

THE Hundred Call

***"The Club
with a Heart"***

**President: Peter S. Carozza, Jr.
Managing Director: James M. Thomas**

**Volume LIII, No. 3
Fall 2022**

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Managing Director Thomas Retiring

Managing Director James "Skip" Thomas recently announced that he intends to retire from his position effective November 1st, due to some health concerns. The Board of Directors reluctantly accepted his notice and has begun the process of searching for a replacement.

Although his tenure as the fourth Managing Director of The Hundred Club has been shorter than he hoped, Skip has left an indelible legacy on the Club.

Beyond ensuring the continued support of the spouses and children already sustained by the Club, he acted as its liaison to extend compassion, care and assistance to four more families that lost public safety officers in the line of duty. The deaths of State Police Sergeant Brian Muhl, New Haven Police Officer Diane Gonzalez, Westport Firefighter Turker Aksoy and Cromwell Fire Marshal Todd Gagnon all necessitated Skip's unique understanding of and empathy for the surviving families.

His selection as Managing Director was based on a long and distinguished record of service to the families of the fallen. An active and engaged member of The Hundred Club since 2009, Skip was elected to its Board of Directors in 2010 and served as its President in 2026. Further evidence of his commitment to the survivors was his service as Chairman of the Connecticut Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation. Appointed in 1987, he oversaw the creation of the Law Enforcement Memorial in Meriden, as well as the annual services held there each May.

Skip's devotion to the public safety community came, in part, from his own long and impressive career. He joined the Glastonbury Police Department in 1969 and rose progressively through the ranks until December 1985, when he left Glastonbury to become the Chief of the Vernon Police Department. In 1987 he returned to Glastonbury as the Chief of Police.

In 1998, Skip retired from the Glastonbury Police Department and began his tenure serving state level agencies. First, he became the Director of Justice Planning. In 2005



Managing Director
James "Skip" Thomas

he was appointed the Commissioner of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and in June 2010 he accepted Governor Rell's request to serve as Commissioner of Public Safety.

Board Member and Past President Gerri Roberts said, "Skip Thomas is the epitome of a true, caring leader."

Noting that she has known him in all of his varied positions, she observed, "In each of these roles, Skip has demonstrated intelligence, caring, thoughtfulness and dedication. Skip is always ready to help anyone in need, whether it be a fellow law enforcement officer or family member of those who have given their lives in the line of duty."

Not only has Skip steadily maintained the Club's services to both the families and members, he also oversaw the renovations and renewal of the headquarters facilities. Under the Board's guidance, he directed the transformation of the offices into the repaired, updated and welcoming place for a growing membership. Even more impressive was his vision for some unused building space that is being developed into the "Heroes Room" – an area dedicated to those Fallen Heroes that the Club has served for over 55 years. The room, equipped with a large conference table, will display photos and memorabilia honoring the Club's history and the people it serves. When Skip conceived of the idea, he also intended it to be a space to be used by first responders for meetings or training, without charge.

"I have had the pleasure of working with Skip as a member of the Board of Directors and, for the last ten months, as Club President," noted Peter Carozza. While sure to miss Skip's leadership as Managing Director, said he is heartened by Skip's agreement to stay active on the Board of Directors and continue working on the Heroes Room.

"He has been a true professional and represented our club with dignity, respect and compassion." Carozza added, "I know I can speak for the entire Board of Directors when we say 'Thank you Skip for all your hard work on behalf of the families we serve'."

20th Annual Firefighters' Memorial Service

The Twentieth Annual Firefighters' Memorial Service was held on Sunday, September 25, 2022, on the grounds of the Connecticut Fire Academy in Windsor Locks. Numerous active and retired members of the fire service, representatives of other public safety services, and family members and friends of the fallen assembled to remember and honor Connecticut firefighters who died in the line of duty.

Four members of the fire service were accorded special recognition this year.

