

RECALL OF MEETING #471

The 471st MIFDI meeting was held on Wednesday, December 17, 2003 in Newton Fire Station # 4. The topic of the lecture was Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles and was hosted by MIFDI 2nd Vice President Captain Mark Roche. Keyspan Energy Delivery Account Executive Michael Manning and Alternative Vehicle Service Group (AVSG) Vice President Nick Burns presented it. They explained to the members the number one goal of Keyspan and AVSG is safety – safety of the public as well as safety to firefighters and other personnel.

Under the U.S. Clean Air Act of 1992, the federal government requires that large fleets of motor vehicles pursue alternative fuels in order to reduce air pollution. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, many agencies are complying with these federal mandates, including the Mass Highway Department, Mass State Police, MBTA, MDC, DMH, etc. These alternative fuels can be LPG, methanol, ethanol, CNG, and electric energy. CNG is the most common type of alternative fuel. There are currently eleven filling stations in Massachusetts. One of them is in Newton. Logan Airport is the largest CNG station in New England. It cost \$1.6 million and services 32 buses in their fleet.

NFPA 52, which is the standard that refers to CNG stations “is our bible, our guideline”, said Nick Burns. He said, “we are on a continuous mission to make these stations safer.”

Their goal is to train the local fire department anywhere they have stations or plan to build a new station. There are several new stations planned for the area. Most are open to the public. Some, however, are not open to the public and are only used by the state.

CNG is lighter than air and will rise in normal atmospheres. Its flammable range is approximately 5-15%. In the event of a fire at a station, the fire department strategy should be to shut off the supply. It is likely that the fuel will be too lean to burn. There is no requirement in NFPA 52 to have a fixed system for fire protection. The standard requires portable fire extinguishers only. DOT and NSHTA requires that CNG vehicle be identified with a blue and white placard.

“It is a safe fuel. It has been used for over fifty years in New Zealand, Italy, India, and Bangladesh”, said Burns. They anticipate that they will capture a 1% market share as compared with gasoline.

The MBTA has 240 CNG buses out of 1000 total buses in their fleet. Buses generally mount tanks on their roof. Tanks are made of either aluminum, steel with a Kevlar wrap, or carbon fiber. These tanks came as an out growth of SCBA tank technology. They are usually about 3000 – 3600 p.s.i. systems. The cost of a gallon of CNG is about \$1.59. So, there is not a great economic savings. The fuel burns much cleaner as it is a dry fuel as opposed to gasoline, which is a wet fuel. Consequently, motor oil is almost never contaminated and it loses almost no viscosity. Therefore, oil changes are not frequently required. “These vehicles are virtually emission free”, said Michael Manning.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal has promulgated 527 CMR 26.00, which covers CNG stations. Mike Manning along with Cambridge Deputy Fire Chief John O’Donoghue have developed a training program and a video to be made available to fire department training officers who request it. At press time, however, the details on how to obtain it were incomplete. More info on that as it becomes available.

A short business meeting was held after the presentations. Elections are being held in January. The meeting was adjourned and a luncheon was held at Yerardi's Restaurant in Newton.

BUSINESS MEETING:

The Treasurer's Report:

Meeting - January

Beginning Balances for 2004

Checking **\$ 646.77**

Savings **\$1,669.52**

Bills paid

Jan. 04 Newsletter **\$105.00** Mike

Jan. 04 Web Page **\$ 23.85** Mike

10/03-12/03 @ \$7.95/month

50/50 Raffle =

Winner =

Deposit from 50/50 Raffle =

MIFDI Stickers & Pens Cost **\$865.00**

Collected **\$ 98.00**

MIFDI Clothing collected **\$ 364.00**

purchased **\$ 354.00**

Owed to treasurer for Mailings **\$ 15.00-** thru Dec 2003 - includes clothing mailings

Labels **\$ 10.00**

\$ 25.00

Total members = **126**

Dues paid thru 2005 = **2**

Dues paid thru 2004 = **34**

Dues paid thru 2003 = **90**

Mailings

E-Mail - **32** Home - **75**

Work - **19**

94

Respectfully submitted **12/22/2003**

David M. Jardin

MIFDI Treasurer

Deputy Fire Chief – Stoughton

Thank you to the membership for your support.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS: Notice of cancellations of MIFDI meetings due to bad weather will be announced on the MIFDI web site. It will be the same cancellation policy as the DFS/MFA announced on WBZ etc.

