

## Minutes of February 12, 2014

Next Meeting: March 12, 2014

Program: Scene Sketch

Location: **Salvation Army 8354 W. Foster Av. Norridge, IL 60706 (NE corner of Cumberland and Foster)**

Time: 0900

President Kushner opened the meeting at 0900.

- A moment of silence was held for Mike Wurtz of the Woodstock Fire/Rescue District. Please keep Mike and his family in your thoughts and prayers.
- A motion was made, and 2<sup>nd</sup>, to accept the January Minutes. The motion passed.
- A motion was made, and 2<sup>nd</sup>, to accept the Treasurers Report. The motion passed.
- Close to 120 members were in attendance! These are seminar attendance numbers. We hope to continue to see all of you at our meetings.
- The Illinois Chapter of the IAAI will be hosting a car fire seminar in Mokena IL. On March 28 - 29
- Nominations for the Harry P. Schaefer Award need to be turned in to a board member before the April Executive Board meeting, Tuesday April 1, so that we have time to select a worthy recipient. All board members e-mail addresses are on the web site.
- We will present the Schaefer Award at the May seminar.
- Please remember to pay your dues.
- **FIRES: MT. PROSPECT** had a fire in a restaurant that had apartments above. The fire is currently under investigation. **CICERO** had a 4-11 in a vacant factory. Within 48 hours a juvenile was in custody for starting the fire. **BERWYN** had two fires: one was a fatal that was caused by smoking materials and the second was caused by a space heater. **SKOKIE** had a fire caused by combustibles being too close to the furnace. **FOX LAKE** had a fire in a vacant house that is under investigation. **HOFFMAN ESTATES** had a vehicle fire that involved a suicide. Note: if you are unable to separate the body from the car and you are in Cook County, you can take the vehicle to the Cook County Medical Examiners Office for help to properly remove the remains. **NEWPORT TOWNSHIP** had a fire that started in the chimney when the occupant used old wood flooring to burn in the fireplace. **HIGHLAND PARK** had several fires: a dog knocked over a candle in a bedroom, a child started curtains on fire with a fireplace lighter, a lady smoking in bed started a fire in a mattress, food was left on the stove, and a space heater was too close to combustibles. **NORWOOD PARK** had a fire caused by an improperly installed potbelly stove.
- Mitch made mention to search social media as a routine part of your investigation. In the case of the Cicero fire they found information posted that assisted in the apprehension of a suspect. Some of these people like to brag and show photos of themselves doing the deed. (Social media also assisted Buffalo Grove make an arrest of a juvenile responsible for a fire at a park.) Another factor is people are posting videos they have taken including those they have taken with drones. This is the case in Mt. Prospect; it gives you another view that you might not have had.

- George Lindermulder of the Arlington Heights Fire Department brought to our attention an older couple that seems to be having an unusual case of bad luck. There have been a number of fires in the residences that this couple rents, usually after an argument with the landlord. Besides Arlington Heights there have been fires in their residences in Woodstock and Bartlett and maybe other locations. The couple's names are Lynn Gary Depenbrok and Patricia Ann McGue (Depenbrok). They occasionally live with an adult daughter by the name of Tracey Gajewski. **These people are not suspects and have not been charged with any crime.** If this unlucky family has had a fire in your jurisdiction please contact George at AHFD.

Our speaker was a member of our organization: Officer Tom Hoskinson of the Mount Prospect Police Department. Tom gave an excellent presentation on photography. Tom started out by reminding everyone that safety at the scene is paramount and that you need to do a safety walk around prior to entering a fire scene. Tom also mentioned the use of a second person to take notes and to make sure the photographer doesn't walk into any holes etc. while taking pictures. Tom also stated that you need to do your photography the same way at every scene so that you show consistency if called to court. Tom stressed the importance of good lighting and that there are good battery powered portable units on the market and to use diffuse lighting rather than direct.

Your objective is to capture a moment in time for future use. Reformat the camera before each use. When photographing items of interest start with the whole scene, and then get closer and then closer with a scale (metric); start big and end small. Take exit photos to show the condition of the scene when you left. Make sure no personnel are in the pictures and if you do make a mistake under no circumstances are you to erase a picture. The defense could accuse you of deleting the one picture that would have exonerated his client.

Prior to storing your original data be sure and make a few copies that can be used without having to look at the master copy. Insure that your system limits who can view the original data and records whoever does look.

If you're looking to purchase a camera Tom mentioned that PC Magazine recently had an article on the Top Ten Cameras, this would give you a good place to start your research.

Our thanks to Tom for taking the time to share his knowledge and expertise with the rest of our members.

Our training was 1.5 hours untested. We also covered subject material from the following topics of NFPA1033 Section 1.3.7: Fire Investigation Methodology (10) (Fire Investigator Scene Safety) and Fire Investigation Technology (11) (Digital Photography and the Fire Investigator).

Respectfully Submitted,  
John T. Gilleran  
Secretary F.I.S.F.