- Colin J. McFadden, a 26-year-old member of the Burlington Volunteer Fire Department.
- George W. Brown (73), a former chief and 55-year member of the Muddy Brook Fire Department (Woodstock).
- William T. Halstead, Sr. (73), a former chief and member the Sandy Hook Volunteer Fire and Rescue Co. (Newtown) for over 57 years.
- Samuel E. Cotter (54), a volunteer firefighter with Eagle Hose Hook & Ladder Co. No. 6 (Ansonia).

The inclusion of Cotter in the memorial service was particularly notable. Unlike the other three firefighters, who died within the past two years, the Ansonia volunteer was killed 122 years ago. According to an article in the former Evening Sentinel, dated July 5, 1900, Cotter had climbed atop a telephone pole to make some repairs to the city's alarm system, when he became entangled in the wires and was electrocuted.

Over the years, Ansonia Fire Department Assistant Fire Chief and Eagle Hose Co. Fire Chief Anthony DeLucia, heard tales of the tragedy, but never had solid proof of the occurrence. He credited Derby Fire Chief David Lenart, Gene Sharkey, a longtime Webster Hose Co. firefighter and Jen Stuart, children's librarian at Ansonia Public Library, for working to find information about Cotter. By researching the incident and finding definitive evidence of Cotter's line-of-duty death, they were able to give Cotter the recognition he deserves by adding his name to the Connecticut Fallen Firefighters Memorial.



The article in the center of this July 5, 1900 edition of The Evening Sentinel reports Cotter's death



The New London Firefighters Pipes and Drums

The memorial ceremony began with the posting of the colors by the Connecticut Statewide Honor Guard, accompanied by bagpiper and retired East Hartford firefighter Hal Grout and the New London Firefighters Pipes and Drums.

Once again, New Britain Fire Department Deputy Chief Paul Walsh served as Master of Ceremonies. He led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance and then introduced Mae McDonnell, who sang the National Anthem, and Father Kevin Donovan, Chaplain of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association, who offered an invocation.



Father Donovan offers the invocation

Governor Ned Lamont attended the ceremony and addressed the audience. He spoke about the essential role of the fire service in protecting lives and property, the courage displayed daily by the men and women in that service, and the ultimate sacrifices that are tragically made sometimes in pursuit of their mission.



Governor Lamont and Deputy Chief Walsh (L-R)

Firefighters' Memorial

Peter Carozza, Jr., Chairman of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, President of the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association, and President of The Hundred Club of Connecticut, was the ceremony's Keynote Speaker.



Peter Carozza presents his remarks

Carozza began his remarks by commending the Memorial Committee for their efforts to raise funds and refurbish the monument. He then acknowledged the four fallen heroes, whose names were being added to the memorial.

Noting that he recently attended the International Association of Firefighters Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service in Colorado Springs, he reported that over 400 firefighters' names were added to the Wall of Honor there, including three from Connecticut: Jim Woodman, of the West Haven Fire Department; Turk Aksoy, of the Westport Fire Department; and Todd Gagon, of the Cromwell Fire Department.

Carozza's remarks were followed by a somber presentation of memorial gifts to the surviving family members of the fallen. The tribute, presented by Deputy Chief Walsh, included a bouquet of red roses and a crystal Lucite flame, inscribed with the firefighter's name and the dates of his service.

The memorial presentation was punctuated by the tolling of the bell – a special signal rung on a bell of five measured dashes, then a pause, then five measured dashes, another pause...then five more dashes. This is a traditional signal signifying the death of a firefighter and is used today as a sign of honor and respect for all firefighters who had made the ultimate sacrifice.



Family members receive the memorial gifts as a tribute to the fallen

Following the tolling of the bell, firefighters placed five memorial wreaths at the base of the monument. Bagpiper Grout then played a moving rendition of Amazing Grace. The ceremony concluded with a benediction by Father Donovan and retiring the colors by the Color Guard.

