

Minutes of March 11, 2009

Next Meeting: April 8, 2009

Program: National Propane Gas Association

Location: **Salvation Army 8354 W. Foster Av. Norridge, IL 60706 (NE corner of Cumberland and Foster)**

Time: 0900

President Kushner opened the meeting at 0914 hrs.

?? Welcome to all members, new and old.

?? A motion was made, and 2<sup>nd</sup>, to accept the February Minutes. The motion passed.

?? A motion was made, and 2<sup>nd</sup>, to accept the Treasurers Report. The motion passed. A full copy of the report is available on our website.

?? Over 112 members were in attendance.

?? A moment of silence was held for all of our troops who have lost there lives in service to our country.

?? Nominations for the Harry P. Schaefer Award need to be turned in to a board member by the April Executive Board meeting, Tuesday April 7, so that we have time to select a worthy recipient. All board members e-mail addresses are on the web site.

?? We will present the Schaefer Award at the May seminar.

?? **Important reminder: The May seminar is Tuesday May 12.**

?? The Illinois Fire Inspectors Association is holding a seminar Thursday June 11, 2009 on Human Behavior in Fire. For more information go to their web site [www.illinoisfireinspectors.org](http://www.illinoisfireinspectors.org) and look under the Calendar of Events.

?? **Congratulations:** Rich Burton, a founding member of this organization and previous Secretary, was married to Jean McKee on Valentines Day. Our best wishes to Jean and Rich!

?? **More Congratulations:** The Park Ridge VFW Post 3579 awarded Mitch Kushner their Meritorious Service Award for a fire Mitch investigated in Park Ridge.

?? **Fires: Riverside** had a fire in an auto repair shop. **Lyons** also had a fire in an auto repair shop; this one however, was caught on a security camera. The camera filmed the vehicle starting on fire. **Elk Grove Village** had a fire in a grocery store. Security cameras caught the woman in the act! The woman was apprehended after police viewed more security videos of cars leaving the parking lot of the store. They then tracked down the offender. The woman had set a fire in Palatine 30 years earlier on the exact same day.

?? Don't forget to use the Property Insurance Loss Register when investigating fires. It's a good way to know if the person you are questioning has ever made a previous insurance claim due to a fire.

Our speaker was Richard M. Hansen of Richard M. Hansen & Associates, Inc. 800-319-2632 Richard is an electrical engineer and a Certified Fire Investigator. Richard gave an excellent, and detailed, presentation. It would be impossible for me to relate all of the information that Richard shared with us but I will try to give some of the highlights.

Remind the homeowners (or whomever) that we are simply trying to determine the facts. We are going to have to ask a lot of questions. Be sure to photograph the control knobs, or what's left of them, on all of the appliances. If you don't have to move the appliance, then don't; leave it for the insurance company to move. (Of course if you need to move it then go ahead.) Think of looking at an appliance as an interview. Get the history of the appliance: has it been repaired, was it operating properly, who is the original owner, do they have any of the original paperwork or manuals, where was it purchased (store or garage sale). Other questions to consider are whether or not the circuit breakers, or fuses, have been tripping lately, did the appliance have light bulbs in it and were they working or had they been burning out? For fires involving heating pads and electric blankets ask the person if they had pets. If they did, was the pet chewing on the cords or material? For clothes dryers you need to ask if the dryer had been drying the clothes properly, could the vent have been blocked by snow causing a build-up of lint? What is the person's occupation; could they have chemicals on their clothes from work? Do they smoke; could a cigarette lighter have gone through the wash?

Frequently, the kitchen is the last room in the house that a person was in before they leave the premises; what were they doing just before they left? Were they cooking, making coffee, toast? Did they light a cigarette off of a burner? (One of my cases.)

Richard also wanted to remind all of us to throw out any extension cords that have nicks or dents in them. He showed us x-rays of cords that had been caught in doors or had something heavy dropped on them; they are fires waiting to happen. Spend a couple of bucks and get a new cord.

Our thanks to Richard for taking time away from his busy schedule to speak to our organization.

Respectfully Submitted,  
John T. Gilleran  
Secretary F.I.S.F.