



# HUNTINGTON

## FIRE DISTRICT NEWS

Serving the Huntington Community Since 1843

Volume 1, Number 2, Summer 2010

### COMMISSIONERS' CORNER

#### Training of Fire Commissioners

In the inaugural issue of the Huntington Fire District News, it was noted that five Commissioners govern our Fire District. Each year one Commissioner is elected by Huntington Fire District residents for a five-year term. Commissioners receive no compensation for holding this position.

One important advantage of electing five community members as Fire Commissioners to oversee the local Fire District is that the Commissioners typically represent a cross-section of the community. This adds a wealth of experience and knowledge. The Huntington Board of Fire Commissioners has included a wide array of businessmen, professional firefighters, volunteer firefighters, emergency service workers, etc.

All newly elected Fire Commissioners must take a 6-hour course developed by the NYS Office of the Comptroller. This ensures that each Fire Commissioner has essential knowledge of budgeting, finance and managerial skills and is well versed in all state laws that control operations of both the volunteer fire department and the Fire District. In our next issue, we will discuss the specific sections of the law that direct how the Fire Department and Fire District are operated.

#### - The Commissioners



### What's New

#### YMCA FIRE

Nearly 50 Huntington Fire Department firefighters responded to an early morning fire in the women's locker room sauna at the Huntington YMCA. The fire was reported at about 7:15 a.m. on January 20 as an automatic alarm. An engine, two ladder trucks, a heavy rescue truck and fire



Steve Silverman photo.

YMCA fire.

police under the command of Second Deputy Chief Robert Berry extinguished the blaze within 15 minutes. The fire destroyed the sauna and caused water damage to the locker room. Fortunately, there were no injuries. The Town of Huntington Fire Marshal and Suffolk Police Arson Squad are investigating.

#### HFD Receives \$175,900 FEMA Grant

The Huntington Fire District received a \$175,900 Assistance To Firefighters Grant (A.F.G.) from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The award supports specialized equipment to enhance first responder safety. The money awarded to the Huntington Fire Department will be used for new personal protective equipment with upgraded safety features to replace coats, pants and hoods for firefighters whose current gear is worn and outdated. Also, 38 sets of self-

contained breathing apparatus with state-of-the-art safety features will replace obsolete equipment.

The Huntington Fire District is especially proud of this award because the number and amounts of 2009 grants were significantly reduced due to the economic downturn.

Since 2002, AFG has provided over \$3.6 billion in grants to fire departments and first responder organizations. AFG is administered cooperatively by two FEMA components: The Grants Program Directorate and the United States Fire Administration.

#### Help for Haiti

The Huntington Community First Aid Squad, joined by the Huntington Manor and Huntington Fire Departments, hosted a "Fill The Boot" campaign for Doctors Without Borders' efforts in Haiti following the magnitude 7.0 earthquake. Over 100 firefighters and rescuers solicited donations from drivers at numerous locations including Main Street, Route 110 and the five corners near St. Anthony's. Over \$35,000 was raised for this tragedy that touched close to home.

#### Flood Rescue



Newsday photo.

Firefighters assist a motorist whose car stalled in rain-fed floodwaters at New York Avenue and Park Avenue.

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# Safety Tips

## Practice Propane Grill Safety

Never take propane grill usage, storage and transportation lightly. Hundreds of fires and injuries occur annually from gas grill fires and explosions\*.

1. Start right. Obtain propane only from reputable compressed gas suppliers.
2. Before filling check propane cylinder for damage.
3. Always check for leaks when replacing cylinders. NEVER use a grill until all leaks are repaired.
4. Check burner tubes regularly for blockages.
5. Make sure all connections are secure BEFORE turning on the gas.
6. Keep the lid open when starting. Gas can accumulate and may cause an explosion upon ignition.
7. NEVER store propane cylinders indoors or near any heat source.
8. NEVER transport or store propane cylinders in the trunk of your automobile.
9. Always shut off the propane fuel at the grill AND the bottle.
10. If there is a fire involving the tank, evacuate immediately and call 911.

\*The Consumer Product Safety Commission



## WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD NEIGHBORS!

Have you got what it takes to be a volunteer firefighter? If you have ever thought of helping your fellow Huntington residents, the time to do it is NOW. And you'll become a hero in your own community.

The Huntington Fire Department has been protecting the residents of Huntington for over 150 years. We are an all-volunteer organization, and we respond to emergency calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Help us to help the whole community. Please volunteer.

### TAKE ACTION

Stop in and fill out an application. Or visit us on the Internet at [www.huntingtonfiredept.com](http://www.huntingtonfiredept.com). Or call me personally at (631) 236-8010. We'll answer all your questions and tell you what it takes to become a volunteer.

- Bob Berry, 2nd Assistant Chief



## From The Chief

### Supporting our firefighters

In the previous HFD News, I provided an overview of how the Huntington Fire Department started and our responsibilities as volunteer firefighters. Future columns will provide a better understanding of the emergencies we handle and what our members often face.

In March we received a call for assistance for a cardiac arrest in Huntington Harbor with CPR in progress by the Suffolk County Police. In fact, there were three patients on a houseboat unconscious due to carbon monoxide poisoning from a gasoline-powered generator. Our crew arrived quickly in our small Avon watercraft, set up and ferried the patients to EMS personnel waiting on shore for transport to Huntington Hospital. Although every effort was made to save these individuals, they succumbed to over-exposure to carbon monoxide.

### LESSONS LEARNED:

- Install carbon monoxide detectors...they may save your life.
- Never use gasoline-powered tools or appliances in unventilated areas.
- If a carbon monoxide detector sounds, leave the area immediately and call for assistance.