The Connecticut Firefighters Memorial was dedicated on August 18, 2002, ten years after its conception by a committee of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association. The design of the Memorial incorporates a plaza-like setting, featuring a brick patio in the form of the Maltese cross, the universal symbol of the fire service. The centerpiece of the Memorial is a six by twelve foot polished impala black granite stone portraying four firefighters fighting a blaze. The centerpiece rests on a concrete and gray granite base with plaques engraved with the names of the firefighters who have died in the line of duty in Connecticut from the mid-1800's to present.



Images from the Firefighters' Memorial Service



Rain doesn't dampen annual Golf Tournament

During one of the driest summers in recorded history, the Hundred Club held its annual Edward J. Funk Memorial Golf Tournament on Monday, July 18, **in the rain**. Named in honor of long-time Managing Director Edward J. Funk in 2010, the annual outing was the second event planned and presented by the Golf Committee, chaired by Director Tom O'Connor. The inaugural Fairfield County Hundred Club Golf Outing was held at the Sterling Farms Golf Course, in Stamford in late May.

More than 140 members and guests assembled at the Tunxis Country Club, a 45 hole public golf course located in Farmington. This year's edition of the annual golf outing was presented by the Bidwell Family of Companies. Golfers began arriving at 8:00 am, when registration opened, and continued to filter in right up until tee time and the shotgun start at 10:00 am.



Before the 10:00 am start (and the rain), golfers had the opportunity to practice their drives

While the weather forecast called for rain, the outing began with dry conditions. Foursomes assembled on the patio outside the Pro Shop to enjoy coffee and breakfast pastries. A number of golfers took advantage of the extra time to practice on the driving range.

Hundred Club Directors Tom O'Connor and Paul Young joined Managing Director Skip Thomas and Office Administrator Ceil Hansen greeting the participants as they arrived, confirming registrations, distributing gifts, and providing information, when needed.



Golf as a "team sport" - the afternoon showers necessitated some cooperative play among the foursomes

Each year, every participant is given a sleeve of golf balls and a personalized keepsake from the tournament. This year, attendees received a leather bag tag and a handsome (and very practical) Greg Norman full-zip windbreaker. The water repellant and wind resistant jacket featured the Hundred Club logo embroidered over the left breast. During the day, a number of the appreciative players donned the garment to escape the inclement weather.

The contestants played the 18 hole, par 72 White Course, course, featuring several island greens that require accurate approach shots. Measuring 6,638 yards from the back tees, the White Course has been given a slope rating of 121 and course rating of 71.3, offering a great combination of challenge and playability. Of course, the "challenge and playability" alter dramatically with a half inch of water on the fairways.



Dave Monaco, Tom O'Connor, Paul Young and Ceil Hansen (L-R) greet players



The Greg Norman windbreaker worn by many of the day's participants



Club President Peter Carozza as rain pounds the cover of his golf cart



Playing through—a gaggle of geese enjoy the weather as a foursome make their approach

The rain that was predicted came gradually. The grey clouds that covered the sky at tee time began to produce a misty precipitation around 11:30. Shortly after noon, the mist gave way to rain. A steady drizzle, occasionally punctuated by a downpour, continued throughout the afternoon.



The snack bar provided refuge, as well as refreshments

The snack bar, located after the 5th and 14th tees, not only offered lunch and beverages, but an opportunity to get under cover. As the players made their way around the course, each group was able to stop and enjoy a sandwich at the concession stand. In addition to the freshly cooked hotdogs, hamburgers and sausage sandwiches, water, soft drinks and beer were available.

The rain that developed during the day may have abbreviated some golfers' time on the course. Either because they accelerated their play to finish quickly or simply gave up when the downpours soaked their game, a number of players began appearing in the dry and welcoming pavilion well before the scheduled 3:00 pm start of the social hour.



Participants relax as they await the dinner service

Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were served in the banquet facility, while everyone dried off and caught up with friends. The assembly, including a number of members who joined the festivities just for the dinner, was formally greeted by President Peter Carozza. Raffle prizes, provided by several generous sponsors, were drawn and Tournament winners were recognized. The day's activities concluded with a buffet dinner featuring a large and impressive steamship round of beef.

