

# THE Hundred Call

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

**President: Paul Fitzgerald  
Managing Director: William E. Sydenham, Jr.**

**Volume LI, No. 4  
Winter 2020**

Phone: (860) 633-8357 Fax: (860) 633-8350 Email: [ct100@hundredclubofct.org](mailto:ct100@hundredclubofct.org) Website: [www.hundredclubofct.org](http://www.hundredclubofct.org)

## Connecticut Sends Firefighters to Fight California Wildfires

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Forest Protection staff prepared and deployed two groups of trained wildland firefighters to assist the U.S. Forest Service in fighting wildfires in California, following receipt of a request for national wildfire response.

A group of ten firefighters was deployed in late July to assist with wildfire response in the Modoc National Forest area in northeastern California. In September, a second group of ten was sent to the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation, an area in northwest California, adjacent to the Six Rivers National Forest and near the Redwood National and State Parks.

Each contingent consisted of full-time DEEP employees and "administratively determined" members, private individuals who are temporary federal hires while on assignment. DEEP maintains a roster of agency staff members and personnel who have been certified to fight forest or wildfires. Crew members must complete a rigorous training program and participate in an annual physical work capacity test and refresher training.

The teams, called "modules", followed USDA Forest Service COVID-19 protocols, including pre-screening for COVID-19 and daily COVID-19 screening upon arrival and throughout the assignment. The crews traveled via rented cars and the deployments lasted 21 to 29 days, including travel time.

Rich Scalora, an Emergency Response Coordinator for DEEP and member of the Berlin Fire Department, was the crew boss for the second group. It took his crew four days to drive from Connecticut to the fire in northwest California. Normally, they would fly to the scene and be there in a day. However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the crew onto the road for a drive that contained hints of what they would face in California.

"There [were] two or three fires that we passed in Wyoming alone," Scalora said. "I mean we know what we're getting into, but until you get there, you can't really put that picture, that little slide, in your head."

After more than a decade of fighting fires

out West, Scalora said he believes climate change has made fires bigger and more intense.

"Things are just drier and more ready to burn. There's more available fuel. People are building more and more into the wildland and building that 'wildland-urban' interface, which creates problems, and it just adds more fuel for the fires," Scalora said.

After about a week at the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation, Scalora's crew redeployed to the Red Salmon Complex fire, which had burned over 120,000 acres in northern California.

Scalora recalled that his crew worked 12-hour shifts starting in the early afternoon and extending past midnight. He said it was like "Groundhog Day," as they worked to contain the same section of fire day after day underneath a sky perpetually obscured by a smoke-filled glow.

"We actually never really saw the sun," Scalora said. "The sun was just smoke-obscured all day long. It was a weird, palish orange-yellow color most of the day, but you never really saw the sun. And then as the day progresses into dusk and evening, it goes from that weird orange-yellow color just right to pitch-black at night."

Scalora said as fires get bigger and more intense, the resources to fight these disasters haven't kept up.



Credit: CT DEEP

"We don't have the resources available nationwide to fight the fires the way they burn today," Scalora said. "We normally send a 20-person crew out. And we ended up sending a 10-person [crew] just because of the pandemic."

Connecticut maintains this firefighting capability to participate in a reciprocal aid program operated by the U.S. Forest Service. Under this program, trained personnel from other parts of the nation are available to assist Connecticut in the event of a fire emergency or other natural disaster in return for the support of Connecticut personnel when needed. All state agency expenses directly associated with these deployments are 100% reimbursed to the State by the U.S. Forest Service.

## Past President Bill Carroll Dies

William J. ("Bill") Carroll, 77, of Trumbull, CT and Fort Myers, FL, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, November 25, 2020, in his Trumbull home surrounded by his beloved wife Sharon and his three sons, Sean, Keith and Brendan. Born January 27, 1943 in Bridgeport, CT, he was a lifelong resident of the greater Bridgeport area and a civic and business leader in the Bridgeport community for decades.

Bill was the longtime President of Merit Insurance. However, his greatest community accomplishments were in connection with his many volunteer and civic contributions. Bill joined The Hundred Club in 1985. He was elected to the Board in 1986, and served as President in 1992. He remained an active and engaged Director ever since.



Past President Bill Carroll

Bill was a past Chair and an Emeritus Member of the Board of Directors for St. Vincent's Medical Center and an enthusiastic supporter of the St. Vincent's Medical Center Foundation.

