



Annual \$15 dues for 2017 due by Jan. 10th meeting.

Hamden Fire Retirees' Association, Inc.

www.HamdenFireRetirees.org



December 2016

Staying Connected - Preserving Our Past

#6



The autumn meeting at the Elks had over 20 members and numerous guests as the Association honored the memory of our brother retiree Sam Jones, who passed away in October of last year. All Association officers were re-elected for another term.



East Point [GA] Fire Department Ff. Ken Jones received his father's HFRA memorial plaque from Gil Spencer, who was 4th platoon shift commander when Sam retired in 1990. Sam passed away in October of last year, a few days before his 90th birthday.



A couple of weeks later at Hamden Town House, Jackie Kelo, widow of our brother retiree Bob Kelo, receives Bob's HFRA memorial plaque from HFRA president Bob Mordecai. Bob Kelo passed away in Virginia, last August 19th after a long illness.



Left: July 1969 - Seven new firefighters are sworn in by Hamden Town Clerk Thomas Raccio. Left to right: Ricky Kenyon, Bob Viglione, Greg Shammatt, Ralph Tomaselli, Bob Macauley, John Reilly, and Doug Yocher. Below: Dave Wood was sworn in as the department's newest lieutenant on October 19th.



2016 in Review

Your E-Board has been keeping an eye on the pension plan by attending monthly Retirement Board meetings.



Lieut. Bob Kelo in 1984

This year we lost brother retiree Bob Kelo on August 19th. Bob started in July 1970 and was promoted to lieutenant in 1984. Bob served as co-leader of the department's Hazardous Materials Team. Bob Kelo retired in 1996.

Marty Barletta, wife of our brother retiree Mark and mother of HFD Capt. Adam Barletta, passed away in Florida on March 6th after a valiant struggle with cancer. Marty, pictured at right with Chief V. Paul Leddy in 1981, was among Hamden's first four fulltime civilian fire dispatchers hired in 1980.



Disp. Marty Barletta with Chief Leddy in 1981

2016 also saw the passing of HFRA Honorary Member Mary Lane on May 1st, longtime partner of Firefighter Joseph Shields (1929-2008) and step-mother of HFD Ff. Kevin Shields and James Shields (HPD-Ret.); Honorary Member Janet Butterworth on August 19th, widow of Firefighter Wayne Butterworth (1935-1984); and Honorary Member Rita Harrington on December 7th, widow of Dep. Chief Kenneth Harrington (1919-1988).

Transitions



Inspector Ralph DiFonzo

In August, Ff. Ralph DiFonzo was appointed to the new position of Fire Inspector. He will assist both marshals with inspections and related duties.

Ff. Paul Tavaras retired in June and Lieut. Clifford ("CJ") Hedges retired in September.



Ff. Paul Tavaras



Lt. C.J. Hedges



Recruit Firefighters Brennan and Sorrentino



Recruit Ff/Paramedics Heiney and Sedlak

Recruit Firefighters Cal Brennan and Steven Sorrentino were sworn in at town hall last February 1st.

Recruit Firefighter/Paramedics William Heiney and Alan Sedlak were sworn in on October 16th.

Four quarterly HFRA meetings were held - in January, April, July and October. The HFRA website continues to be updated every Friday (exc. during the summer). Election of officers for calendar years 2017 and 2018 was held at the October meeting. Re-elected were President Bob Mordecai, Vice president Jim Dunlop and Secretary-Treasurer Dave Johnson. Jim Leddy was re-elected to another six-year term as Trustee, and will serve until 2022. Other trustees are Bob Viglione (2018) and Gil Spencer (2020).

HFRA History Committee and Website



Jay Connolly - Badge No. 1

The History Committee continues to receive many photos from members and a lot of help from the Hamden Historical Society's archivist, Beth Shutts. Check full size views of these and hundreds of other photos at the HFRA website: www.hamdenfireretirees.org

Members who do not have regular access to a computer are encouraged to visit a local library or ask a relative with a computer to help visit the Association's website – www.hamdenfireretirees.org. There are over 275 archived website updates with hundreds of photos, articles and special features about the Hamden Fire Department and our retirees.

Chief Berardesca resurrected an old HFD tradition this year by presenting the HFD's most senior firefighter with Badge No. 1. Firefighter Maurice "Jay" Connolly received the badge in a surprise presentation at town hall on October 18th, attended by many active and retired department members. On the job since January 1981, Jay is not only the most senior firefighter, he's the most senior department member. The last holder of badge No. 1 before the numbered badges were discontinued was John O'Hare, who retired in October 1991.