MFTC UPDATE: Steve Persson

MFA UPDATE: No Report

COMMITTEES:

The Historical Committee - consists of Steve Persson, Ira Hoffman, and Richard Gomes. **Nothing to report.**

The Bi-Law Committee - consists of Norm Aubert, C. Randall Sherman, Mort Shurtluff, Chris Kelly, Brian Ash, and John Cummings. **Nothing to Report.**

Public Relations Committee - consists of Mr. Ira Hoffman and Michael McLeieer. **Nothing to report.**

JANUARY MEETING SCHEDULE:

The 472nd M.I.F.D.I. meeting will be held on **Wednesday, January 28, 2004** hosted by the Waltham Fire Department courtesy of Chief Thomas M. Keough and MIFDI member Deputy Chief Michael Grigorakos. The meeting will take place in the training room at the Waltham Emergency 9-1-1 Center located at 161 Lexington St. between the fire station and the police department.

The program will be provided by the Massachusetts State Police Bomb Technicians assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Trooper William Qualls will provide us with an overview on the best course of action to take when confronted with a bomb threat or responding to an incident involving a suspected explosive device. We have seen a dramatic increase in these type of incidents since 9/11 and therefore should all benefit from this presentation.

SCHEDULE:

0900 Coffee & pastry, **1000** Presentation, **1130** Business meeting, **1200** Lunch (Off site)

DIRECTIONS:

From Rt.128 (I-95), Take Exit 27A. Follow Totten Pond Road to the end, that will be Lexington St. Turn right onto Lexington St. and you will see the Waltham Municipal Center a short way on the left. Parking in the rear is tight, however, parking is available beyond the station at the drill tower.

LUNCH:

Lunch will be at the Chateau Restaurant, 195 School St. If you turn left onto Lexington St. from the 9-1-1 Center, continue south on Lexington St. to the 1st traffic light, that is School St. Turn right on School St. and the Chateau Restaurant is on the right two blocks down. There is plenty of free parking and the menu has a large variety of reasonably priced items.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT:

I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season. As we enter 2004, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the membership for your support during 2003. Together we have accomplished many of the goals set forth earlier in the year, which included increasing the membership numbers. MIFDI continues to be the central resource for information, ideas and exchange.

We will be looking to fill one position on the Board of Directors and vote on the nomination of Thomas Bogart to the position of Secretary at the January meeting. If you are interested and consider yourself a possibility as a Director, please e-mail or phone me with your interest. I also want to ask that all Board Members please attend the January meeting.

A personal *thank you* goes out to 2nd Vice President Captain Mark Roche for all of the behind the scenes work you do in scheduling & coordinating the speakers and meeting locations, to 1st Vice President Scott Maker for your dedication in sending out our quality and informative MIFDI Bulletin each month, to Treasurer Deputy Chief David Jardin for keeping track of our finances and membership lists, to Marshal Steve Coan and MFA Director Peter Lamb for allowing MIFDI to continue to utilize the services of the facility and to the Board members for all of you input and dedication. It truly is a pleasure working with such dedicated individuals.

Please remember to frequently take advantage of ongoing training opportunities provided from both the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and the National Fire Academy. There are always new ideas, which may be learned in these classes so we can keep our training programs “fresh” and “beneficial”.

If you would like to host a meeting or have an idea for a speaker or topic, please contact either Mark, Scott or me.

Finally, the MIFDI website <http://www.mifdi.org> continues to increase the number of visitors who view it each month. It remains the best source for networking and exchanging training ideas with all of our members and beyond.

Remember, this is your organization. Please let the Officers or Board of Directors know if there is anything we can do for you.

Stay safe,

Michael

UPCOMING EVENTS:

January 12, 2004, Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Recruit Class #162 begins.

