

Winter 2011



I. A. A. I. OREGON CHAPTER 31
PO BOX 15118
SALEM, OREGON 97301

The Oregon Fire Trail

Rick McGraw IAAI Oregon Investigator of the Year

Rick McGraw began his career with Portland Fire & Rescue in October of 1989. He was sworn in as Fire Investigator on April 3rd, 1997. He served as a shift fire investigator for four years before assuming his current position of day investigator.

Rick has been an IAAI Certified Fire Investigator for nine years. He holds an advanced police certificate with the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. Rick also serves as a Task Force Officer with ATF.

The Portland Fire day investigator position is responsible for the follow up and case management of all major fire investigations in the City of Portland. Rick is part of a callback team that responds to fire deaths, greater alarm fires, explosive device incidents, and other arson incidents. Rick was paired with Detective Ron Keller of Portland Police Bureau's arson detail. The Portland Fire Investigation Unit recently lost this detective position through Portland Police Bureau budget cuts. Rick has since assumed these detective duties in addition to his existing workload. Rick has conducted over 1000 fire cause and origin investigations with case work on an additional 500 as the day investigator.



Rick McGraw, Portland Fire & Rescue and Susie Lovisco, Past President of the Oregon Chapter 31 of the International Association of Arson Investigators.

Rick is credited with developing a strong working relationship with ATF over the last seven years. His strong sense of justice and communication skills has earned the trust and respect of the Multnomah County District Attorney and United States Attorney Offices. Rick has established a close working relationship between Portland Fire and the Oregon State Police Forensic Services Division.

Over the years, Rick has sacrificed countless hours with his family to ensure that the mission of Portland Fire & Rescue is supported. His dedication and passion for the job are evident by his constant unconditional sacrifices.

Congratulations to Rick for being named the Oregon Chapter 31 International Association of Arson Investigators—Investigator of the year 2010. Job well done!



In Memory

Paul A. Nees

May 6, 1952 - November 28, 2010

After an 18 month battle with multiple myeloma cancer, Paul passed away peacefully in his home on Sunday, November 28th, 2010 with his family by his side. Paul was 58 years old. He spent his career as a fire fighter and in fire safety, where he retired from California Department of Forestry in 1988. He spent time in other fire service organizations with his most recent as a Deputy

Fire Marshal for the State of Oregon. Paul was a very knowledgeable man and could recite code verbatim. He was a great asset to the State of Oregon and the fire service.

Paul is immediately survived by his wife, Barbara Nees; son, David (Elizabeth), grand-daughter, Madeline Nees of Fresno, Calif.; daughter, Jennifer Peters (George) of Battle Ground, Wash.

Memorial donations may be made to Fire Fighter Cancer

Support Network, In Honor of Paul Nees, 1320 North Eastern Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90063 or online at

www.firefightercancersupport.org



Mark Your Calendar



IAAI Oregon Chapter 31 - Fall Seminar

Where: Seaside Convention Center

When: September 19 thru 22nd, 2011

More Information to follow. Stay tuned!

The Principles of Electrical Fires and Explosions 2011

Tutor: Dr Vytenis Babrauskas

February 3rd & 4th 2011

Hyatt Hotel Fishermans Wharf, San Francisco, Ca

THE COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The course presents the unifying principles of electrical fires to fire investigators, fire service personnel, forensic engineers, insurance adjusters, and other professionals interested in understanding the causes of fires. At the completion of this course, the attendee should be equipped with a basic understanding of the mechanisms by which the third leg of the fire triangle—“source of heat”—can be caused by electric current or static electricity. Attendees should already have had some previous instruction on the basics of electricity, as only a very brief review of the elementary principles of electricity will be made. The knowledge gained in this seminar will then allow interpretations of burn patterns to be made that are consistent with the state of the art of ignition theory, as it pertains to electrical causes.

Programme and Registration On-line now open at

<http://www.intersciencecomms.co.uk/html/events/pe11a.htm>

Discounted registration for Fire and Materials 2011 delegates

Oregon Council Against Arson Award

On December 2nd, 2010 the Oregon Council Against Arson presented an award in the amount of \$1500.00 to Ms. Tabatha Perdue who came forward with information in regards to a fire that led to the conviction of the two responsible people.

The Salem Fire Department responded to a 2-story, vacant residential dorm fire at the closed Fairview School on January 27th, 2010. During suppression there were several indications that the fire may have been incendiary in nature. The Salem Police Department and the Salem Fire Department began a joint fire cause and origin investigation. Early on in the investigation both the Salem Police Department and the Salem Fire Department had received phone calls from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, that a person had information in regards to who had started the fire. The Salem Police Department followed up with the information and then contacted Ms. Perdue, who had had a conversation with a person who confessed to her that he and another person had started the fire.

Due to the extent of damage to the structure, a cause and origin investigation would not have led to a conclusion and the fire would have been undetermined

The information provided by Ms. Perdue was the sole reason for the arrest, confessions and convictions of Robert Riggi and Wesley Kirk.



\$5,000 AWARD FUND

It has been determined that this fire is

ARSON

If you have information regarding this fire, please call

800-452-7888

Sponsored by:

OREGON COUNCIL AGAINST ARSON



Left to right: Treven Upkes - Salem Police Department, Curt Able - Salem Police Department, Ms. Tabatha Perdue, Jeff Mack - Salem Fire Department, IAAI Past President Ann Lewis.