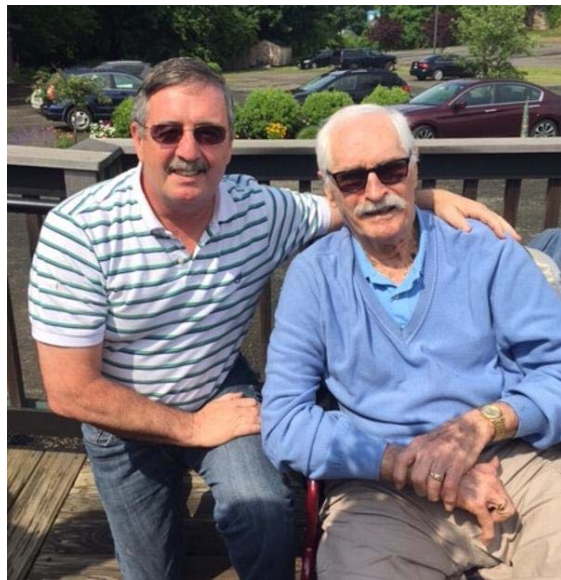
Best Story of the Year

Last March we posted a news article from fifty-five years ago, when then-Firefighter Joe McDermott was honored by the fire commission for saving the life of a toddler whose parents rushed him into Station 2 after he stopped breathing. Joe applied mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and revived the youngster. When our web posting was read by retired West Haven Dep. Chief Bob Freeman, he contacted the Association to report that he knew the whereabouts of the fellow whose life Joe saved in 1961. Years later, the fellow had tried unsuccessfully to contact Joe to meet him again and offer his thanks, but Joe was retired and had moved to Florida. The fellow had hit a dead end. That is, until Freeman saw this 1961 New Haven Register article posted on our website.

Fireman Receives Citation For Reviving Boy



Hamden Fireman Joseph McDermott, second from left, was presented with a citation Monday night for reviving one-year-old James O'Brien Jr. with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The boy became ill Jan. 19 as he was passing Station 2 with his parents. Shown above are, left to right, Fire Chief V. Paul Leddy, who presented the citation; McDermott; James O'Brien of 112 Gilbert Ave., West Haven, father of the boy; and James O'Brien Jr. The ceremony was held at Hamden Fire headquarters.



As Paul Harvey used to say, "And now the rest of the story . . ." The little boy whose life was saved by Joe McDermott in 1961, pictured in the newspaper photo at left, was James O'Brien, Jr.

Last June, James O'Brien, Jr. and Joe McDermott had a reunion at a local restaurant. Fifty-five years after his life was saved by Joe McDermott, James O'Brien, Jr. today is Chief of the West Haven Fire Department.

(You just can't make this stuff up.)



June 16, 1936 – Whitney and Dixwell, as Hamden's Sesquicentennial Parade steps off. 8 minute 16mm film of the parade is on YouTube.



1957 – Earliest known complete color photo of Hamden's 1938 Diamond-T "Squad" at Headquarters



June 12, 1966 – Francis "Chalky" Leddy, Jerry Bradbury, Joe McDermott, Bill Davin (straw hat), Russell Smith and Eddy Doiron at the third annual Hamden Firemen's Field Day at Brooksville Park.



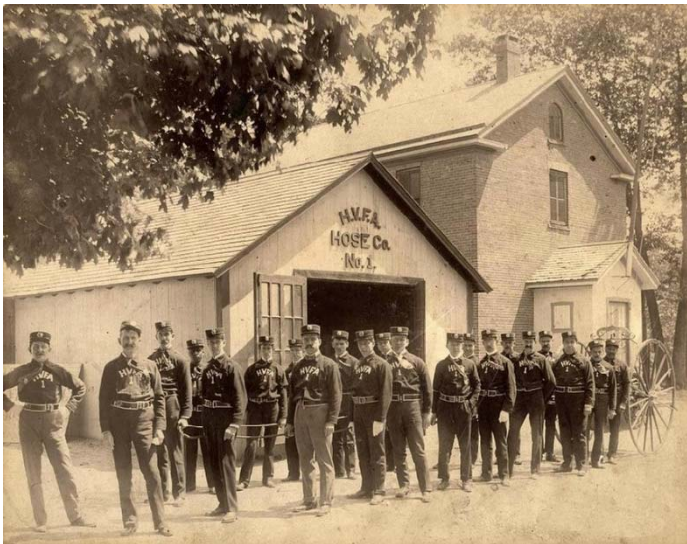
1969 Memorial Day Parade HFD Honor Guard
Carmen Amarante, Ace Callahan and Dave Herrmann (front)
Warren Blake, Paul Reutenauer and Walt Macdowall (rear)