January 25-28, 2004, IAFF Human Relations Conference, Santa Monica, CA

January 28-31, 2004, SPAAMFAA Meeting & Convention, Treasure Island, FL

February 1-5, 2004, Firehouse World Exposition & Conference, San Diego, California - www.firehouse.com

March 20, 2004, Statewide Exam for Fire Chief & Deputy Fire Chief. Last day to apply is February 13, 2004 - www.state.ma.us/hrd

April 24, 2004, Statewide exam for Firefighter Municipal Service. Last day to apply is February 6, 2004 - www.csexam.hrd.state.ma.us/hrd

April 26-May 1, 2004, FDIC 2004 (Fire Dept. Instructor's Conference) Indianapolis, IN - visit www.fdic.org

CONGRATULATIONS to Deputy Chief C. Randall Sherman of the Yarmouth Fire Department on his promotion to Acting Chief of the Department, effective December 20th, 2003. Acting Chief Sherman is also a candidate for the permanent appointment.

INSTRUCTORS CORNER:

It Happened Again...

By Pete Lamb, Director, Massachusetts Firefighting Academy

This is a difficult time to write a commentary. As I sit before the screen today the events of one day ago are weighing way too heavy upon me.

The Town of Lancaster, Massachusetts has lost a firefighter at a structure fire yesterday. 3 other firefighters injured, one of them seriously. The seriously injured is a friend and a colleague.

The original fire building is destroyed, a family and a community or two has been devastated.

It was a basement fire.

Just as I started to write the article, I received word of two firefighters from Maryland being injured in a basement fire.

So what.....There are probably 50-100 basement fires everyday across America. Firefighters go to basement fires.

What happened yesterday in Lancaster could happen anywhere in the US tomorrow. It is a small town America, protected by a small group of dedicated firefighters.

I raise that point because frustration has gotten me to that point. I guess it really doesn't matter that we kill 100 members a year in this country. I am sitting personally and emotionally drowning in the blood of my brothers because we believe that buildings are more important than us.

I take my job as an instructor very seriously and professionally and those that know me, know that all too well.

Isn't there something that we as fire instructors can do to make a change in this deluge of death? Are we doing enough to change the way a firefighter, or fire officer thinks?

I was not at the scene of the emergency on Saturday Morning, but I think by it's outcome we see that something went terribly wrong.

The formal investigation will take some time and find some facts, and there will be many stories of the heroism of other members who acted under difficult conditions. But to what end?

Hundreds will descend upon the town of Lancaster on Tuesday to pay tribute to a young man. Hundreds will send emails and condolences to a young widow who is 9 months pregnant.

What good will any of that do?

To make some good come out of any tragedy there must be tough and difficult decisions that must be made.

As fire officers and fire instructors be prepared and ready to make those decisions.

Make your training VALID, and RELEVANT. Stop teaching popular techniques that are "fun to teach" and good "hands on stuff" when you know that some of these techniques have only a marginal chance of success, and may create a false sense of confidence. Some of the CRAP we are teaching will not help anyone who has already crossed a very thin threshold of safety by some building failure, or other catastrophic event.

It takes "balls" to be a good instructor. Safety is not very popular. You will not be popular if you preach safety and instill it into every one of your evolution. If you are not ready to commit to that level of intestinal fortitude and you want to be popular with the guys, then keep headed the way you currently are. I suggest that you look at each and every training evolution you have and make sure the end objective is firefighter safety. If you cannot figure out why you are teaching a particular evolution or if there is no perceived safety benefit then change your thinking.

We as a fire service in this nation have spent tens of thousands of training hours across the national lecture circuits teaching "last resort" and rapid intervention techniques. It is time to stop. Let's take our training back to preventing these "last resort" maneuvers. Focus on size up and air management training.

If the investigation yields and lessons to be learned, then please incorporate those into your department's train in and sops.

If the investigation does not yield any information, then make sure your members are fully aware of the dangers and risks of basement fires and all structural fires.

As I typed those words, I shrugged my shoulders and re-read what I wrote....

How stupid am I? We have all read the NIOSH reports of many previous line of duty deaths and injuries already. In 10 years we have killed 1000 men and women, excluding the 343 from FDNY, so make it 1300.

We read the reports, we know the recommendations, we either don't care, or we just don't get it.