Bill was Ringmaster of the 1988 Barnum Festival, and past President of the P.T. Barnum Foundation. He was a mem-

ber of the St. Patrick's Scholarship Fund Committee and a former leader of the Democratic State Central Committee. He was a former member of The Board of Directors of The Bridgeport Regional Business Council and was co-chairman of St. James Parish "Faith in the Future" Campaign. He was past President of the Boy's and Girl's Club of Bridgeport, and past President of The Connecticut Boy's Club Association, which bestowed on him the "Man and Boy" award of the Boy's Club of America, their highest honor. He also served on the State of Connecticut Lawyers Statewide Grievance Panel and was honored by the Greater Bridgeport Bar Association with the Law Day Liberty Bell Award for outstanding community service.

He was the past President of The Bridgeport Lions Club, former District Governor, and a lifetime member of Lions International. He was a former Chairman of The President's Circle at Fairfield University. Bill also served for thirteen years as a member of The Stratford Board of Education, including eight years as its Chairman. He was a former Director of The Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, CT. He was a member of The Charter Club at the University of Bridgeport, and received the Distinguished Alumnus Award for his service to public education.

Many were touched by Bill's generosity, friendship and good will. Never one to seek fanfare for his good deeds, he leaves behind his family, lifelong friendships, and a community far better off for his having been a part of its life.

## Three New Directors Appointed to The Hundred Club Board

Club President Paul Fitzgerald will welcome three new members to the Board of Directors in January. The volunteer governing Board consists of seven officers, thirteen directors and the past presidents. The new directors will serve a three year term.

**Steven Nezas**, a resident of East Norwalk and 27-year veteran of the financial services industry, is a Vice President of Insured Solutions for Morgan Stanley Wealth Management. Currently in his eleventh year with the company, Steve's responsibilities include product management and business development for Insurance & Annuities. Additionally, he is the manager of the firm's Ultra High Net-Worth Property & Casualty business unit, which he took the lead in launching for the firm.

Steve earned his bachelor's degree in Economics and Business from The Virginia Military Institute and served in the U.S. Army Reserves. Outside of work, Steve contributes extensively to his local community, including the Norwalk Seaport Association, where he was past Co-Chairman of the annual 40,000 participant Norwalk Seaport Oyster Festival. He also serves on the Board of Directors - Norwalk Chapter of The Exchange Club of Connecticut, which provides for abused children and families in need.

**Melinda Carlisle** has been a full time real estate professional in the Stonington/Mystic area for forty years. She owned her own agency which she merged with another local company, Randall Realtors, several years ago. Licensed in both Connecticut and Rhode Island, she is experienced in all facets of the business. Melinda consistently ranks in the top 5% of sales associates among Southeastern Connecticut Board of Realtors and was their 1999 Realtor of the Year.

Melinda is extremely active in community organizations. She is a current member and Past President of the Rotary Club of Mystic, serves on the President's Council of Mystic Seaport Museum, and is the Past Commodore of the Mason's Island Yacht Club. Melinda is also enthusiastically engaged in supporting local and regional service groups, like the Mystic YMCA and Lawrence & Memorial Hospital, through fund-raising efforts.

**Daniel French** was appointed Assistant Chief of the Manchester Fire/Rescue/EMS Department in January 2015. In this position he oversees all operational components of the "all-risk" agency, providing services in fire suppression, emergency medical services, specialized rescue, and hazardous materials. Since his appointment, he has worked tirelessly to increase the department's engagement with the community. Dan serves on Manchester's Dutch Fogarty Independence Day Celebration Committee, organizing the annual fireworks display and functions as the Medical Liaison to the Manchester Road Race, Connecticut's largest sporting event.

Prior to his tenure in Manchester, the veteran firefighter served for 26 years with the Waterbury Fire Department. While in Waterbury, Dan rose through the ranks performing as Training Director, Battalion Chief and, finally, acting Deputy Chief. He was also active in the Waterbury Fire Fighters Association, serving on its Executive Board and as President.

# A note of thanks; a story of resilience

The Hundred Club frequently receives notes from family members, expressing appreciation for the group's support. Cards conveying gratitude often follow the delivery of Mother's Day candy, Thanksgiving food baskets, and Christmas remembrances. Children send notes of thanks for the Club's sponsoring a week at camp or a semester's tuition.

These messages are reminders of the important role of The Hundred Club, not only in providing support and assistance to the families of the fallen, but in assuring them that we will "never forget".

