being used this winter season. He explained that creosote, a natural by-product of burning fuels like wood, and coal, collects on the inside of a chimney. It is extremely flammable and if not cleaned off, the build up can catch fire.

“Without a doubt, the best thing you can do is clean and check the chimney before using the appliance,” he said.

Climbing the Ladder: Education & Training

The objective of Climbing the Ladder is to keep you informed and up to date on issues related to education and training within the Ontario fire service, and to adequately address your questions and concerns. If there is a particular issue you want covered, send the topic to the Editor of The Messenger and it will be passed on to the appropriate person in the OFM Academic Standards and Evaluation section.

ProBoard Re-Accredits Ontario

BY DOUG GOODINGS
EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR &
KAREN BAUMAN
OFM ACADEMIC STANDARDS
& EVALUATION (AS&E)

Effective November 18, 2008, the province of Ontario was fully accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) for all of the levels requested by the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM). This announcement came after a September 30 meeting with the OFM in which ProBoard conducted a re-accreditation site visit. The ProBoard accredits programs to

the National Fire Protection Association Professional Qualification (NFPA) standards. Their mission is to "establish an internationally recognized means of acknowledging professional achievement in the fire service and related fields."

Prior to the visit, the OFM prepared extensively and completed a detailed self-study document to describe how the OFM meets the accreditation criteria of ProBoard. The request for accreditation and re-accreditation focused on the NFPA Standards for Firefighter, Hazardous Materials, Fire Investigator, Public Educator and Public

Information Officer.

The ProBoard site visit team consisted of Billy Shelton and Jane Duncan Ph.D., Shelton, the Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs in Glen Allen, Virginia, has an extensive military background and has served as Fire Chief. Duncan is the Dean of the Calgary Alberta Fire Training Academy and has over 20 years experience developing, implementing, and analyzing training programs designed to reach adult learners.

Fire Prevention Week 2008

BY GINA PONTIKAS
OFM PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

The 2008 Fire Prevention Week (FPW) theme was "Prevent Home Fires". Although the theme changes from year to year, there is a constant enthusiasm and creative spirit leading up to and during FPW.

Many fire departments across the province hosted and participated in various FPW activities in their

communities. Here are examples of just a few of the successful and innovative events held last year.

Milton Fire Department

Milton Fire Department continues to be very proud of its new mascot program created to educate the residents of Milton about fire prevention. Milton community partners pulled together in supporting the costs of purchasing three new mascots.

In case Messenger readers have

not met up with the mascots yet, Milton Fire Department would like to introduce "Milty - the fire dude" - a 10-foot inflatable firefighter which was sponsored by Roxul, a local business; "Beeper" - the smoke alarm; and "Volty" - the 9-volt battery also sponsored by local businesses with a major donation from Wal-Mart Canada.

The names for the smoke

See 'Fire' on page 24

Continued from page 23

Fire Prevention Week 2008 showcases creative spirit

alarm and battery mascots were generated from a contest where local children were asked to come up with appropriate names for the mascots. In addition to these new mascots, Milton Fire Department continues to use everyone's favorite mascot, Sparky.

The mascots were in action last year, participating in two open houses at local fire stations during Fire Prevention Week 2008. Later in the year, Milton Fire Department attended a grand re-opening of the Wal-Mart Superstore in Milton, where the mascots made an appearance.

Markham Fire & Emergency Services

In October 2008, Markham Fire & Emergency Services partnered with the Markham Waxers Junior A Club and attended a game against the St. Michael's Buzzers to bring awareness on how to "Prevent Home Fires," the 2008 Fire Prevention Week theme.

A booth, consisting of fire safety information, was located just outside the rink for all visitors to learn about fire safety.

Sparky dropped the ceremonial first puck for the game to launch this exciting event. Throughout the game, during breaks and between periods, the announcer read fire safety messages to the crowd. This event helped to create a great partnership and was another unique way to get the message of fire safety to the residents of Markham.

Tillsonburg Fire Services

Tillsonburg Fire & Rescue Services kicked off a 2008 School Tour event

during Fire Prevention Week.

A letter was sent to the principals of every elementary school in Tillsonburg requesting that they assist the fire department in providing fire and life safety information to Grade 3 students in the community.

Tillsonburg Fire Services provided training to the students with their fire safety house. The fire safety house, a mobile trailer, has proven to be an excellent interactive teaching instrument which can be set up barrier-free, as required. Children and adults are given an opportunity to learn in a non-threatening environment with local firefighters.

Over 400 Grade 3 students learned about the importance of smoke alarms and home escape planning and how to identify fire hazards throughout the home.

The participating schools were also requested to make special announcements during Fire Prevention Week. Each message included a fire safety tip and reminded students of an Open House scheduled at a local fire station that week.

An example of one of the many important fire safety messages that were shared in the schools with the Grade 3 students included "It's Fire Prevention Week and our firefighters want you to know that smoke alarms save lives. Tonight, with a grown-up, check that there is a working smoke alarm on every storey of your home and especially outside your sleeping area. Help keep your family safe!"

In addition to the School Tour event, Tillsonburg Fire Services kicked off Fire Prevention Week at a local Canadian Tire Store and



Sparky and Markham Fire & Emergency Services Chief Fire Prevention Officer Glenn Dick watch the Markham Waxers hockey game together.

had coordinated several public service announcements on how to prevent home fires to be aired on two local radio stations.



Toronto Fire Services Fire Chief Bill Stewart presents Principal Judi Sederoff of Ranchdale Public School in Toronto with her RiskWatch award. She was recognized for her use of the Risk Watch injury prevention program during the launch of Fire Prevention Week 2008.