A more recent incident could have been just as tragic. We responded to a smoking garbage truck and ascertained that the smoke was due to a chemical reaction. Fortunately, the Town of Huntington personnel operating the truck had stopped in a safe location and sent a

supervisor to investigate the truck's route. We quickly established a safe perimeter around the vehicle and called for Hazardous Material support from the Suffolk Policy Emergency Service Unit.

It was determined that a resident had trashed some unwanted pool chemicals, and a chemical reaction occurred when they were compacted. Our members, along with the other agencies involved, sifted through the truck contents and safely removed the substances. This situation could have been much worse; the workers on the truck could have come in contact with the chemicals causing serious injuries.

### LESSONS LEARNED:

- Situations are not always what they appear to be.
- Dispose of unwanted chemicals properly. If unsure, contact the Town of Huntington Refuse Department (631-351-3239) or the Recycling Center (631-427-6377).

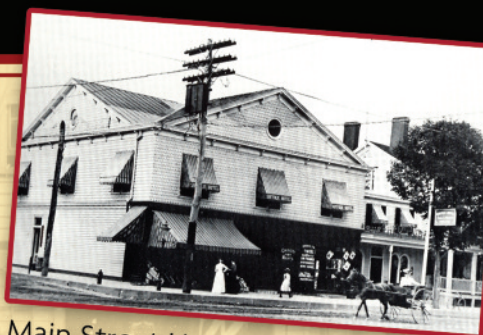
The volunteers who protect you must be prepared for anything. It is what we train for to keep our community safe.

Stay Safe,

Brian Riggs  
Chief of Department







Main Street Huntington looking west toward New York Avenue

## Looking Back

A lot has changed since 1843 when the Huntington Fire Department was formed...

Circa 1890's



Drill Team, 1963



## Profile

### Honoring Three Of Our Bravest:

Henry Gerdes, Larry Farrell, Jimmy Scudieri

Being a Huntington Fire Department firefighter is a commitment that requires significant training, extraordinary loyalty and unstinting dedication, often in the face of great danger. Henry Gerdes, Larry Farrell and Jimmy Scudieri are three of Huntington's bravest and have demonstrated those unique, unselfish traits for 70, 60, and 50 years respectively. We salute you all!



Henry Gerdes

### 70 YEARS

In December of 2009, Henry Gerdes, a U.S. Army veteran of WW II, celebrated 70 years of service, having joined the Huntington Fire Department Protection Hose Company #1 on December 18, 1939. Henry became Hose Company Captain in September 1950 and served in that position until September 1953. In 1999 Henry was made an Honorary Chief of the Huntington Fire Department for his 60 years of dedicated service to the Huntington Fire Department. We're pleased to say that Henry celebrated 70 years of service to the Department this past December.

### 60 YEARS

Larry Farrell's service dates to the Truman administration, having joined the Huntington Fire Department Hose Company on March 7, 1950. Larry celebrated his 50th anniversary in March of 2000. Larry received the rank of Honorary Chief in 2010 as he achieved 60 years of active service. He



Larry Farrell

also has served as a member of the Fire Police Squad since 1997. Larry was a local business owner having been the proprietor of Savoy Venetian Blinds. He was well known to the Huntington community, especially for his green truck bearing the message "A blind man is driving this truck."



Jimmy Scudieri

### 50 YEARS

Dwight D. Eisenhower was President of the United States when 20-year old Vincent "Jimmy" Scudieri joined the Huntington Fire Department on December 14, 1959. Currently First Lieutenant of the Fire Police Squad, Jimmy has served as Second Lieutenant in the Hook and Ladder Company. A lifelong Huntington resident, Jimmy was well known in the community for his delicatessen business. He operated Jim's Dairyland Deli for many years and often applied his cooking skills in the firehouse kitchen, a skill much appreciated by all the members of the Huntington Fire Department.

## In Tribute To Henry Berleth, Chaplain



The Huntington Fire Department is deeply saddened by the passing of Henry Berleth. For 49 years Henry was an active member of the Hook & Ladder Company and Chaplain of the Huntington Fire Department. He served on various committees on both company and department levels for many years. His dedication and bravery were demonstrated in 1961 when he rescued a woman from her burning house at 550 New York Avenue.

Active with the Boy Scouts and a former Fire Commissioner, Henry's fellowship, guidance and dedication will be missed by all.



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HUNTINGTON FIRE DISTRICT NEWS



Huntington Hydrant Maintenance: How Much Is Too Much?

Fiscal responsibility for the HFD rests with the Board of Commissioners, which formulates budgets and presents them to taxpayers. We maintain no outstanding bonds and are proud to be debt free. However, certain costs, like fire hydrant rental and maintenance, are beyond our control as they originate with the Suffolk County Water Authority.

The SCWA charges the Huntington Fire District \$160.20 per hydrant per year. HFD residents pay \$103,649.40 annually to SCWA. In fact, in the period from January 2000 through the end of December 2010, the Suffolk County Water Authority has charged the HFD over a million dollars... \$1,093,843.20 to be exact. Compared to our closest independent neighbors (see chart), SCWA annual fees are 8 times higher than the South Huntington Water District. The Greenlawn Water District, also independent, has a cost of only \$1.00 per hydrant per year.

\* (With maintenance agreement). Greenlawn, Centerport, Huntington Manor, Dix Hills, Commack and East Northport Fire Districts participate in Greenlawn Water District Maintenance program. The Fire District tests the hydrants annually and paints if required. Paint and all repairs supplied by Greenlawn Water District Maintenance crews.