Recently, a letter, sent by the daughter of a fallen police officer, uniquely expressed the impact of the Club's service and the depth of gratitude it engenders. Her missive was included in the mailing of the annual membership notices. However, because of its inspirational message, we thought it deserved a reprise. The letter has been edited for brevity, but the words are hers:

*My dad meant everything to me. There was no denying we had a special bond. That morning, when I found out (that he had died), my whole world came crashing down. What sad, lonely, scary world was I to live in without him? Things were very bleak for a long time until a moment of light emerged and I was told that my father was considered a hero and that there was a special organization for heroes to be recognized and that their children can go to college! That special place was The Hundred Club. Who knew how much The Hundred Club would actually help and shape me throughout the next 21 years? For that I cannot express how deeply grateful I am.*

*I have been diagnosed with two kinds of anxiety disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder/PTSD and Generalized Anxiety. When I was younger, I didn't know what the symptoms were and what was happening to me. The affects were scary and caused me to have insomnia at night. It was no surprise that I slept in class during the day and my grades suffered in school. In my senior year of high school, I was told, by my Guidance Counselor, that I was not meant for college and that I should join the military. I felt like the dumbest person ever. Here I am, 17 years old, and I have no future or dreams. I did join the military, briefly, until I got hurt. I had a talent in art and thought that maybe I*

*should pursue being an art major. I had the scholarship that The Hundred Club provided, so why not? I enrolled at Housatonic Community College.*

*The beginning was tough. I failed a lot of my core courses and had to repeat them. I didn't have a true foundation from high school. I graduated with a 1.7 GPA due to not one person or education professional noticing my mental and emotional decline from silently suffering with anxiety and OCD. Then, a strength rose up inside of me. The thought of people donating money to me, people I have never met, just so I can go to college gave me strength and courage to go on and to succeed in my studies. I didn't want to let those donors down. I wanted to make all of you proud of me. I worked on and pushed forward, harder than ever. Never giving up.*

*Fast forward three colleges and three degrees later (one diploma was in Medical Assisting and Phlebotomy so I could work as I went to college). I graduated from Southern Connecticut State University in Art Education. I have earned achievement awards, several Dean's List awards, have had my academic work on display as examples of success for new teachers, had two art exhibitions, passed all my praxes and EdTPA certification, and have been awarded and nominated for Teacher-of-the-Year twice.*

*During my final weeks of student teaching in December 2018, I was hired as a long-term substitute art teacher in Ansonia, CT. The situation there was a mess due to a severely burnt-out, unfit teacher, whose actions caused years of educational and student safety neglect. In a few short months of my substitute teaching, I was able to turn the art classroom, as well as the art expectation, around and help create a city-wide art education curriculum. In August 2019, I was hired for my first-ever position as a real, certified art teacher in Ansonia at Prendergast School teaching K-6th graders.*

*In conclusion, thank you for being there for me, school-to-school. Thank you for helping me with my surgery when you didn't have to. Thank you for holiday fruit baskets and turkeys you sent my mom when we were young. Thank you for staying with me through 15 years of earning my bachelor's degree. Most of all, **thank you for being my guiding beacon**, even though you didn't know it.*

## News From Headquarters

The Board of Directors convened for a regular meeting on October 15, 2020. Their action included:

- Recognizing that inflation has increased the cost of tuition and associated educational expenses, funding of the Anthony Ustjanauskas Memorial College Scholarship Program was increased from \$25,000 to \$40,000 per academic year per student.
- The Bylaws were amended to accommodate new technology and methods of communication. Specifically, Board members may be notified of meetings by "...email address or other means..." and their attendance at meetings may be "...in person, via video or any other technological means".
- The Bylaws were also revised to permit no more than three members of the Board of Directors to be "...actively employed in each service of police officer, firefighter or correction officer".



"The Club with a Heart"

The Hundred Club of Connecticut  
119 Oakwood Drive  
P.O. Box 419  
Glastonbury, CT 06033

# 2020

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

**176 NEW  
MEMBERS**

**\$239,812  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
AWARDED**

**\$2,200 BIRTHDAY  
GIFTS PRESENTED**

Families of fallen heroes  
assisted since inception

**98**  
Police Officers

**137**  
Firefighters

**7**  
Correction Officers

**SPECIAL  
ASSISTANCE  
\$8,995**

**99** THANKSGIVING  
BASKETS  
DELIVERED

**53 YEARS OF  
SERVICE**