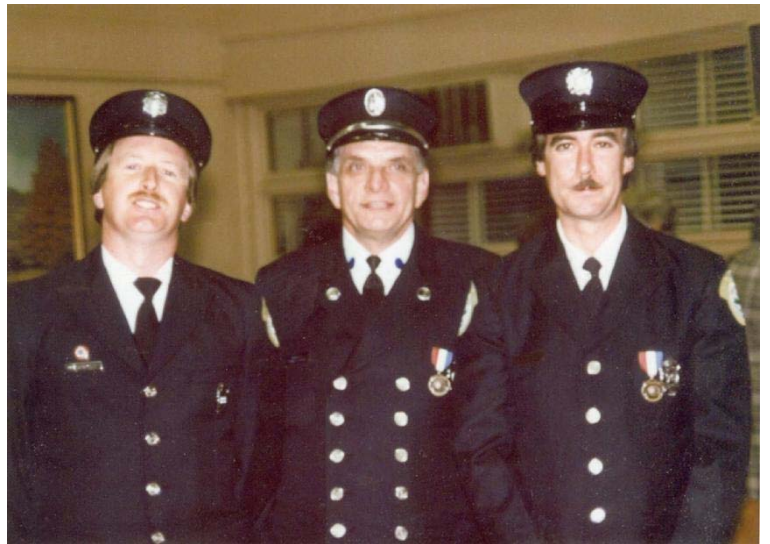
1967 - Sam Jones outside old Station 3



1978 – Ralph Tomaselli on Welton Street, getting ready to help tear apart this Pontiac Tempest with the department's new Hurst Tool



1898 – Highwood Hose Co. No. 1, Hamden's first organized fire Company, established 120 years on December 10, 1896.



Ff. Don Buechele, Lt. Bob Kelo & Ff. Bob Surprise at 1985 Awards Night



Hamden's new Engine 3, placed in service last July 25th at Station 3



c. 1974 - Ralph Dievert in old alarm room at HQ



Tom Doherty, Bob Mordecai and Mark Barletta at the HFRA summer meeting at the Elks



Our own Jeanine Aceto at the Hamden Police & Fire Appreciation Day – Nov. 30

Your \$15 annual dues help to support the HFRA website and the preservation of our history. If you have firehouse photos, please share them with us. Send your photos to **HFRA, PO Box 185605, Hamden, CT 06518**. They will be scanned and mailed back to you within 24 hours. E-mail digital photos to HFDBadge102@aol.com. Preserve our history!

Just a few of the postings during 2016 on the HFRA website – www.hamdenfireretirees.org



Willimantic Fire School 1970 – Lt. Jack Laffin, Ffs. John Reynolds, Joe Mulligan, Ralph Dievert, Bob Macauley and Ray Ramelli



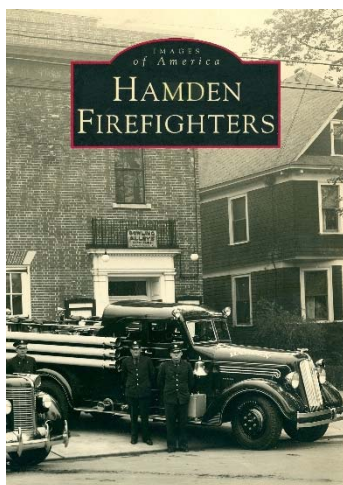
December 1951, Station 2 – Lt. Dan Hume (seated), Ffs. Art Smith, Frank Nolan, Tim Cummins, Ken Harrington & Bob “Whitey” Williams



1973, Station 5 – Ffs. John O’Hare and Joe Mulligan with vols Steve Blennerhassett, Bill Chalmers, Paul Moody and Clark Hurlburt



May 2016: Sta. 3, Pl. 3 – Capt. Jason Blyth, Lt. Jay Mathews, Ffs. Kevin Shields, Seth Patrick, Dave Wood and Mike Onofrio



AT LONG LAST

The Arcadia Publishing Co. has expressed interest in a proposal to publish a pictorial history of the Hamden Fire Department in their Images of America series, authored by fellow retiree and Hamden’s newly-appointed Municipal Historian Dave Johnson.

If the proposal is accepted, “Hamden Firefighters” is expected to be published in mid-2017, with proceeds to be split between the Hamden Fire Retirees Association, Inc. and the Hamden Historical Society.

We’ll keep you posted.

**Please send your \$15 HFRA dues check for 2017 to
HFRA, P.O. Box 185605, Hamden, CT 06518**

Widows and other Honorary Members are exempt