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OFC library gets a fire truck of their own

At the 16th annual Public Educator's Conference, the Point Edward Fire Department presented Ontario Fire College librarian Judy Humphries with a special gift. It was a wooden fire truck with fire safety-related books for young children to enjoy when they visit the College. Judy was delighted!



OFM News Update

Karyn Lewis-Haughton has joined the Academic Standards and Evaluation Section as Program Coordinator, Testing and Certification.

Olaf Lamerz was the successful candidate in the recent open competition for a Fire Protection Specialist in FPS. Olaf has served as a Fire Protection Adviser in the Thunder Bay region since 2003.

Gina Pontikas has returned to her position as Program Coordinator in the Public Education and

Media Relations section.

Carol Gravelle has returned to her position as Messenger Editor/Public Relations Officer in the Public Education and Media Relations section.

Chad Brown was the successful candidate in the recent open competition for the Program Specialist position in the Southeast.

Cynthia Ross Tustin was the successful candidate in the competition for Program Specialist

in Fire Protection Services.

Dawn Heath was the successful candidate for the administrative assistant working with the Deputy Fire Marshal.

Jana Dozzi was the successful candidate in the competition for the Financial Officer position in Corporate Services.

Cheryl Desormeaux was the successful candidate in the recent competition for an Administrative Assistant in Fire Protection Services.

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Positive messaging helps to empower others

and unattractive (i.e., the use of hard hats, steel-toed boots) and people tune it out; and,

- Individuals do not feel like they can do anything to prevent an injury or fire.

"Public education needs to focus on how managing risks can be exciting and how managing risks can lead to becoming more proficient at a higher level at an activity," continued Wilson. "We need to move away from using don't messaging because it does not tell people what they can do; it just tells them what not to do."

Some ways that Dimitroff suggested the fire service could use positive messaging in public education for young children

included:

- Using non-threatening or familiar characters such as Sparky, storybooks, media and Risk Watch materials, and;

- Continued support of safety villages in communities to give students the opportunities to learn to prevent, practice and prepare for potentially dangerous situations.

To reach teenagers, Wilson suggested:

- Talking to teenagers to understand more about what they are thinking (this suggestion is based on SMARTRISK's model for developing programs; if we only knew more about them, we could reach them).

- Giving youth the opportunity to choose the delivery option of public education programs through discussion with fire service personnel, the experts in fire safety.

- Working with high school teachers and administrative staff to meet their needs when educating teenagers at high schools.

"You don't have to have a \$5,000 campaign," said Wilson. "Use youth as your resource to reach others. Through brainstorming, you can implement a program in your community that is right for everyone, and developed by members of your target audience."

To learn more about the *No Regrets* program, turn to page 11 or visit www.smartrisk.ca.

Fire Service Calendar 2009

March 26-29	Northeastern Fire Education Conference	North Bay, ON
Feb. 12, 19, 26 & March 26	OMFPOA Building Code course	Ajax, ON
March 1	FFAO General Meeting	Stittsville, ON
May 2-6	Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs 57 th Annual Conference & Trade Show	Toronto, ON
June 1-4	Ontario Professional Fire Fighter's Association Convention	Guelph, ON
Sept. 17-19	Fire Con	Thunder Bay, ON
Sept. 20-23	Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs 2009 Conference	Winnipeg, MB

Burn camp provides positive way to heal

You've heard the phrase, "Don't judge a book by its cover." However, it's all too often that children are judged by other children on their appearances. At Camp Bucko, it's different. Children with burn scars get an opportunity to meet others with burns and share their stories with others in a supportive environment.

Now in its 14th season, Camp BUCKO is a registered charity. It is a place for those aged seven to 17 who have experienced burns associated with scalds, flames, home burns, chemicals and abuse.

"When kids get out of the hospital, the recovery process is big and involved," said Nancy Sinclair, Director of Operations for Camp BUCKO. "There has often been reconstructive surgery, and they might have to wear elasticized garments to alleviate their injuries. At camp, we provide a supportive and encouraging environment to help them heal, physically and psychologically."

The program in August is one week in duration. Focused on leadership skills and personal growth, children can work toward getting certificates in sports such as canoeing, kayaking, wall climbing and archery. They can also meet and share their stories with other children who have been burned, a rarity in many communities.

Speaking at the Annual Public Fire & Life Safety Educators' Conference, Sinclair gave her presentation and was followed by two 12 year-old youths, Justin and Tyler, who have been attending the camp for a number of years. Both were burn survivors, having been burned by scalding water when they were toddlers. They spoke



Nancy Sinclair, Director of Operations for Camp BUCKO looks on as Justin speaks about his experiences as a burn survivor.

about their experiences growing up and having to get multiple skin graft surgeries, due to the inability of scar tissue to stretch as a child grows. They also spoke about incidents of how they have been treated away from the camp,

including the teasing and bullying by other children. Both wished aloud that camp could last longer than one week because of how much they enjoyed it. This quickly reinforced the importance of this organization as a special place for children to build their self-esteem after severe burn injuries.

At the conference, funds were raised for two children to attend the camp in 2009. Each year, 200 invitations are sent out to children who are a few weeks into their treatment or healing process. There is no cost to them due to fundraising efforts. However, some children still decline the invitation because of how they perceive others will see them with their burns. In all, 80 children attend Camp BUCKO from Ontario and other provinces without burn camps.

Since 2006, five family camps have taken place at Camp Bucko. It is an opportunity for burn victims to attend with their parents and siblings, as siblings can often resent burn survivors for getting a large amount of attention. It is also a way to help families build a survivor's self-esteem through educational videos and brochures.

Since its' beginning, Camp BUCKO has nearly tripled its enrolment. It is a testament to the work being done at the camp and how Camp BUCKO is helping to heal one child at a time.



Doug Crawford, Deputy Fire Marshal of Ontario stands with Tyler and Justin at the conference.