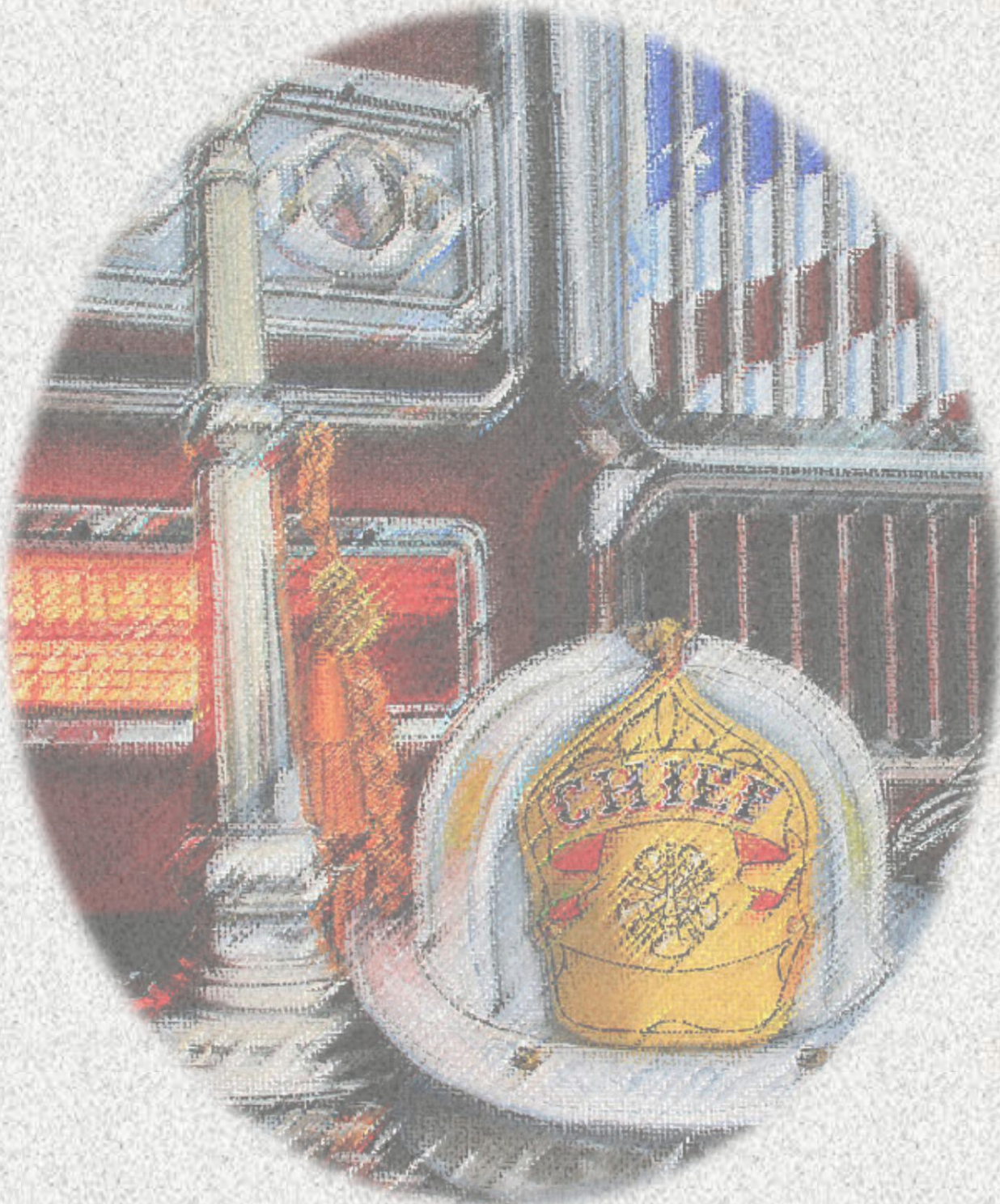
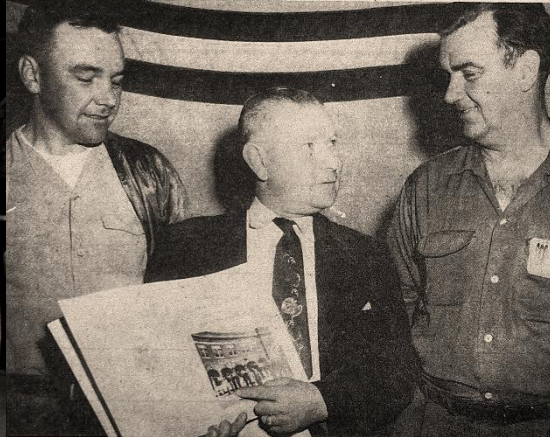


# **Chief Officers**



**Hicksville Volunteer Fire Department**





## Chief of Department



William Ferber

Chief William Ferber was born in Brooklyn but moved in time to attend High School here. He joined our Department Company 2, in 1961. He served his Company through officer positions of Lieutenant and Captain and was Assistant Chief in 1972. He has served the department in the chief positions and has now been elected as Chief of Department. Bill works for the Town of Oyster Bay as a welder. He has three children - Donna, Debra and Robert.