GR Castillo Retires From IAAI Board

GR Castillo has worked for the Oregon State Police nearly 13 years and has provided services to Oregon IAAI for over ten of them. She initially began as a substitute Secretary, filling in when asked, before being appointed officially in 2001 by Past President, Jeff Howard. Along with the secretarial duties came the fall seminar logistics responsibilities, which has been great fun for her. In 2002 she was asked to develop the Organization's first website. With no experience in how to do it, the website was developed and up and running that year. She continued to learn about web design and has taken it through a couple of physical incarnations over the years to today's format. She believes it needs another update, but will leave it to the new web master to accomplish. In 2005, upon the retirement of then treasurer Mark Merrill, she agreed to take on the Treasurer duties as well. She has held both Secretary/Treasurer positions since then. Somewhere during that time, she can't remember exactly when, she also took on managing Membership. She has developed databases for managing the seminar and membership enrollments that has contributed significantly to the professionalism and organization of records for Oregon IAAI. In 2007, and after many years of unsuccessful attempts to obtain the 503 (6) tax exempt status for our Organization with accountants and attorneys, GR took it upon herself to see what she could do. Within a few months, she accomplished what Oregon IAAI had begun to think was impossible without significant expense. She researched, prepared the paperwork and submitted successfully to the IRS for the tax status we had been seeking for so long.



GR lives in Salem Oregon and continues to work for OSP at GHQ for the Counter Terrorism/Arson/Explosives Units. She will be providing support in the background over the next year to assist IAAI in transitioning new people into taking over her responsibilities and while it is still about three years out – she is also looking forward to retiring from OSP as well. GR has expressed her deep love for this organization and for what it stands for. She considers it to have been an honor to have served our membership over the years and will remember her time with us with great affection.

Those in the Mid-Willamette District will continue to benefit from GR's participation with them as their District Secretary/Treasurer.

921 Tidbit—Probable vs. Possible

18.6—Opinions. When forming opinions from hypotheses about fires or explosions, the investigator should set standards for the level of certainty in those opinions. The following lists two levels of confidence that have significance with respect to opinions:

- (1) *Probable.* This level of certainty corresponds to being more likely true than not. At this level of certainty, the likelihood of the hypothesis being true is greater than 50 percent.
- (2) *Possible.* At this level of certainty, the hypothesis can be demonstrated to be feasible but cannot be declared as probable. If two or more hypotheses are equally likely, then the level of certainty must be "possible."

IAAI Chapter 31—2010 Award Winners



Pictured: Past President Susie Lovisco, Oregon State Fire Marshal Randy Simpson, Office of State Fire Marshal Judy Okulitch & President Maurice Austin.

Judy Okulitch with the Office of State Fire Marshal received the IAAI Distinguished Service Award for her dedication and contributions toward Youth Fire Prevention and Intervention programs at the state and national levels. The program goal is to reduce the incidence of fire by establishing a continuum of care for youth who misuse fire and their families in the state of Oregon using community-based intervention programs. Judy has worked with the IAAI at the national level to develop part of their national curriculum regarding fire investigation

involving youths.



Pictured: Lynn Davis, C&O Services

Lynn Davis has received the 2010 Life Membership Award. Lynn is a charter member of the Oregon chapter, having participated in its formation in 1978 and was one of the original Certified Fire Investigators of the Oregon chapter. Lynn has served a Chapter President on two separate occasions. Lynn had a long career with the Portland Fire Bureau where he began as a Firefighter and rose to the positions of Fire Investigator, Fire Marshal and then as Acting Chief. Lynn

retired and is a co-owner of C&O Services, Inc conducting fire investigations. Lynn has over 35 years in the investigation community and continues to be involved on a daily basis.

Other Winners

Virginia Chapman

First Place Fire Photography Award – Accidental
September 29th, 2010

The Don Murphy Scholarship:
Michelle Pauly

The Rex Millard Scholarship:
Robert Garrison

The Del Williams Scholarship:
Ryan Fields

Portland District: Rich
Matrisciano and Tad Pedersen

Newly Elected Board Officers & Board of Directors

At the 2010 Fall Seminar in Hood River the newly elected executive board members were sworn into office.

President: Mo Austin - Big Foot Investigations

1st Vice President: Ed Bonollo - Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue

2nd Vice President: Jim

Christiansen - Columbia River Fire & Rescue

Directors:

2009—2012

Jerry Flowerdew - EFI Global

2010—2013

Jeff Mack—Salem Fire Department

Daniel Thennell—Smith, Freed & Eberhard, P.C.

Laura LaFrance—State Farm Insurance

Congratulations Everyone!

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What's New



The Oregon Chapter of IAAI is now on Facebook. Facebook will be used to distribute information to members for meeting times, training opportunities or links to related information.

If you are a registered user of Facebook already, search for the International Association of Arson Investigators—Oregon Chapter 31 and click on the “Like” button. If you are not a registered user you will have to register as a user on Facebook to connect and receive messages.

As of December 2010 we have 39 people who have joined the page and are receiving information. We hope you will join our page on Facebook so that you can stay caught up on what's happening around the state.

If you are new to Facebook and need assistance navigating or registering as a user please feel free to contact Jeff Mack at jmack@cityofsalem.net or at 503-589-2136.

Expert Witness Class

If you are still in need of an expert witness class. Contact Ryan Fields at 541-944-3444 or through email at rfields@orcafire.com. Please be advised, participation in this class requires a lot of commitment from you, including pre-course work. Refer to our website, www.or-iaai.net for Instructions/Advice to Students.

The Oregon Fire Trail is published Semi-Annually by the Oregon Chapter of the IAAI. For submissions or suggestions contact Jeff Mack at 503-589-2136
Email: jmack@cityofsalem.net