If you are from the Northeast area and will be attending the funeral, do not get caught up in the pomp and circumstance of the flags, and class A uniforms and flag draped aerial ladders, but instead as you stand at attention and salute, focus your attention on the family, the mother and father and wife and children. As you listen to the strains and wails of the bagpipes that are all so present as we pay tribute to a brother firefighter, look at his family, and watch their pain and suffering, and tell me again how

that now destroyed building was worth this.

Maybe then we will get it.

Stay safe, say a prayer or give your thoughts to the family of Firefighter Martin McNamara, and say a prayer or remember Deputy Chief John McLaughlin who is fighting to recover from injuries sustained.

LAST ALARM:

- It is with deep regret that the President of the Massachusetts Institute of Fire Department Instructors reports the death of former MIFDI member and **Past President Richard C. Cully** of the Cambridge Fire Department. Dick passed away on December 30, 2003 at age 80 in Longwood, Florida where he had been living for the past few years. He was born on June 29, 1923 in Clinton, Mass. He moved to Cambridge to live with relatives in 1935 due to the early death of his parents. After serving in the U.S. Army, Dick joined the Cambridge Fire Department on February 4, 1951 and was assigned to Ladder Co. 4 in Taylor Sq. Dick studied hard and rose swiftly through the ranks as Lieutenant March 9, 1963, and Captain March 15, 1967. On July 30, 1972 he was appointed Deputy Chief and was one of the first African-American firefighters in the state to achieve the rank of Deputy Chief. Dick retired on July 10, 1983. He served as President of MIFDI in 1982. The officers and members of MIFDI offer our condolences to his family and colleagues on the Cambridge Fire Department including his son Rick who serves as a member of Cambridge Engine Co. 6 on River St. in Cambridgeport. Deputy Chief Cully was well respected and admired by his peers as a good firefighter, knowledgeable fire officer, and a good guy. May he rest in peace.
 - The Massachusetts Institute of Fire Department Instructors regrets to report the death of **FDNY Firefighter Thomas Brick** of Ladder Co. 36 from the Inwood section of Manhattan. Firefighter Brick was killed December 16, 2003 when a stack of flaming mattresses fell on him during search operations as he battled a four-alarm fire in a mattress and furniture warehouse in Manhattan. Firefighter Brick was part of the first class to graduate from the FDNY Fire Academy after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the second firefighter killed in the line of duty since the attack of 9/11 that claimed 343 members of the Fire Department of New York. May he rest in peace.
 - The Massachusetts Institute of Fire Department Instructors offers condolences to the family and colleagues of **Boston Firefighter Johnny Best**, active member of Engine Co. 55 in West Roxbury. Firefighter Best died on December 24, 2003. May he rest in peace.
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WELCOME NEW MIFDI MEMBERS: **Frederick Clark - Captain, Goshen Fire Department**

A REMINDER for RE-NEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP:
Issues regarding **RENEWAL of DUES** or **NEW MEMBERSHIPS** may be addressed to:

MIFDI

Attn: David Jardin, Treasurer **If you have not already done so, it's time to renew your dues. Due Jan. 1st.**

52 Willow Street
Stoughton, MA 02072-1027

*Dues are \$25.00 per year for Active Members -

*\$100.00 per year for Associate members (which includes a 1/4 page of advertising in the MIFDI Bulletin and on the MIFDI website).

*Retired members dues are \$12.50 for one calendar year (January 1 through December 31).

FIRE SERVICE FEEDBACK:

This forum is an extension of the [Guest Book](#) on the MIFDI Web-site, and provides our members a way to ask questions and get answers about problems encountered in the Fire and EMS service. If you would like to reply to a question, pose your own question or submit an article for publication in the MIFDI bulletin, but have no internet capabilities, you may do so in writing to: **Michael McLeier, President - MIFDI, PO Box 507, Merrimac, MA 01860-0510.**

Fax # (877) 327-4353. Faxing or e-mailing of articles is preferred. Please e-mail articles in MS Word format to michael.mcLeier@merrimacfire.com

Name:

Email:

Comments:

Fire Department:

Rank:

DRILL SCHEDULE:

JANUARY 28th: Waltham

FEBRUARY 25th: Merrimac

MARCH 24th: DFS/MFA

CANCELLATIONS: During the winter months, check the MIFDI website for severe weather cancellations at www.mifdi.org.