## Assistant Chiefs



1st Assistant Chief  
Richard Kershow



2nd Assistant Chief  
William Donlon



3rd Assistant Chief  
O'Donnell



# Chief Officers, Hicksville Volunteer Fire Department

Research and Writings by Karl M Schweitzer, 56<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief - Copyright 2024

Printed by Port Litho II LTD 2 Grant Avenue, Albertson New York 11507



## The Chief

He'll always be THE CHIEF, a name he's earned with pride,  
Even when his term is over, and he must step aside.

His rise through the ranks to this pinnacle of success.

Took years of special training... a dedication few possess.

Many are remembered who've shared his role in life, Above all,  
the "firehouse widow", his ever-Lovin' wife!

His lungs have tasted toxic fumes, his skin has felt the flame.

Aches and bruises went hand-in-hand, like thunder in the rain.

As a soldier of good Florian, our Patron Saint of old, He's  
fought his share of battles, too numerous to unfold.

Destiny makes us brothers; he'll never be alone,

What he sent into the lives of others, has come back to his own.

From those who've worked beside him, it's said with fond  
belief, May God be with him always, and he'll always be the  
CHIEF!



## Introduction

One of the biggest obstacles that I encountered in this project and any history project is where do I start. It all started with my initial research from my days as a young firefighter over 40 years ago. Back then I was able to chat with many of the older members, early contributors, and the important leaders, of which many have passed on. This project is my contribution that it is our time, our time to document the 2 percenters. Two percent of those members who stepped up to serve as leaders of the Hicksville Volunteer Fire Department. The Chief Officer.

I used the advantage of my prior research that was gathered over 30 years ago and the notes I had saved, gave me a leg up. I remember those firsthand conversations with Chief Kerbs, Borley, Weiss and my personal favorite, Walter Werthessen. It was the early 1980's that would set my passion of writing various historical projects. I had the opportunity back then to talk with many former Chiefs and older members. What helped me along the way was that I came from a firematic family, including family that served in all eight companies of this department.

I would ask them about their experiences, what they remember from their early days and what was passed down from generation to generation. I would comb through the department file cabinets that haven't been looked at in many years. Even a trip into the old apartment on the third floor and the crawlspaces above the old library. Areas that turned out to be treasure troves and would only see the light of day because of the conversations with our forefathers. The information was organized, cataloged and left it in a much better place in 1994. Since that time, the file cabinets were pilferage through, and much is long gone. However, I had the foresight to back up much of the research on floppy disks, which have become useless with today's technology.

I read through hundreds of pages of old Department, District, and Company minutes. I was lucky enough to have them made available to me back then. The Hicksville community was also lucky enough to have several local newspapers since 1910, that gave me an enormous advantage in my research. Additionally, I became interested in genealogy and that led me to using the internet, visits to local cemeteries and libraries.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize two individuals, Ex-Chief Owen Magee, an all-around keeper of history. Ex-Chief Magee was a main contributor to the local newspapers for

decades serving as the public relations conduit starting in the 1970's. Before him, there was the editor of the Mid Island Herald, Fred Noeth. Fred was a member and Ex-Captain in Emergency Company 5. He provided weekly updates of fire news during the late 1940's through the 1970's.

I realized quickly we will become part of the historical landscape, and it was my goal to leave the next generation of fire historians a place to carry on and to reflect on those who once served. Dare I say, the leaders, movers, and shakers, and yes, the two percenters.

Filling this book is a documented look back at 73 individuals who stepped up and once served as Chief Officer of the Hicksville Volunteer Fire Department.

I hope you enjoy,

Karl M Schweitzer, 56<sup>th</sup> Chief Officer.



## *In the Beginning.....*

The depression of 1844 in Hicksville slowed the development of the area until 1849 when Fredrick Heyner, in partnership with John Heitz, purchased over 1,000 acres two years after Heitz had arrived in this Country from Germany. Heitz operated a successful watchmaker business in New York City, at the time he joined Heyner. Moving to Hicksville, he increased his holdings and erected a small store. Wide streets lined with trees was part of his plan, when he and Heyner sold home plots, and as the residential area grew, the need for fire protection became necessary.

It was the summer of 1866 the first recorded event of fire to strike the community was when a thunderstorm spent its fury in the Hamlet of Hicksville. Lightning played hide and seek in many places. It struck the barn on Rohrbach's place on Broadway near the railroad station. All his smaller buildings were devastated in the fire. For many days and evenings thereafter, the formation of a fire department was discussed in Beckers Brewery, de Lanquilette General store, and the Grand Central Hotel.

Things remained at a standstill for several years until the next big event in fire history, which was an exhibition of a Babcock Fire Extinguisher in the rear of the de Lanquilette store. Present at this exhibition were many of Hicksville's prominent citizens such as, Voight, Weterau, Heitz, O'Hara, Rohrbach, McGunnigle, Duffy, Liebke, Herzog, Kluene, Christ, Hahn, Quartitus, and Freytag. As the story goes this extinguisher worked so well that it remained in place at the Grand Central Hotel until 1868 when the first fire company came into existence.