The Hundred Club thanks its generous Tee Sponsors

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Sandy Hook Fire & Rescue Chief Passes Away

William Halstead worked as a volunteer in Newtown for 57 years – from the day he turned 16 until the night he passed away

William "Bill" Halstead, Sr. passed away unexpectedly at his home on Friday, July 8, shortly after returning home from a call. The 73 year old Halstead was a lifelong resident of Sandy Hook and graduate of Newtown High School.

He had been a member the Sandy Hook Volunteer Fire and Rescue Co. for over 57 years, carrying on the legacy of his family members, including his mother, father, brother, and numerous aunts and uncles. He joined the department in January, 1965 when he turned 16. Halsted had served continuously as Chief of the department for 44 years after being elected to the position in 1978.

"Our community is what it is because of volunteerism," Newtown First Selectman Dan Rosenthal said. "Newtown runs based on volunteerism. And when I think of volunteers, I can't think of a better person than Bill."

"Not only was Bill the center of his family's universe, he was, without question, the foundation of Newtown's emergency services apparatus. In his 44 years as Sandy Hook Chief, he led the department admirably and with distinction and built an extended family in the process," the first selectman stated.

Halsted worked for the State of Connecticut at the Fairfield Hills Hospital in Newtown for 25 years. He was the Chief of the Hospital's fire department until his retirement in 1997.

He also served as Deputy Fire Marshal for the Town of Newtown from 1983 to 2001 and became the full-time Fire Marshal in 2001 until he retired from that position in 2016.

Halstead was Newtown's first Director of Emergency Management and served in that position for 23 years. In 2011, the town's emergency operations center was named the William T. Halstead, Sr. Building in his honor.

His firefighting work did not go unnoticed. Halstead was inducted into the Connecticut State Firefighters Association Hall of Fame in 2011 and named the Connecticut Firefighter of the Year in 2019.

Until his passing, Halstead continued to set the bar for the firefighters in Sandy Hook, regularly appearing at the top of the monthly stats for call responses. Newtown's First Selectman said he would often have the emergency scanner on at night and Halstead was almost always the first to respond.

"I would hear '4-1 is on.' That was his call signal," Rosenthal said. "Most of the time, Bill took most calls and was one of the first responders on the scene."



Chief William Halstead, Sr.

In addition to his extraordinary service in Sandy Hook, he also was a longstanding member of the Connecticut State Firefighter's Association and served as the President of the association in 2020. Bill also served as the President of the Fairfield County Fire Chief's Emergency Plan and was a member of many other firefighting organizations including the Connecticut Fire Marshal's Association, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Arson Investigators, the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, and the Connecticut Parade Marshals.

"It's hard to imagine Sandy Hook without him," said Danbury Deputy Fire Chief Bernie Meehan, who knew Halstead for over 40 years.

"I grew up in Newtown and I was a volunteer firefighter there, so from the moment I joined when I was 16, he was the boss," Meehan said. "He's been chief since I've known him, which is 44 years, and my oldest memories are of him running fires."

"Chief Halstead always looked out for his people," Meehan said. "He was always, always concerned for his people and no one came between them. That was something I really admired about him."

Following Halstead's death, Gov. Ned Lamont directed flags around the state to be lowered to half-mast.

"Chief Halstead provided decades of service to the community in which he grew up and the community he loved," Lamont said in a statement. "His dedication is exemplary, and we are lucky to have leaders like him protecting the residents of Connecticut."

International Association of Black Professional Firefighters celebrates its 50th anniversary in Hartford

The International Association of Black Professional Firefighters (IABPFF) celebrated its 50th anniversary in Hartford during the last week of August. More than 1,000 firefighters from around the world gathered in Connecticut's capital city for the annual convention.

The IABPFF has over 8,000 members and works to recruit Black career firefighters and assist them with career progression through training, mentorship, mental health resources and legal representation.

About 80% of firefighters are non-Hispanic white, and only about 6% are Black, according to data from the National Fire Protection Association.

"When I came on the job, there were maybe one or two African American officers in my department," said Frank Tidwell, northeast regional director for the IABPFF. "Today, there are maybe 20."

Carrie Edwards-Clemons, the Deputy Fire Chief in Flint, Michigan, is the first female President of the IABPFF. She said one of the organization's goals is to lift up women of color.

"We are in existence to help African-Americans, minorities, women in the fire service advance up the ladder, provide fire prevention activities in the community, and support

each other in an atmosphere and in an environment that wasn't always welcoming to us," Edwards-Clemons said.

The organization, which held its first convention in Hartford in 1970, during the Civil Rights Era, originally planned its golden anniversary celebration for 2020 but had to postpone it due to the pandemic. Some longtime members say they've watched the topics evolve and say the convention will continue to expand its services to meet the current needs.

The anniversary convention included workshops, regional chapter meetings, a memorial march, and a community service event, during which firefighters distributed school supplies to Hartford students.



Carrying a ceremonial firefighter ax, Greg Johnson of the Hartford Fire Department leads a march of an estimated 300 members of the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters during the organization's Golden Anniversary Convention.

Tunnels to Towers Foundation paid mortgage for fallen State Police Sergeant

The Tunnel to Towers Foundation announced on September 9 that it has paid off the mortgages held on the homes of twenty-one fallen first responder families, in honor of the 21st anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

Tunnel to Towers was established in memory of fallen FDNY Firefighter Stephen Siller, who laid down his life to save others on that fateful day.

Among the beneficiaries of the nonprofit organization is the family of a fallen Connecticut State Police sergeant who lost his life in 2021.

Tunnels to Towers is paying off the mortgage for the home of Sergeant Brian Mohl. The 50-year-old died last September when his patrol car was swept away by floodwaters from the remnants of hurricane Ida. Sergeant Mohl was a 26-year veteran of the state police.

The Tunnel to Towers Foundation's Fallen First Responder Program pays off mortgages for families of law enforcement officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty and leave

behind young children, ensuring that they will always have a place to call home. In 2021, Tunnel to Towers expanded the program to support the families of first responders who have lost their lives to 9/11 illnesses.

"When America was attacked on September 11, 2001, my brother and so many others rushed headfirst into danger and laid down their lives, trying to save as many people as they could. Twenty-one years later, I am proud to keep my brother Stephen's memory alive by supporting the families of these heroes who have also sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. Their dedication and their sacrifice will never be forgotten, and the families they left behind will always have the support of Tunnel to Towers," said Foundation Chairman & CEO Frank Siller.

The Foundation also announced the establishment of the Tunnel to Towers 9/11 Institute, the organization's expanded effort to educate and inform future generations of the 9/11 fallen and the heroic actions that took place on September 11, 2001. For more information, visit <https://t2t.org>.



"The Club with a Heart"

The Hundred Club of Connecticut
119 Oakwood Drive
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55th Anniversary

2022 Annual Meeting Luncheon

Wednesday, October 26, 2021; 11:30 am – 2:00 pm

The Promenade Ballroom, 165 Brainard Road, Hartford, CT 06114

Special Guest Speaker - State Emergency Management Director William Hackett (Ret)

Mr. Hackett retired as State Emergency Management Director in 2021. At various points in his career with Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), Mr. Hackett simultaneously served as the Acting Commissioner of the state's public safety agency, Deputy Commissioner and Governor's Homeland Security Advisor. He was also appointed to the State E-911 Commission and was the co-vice chair of the United States Coast Guard Sector Long Island Sound Area Maritime Security Committee (AMSC).

Program Master of Ceremonies: Kevin Hogan, WFSB News Channel 3 Bureau Chief (Ret)