John Underhill was elected foreman with Stephan O'Hara as his assistant when the first fire company was officially organized as Protection Hook and Ladder Company One on November 1, 1868.

Shortly after its inception, Protection Hook and Ladder Company One battled a devastating fire at Wallmullers place, which leveled the building. The lack of water again proved to be the major factor in the loss. The need for better equipment became a primary concern with the continued growth of the community.

In 1876, a second company was established with the purchase of a chemical engine for power and increased capacity. Chemical Engine Company One as it was first known was organized under the leadership of Foreman John Quartitus and Conrad Wolhurst as his

assistant. Citizens Engine Company 3 was formed in 1893 with a very substantial charter list of members. Its first apparatus was an old ships pump donated by Hartmann Rohrbach and its first Foreman. In addition to Hartmann, the other officers were Robert Widmer, Henry Graf, and William Jaegle.



***Company 2 Hand Pumper (Circa 1893)***

***1<sup>st</sup> Fire House (Circa 1893) Located on William Street***





### ***Elections of Chiefs.....***

Early on, the leaders of the Hicksville Fire Department were prominent citizens and community leaders. They were landowners, businessmen, bankers, politicians, and innovators. From February of 1893 the Chiefs were elected by trustees representing Companies One through Three.

Once the Hicksville Fire District was created in 1902, the responsibility shifted to the Chief's being appointed by five elected fire commissioners. It wasn't until 1905, with the unrelentless insistence of Chief Andrew Heberer, that the Fire Commissioners created a by-law to allow Companies to vote by majority and elect a Chief and one Assistant Chief. A year later it was decided by the Board of Fire Commissioners that a position of 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief be created to help in the leadership duties.

What was noted during the research, through the 1950's many members would serve as an Assistant Chief, but not necessarily elected as Chief. Members did not always have to serve as Captain or Foreman. One of the last noted examples was Larry Huttle. Larry never served as Captain of Volunteer Hose Company 4 but was elected Assistant Chief and Chief. There was a lot of movement in these positions, due to world events, internal politics and members not staying long enough within the department.

As noted in the 1935 By-laws through the revision of 1978, the requirements to become an Assistant Chief were to have only been an active member of the Department for at least five years. By-laws between those years could not be located, nor could a rule be found noting otherwise. The requirement to be at least a Company Captain prior to serving as Assistant Chief or Chief is only seen for the first time in the 1978 By-laws.

One thing that has not changed and remains constant is that the Assistant Chief and Chief are elected for one-year terms. In 1978 a District By-law was passed that would only allow Assistant Chiefs and Chiefs to serve no more than two consecutive years.

The annual elections are now held in December and the Chief's terms begin in January and go through December. It hasn't always been that way. The Chiefs Elections were in February starting in 1893, with the election of Arnold Heitz. In 1922 the elections were changed to January and that lasted until 1957. That year, the Board approved the creation of the position of a 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief and then moved elections to April. Elections were then

changed back to nominations in September with elections in December in 1970. Two changes have been made since then and remain the process today.

In 1998, the Department revised the elections to include a primary election if more than two members were nominated for the same position. After the primary in November, members would cast their vote between two members, allowing the members to be elected by at least half of the voting members.

The most recent change came in 2017, with the requirement that members must answer 20% of all alarms and meet a set of training requirements that start with the position of Lieutenant and increase with each position that is advanced.



### *Fire Chiefs - All in the Family*

It is easy to see how firefighting runs in families, probably because when one person gets the fever, it is infectious. When one becomes a firefighter, they fall in love with the camaraderie, the excitement, and the challenges. When we get around our families or friends, they see how passionate we are about the job, and they find it attractive as well. I can see that if one family member became a firefighter, how their feelings about the experience would intrigue brothers who might take on a role as well, and thus the beginning of a new emergency service “family business.”

Many of us were literally raised in the firehouse; maybe it was a father, grandfather or an uncle, brother or brother-in-law was a fire chief. Multi-generational volunteers keep the departments rolling. It's always been a part of being Chief, leaving holiday dinners and family gatherings to help people and helping the community ... protecting property and saving lives.

As I dug deep into the research for each of the fire chiefs, I noticed that over the years there have been several notable facts.

There have been several members who served as Chief above and beyond the normal two-year term. Our longest serving Chief's were.

1. Andrew B. Heberer who spent 18 years as the Chief over two separate terms, 1895 – 1905 and 1910 – 1913. He remains the longest serving Chief in our history.
2. Christopher Moskos Sr. served 4 Years over two separate terms from 2012 - 2013 and 2022 – 2023.
3. Henry Gebhardt spent 4 Consecutive Years as Chief from 1926 – 1929.
4. Robert Chiz served 3 ½ Years over two separate terms as Chief, from 2006 - 2007 and 2018 – 2019.
5. Henry Schnepf served 3 Consecutive Years as Chief from 1919 – 1921.
6. Vincent Braun served 3 Consecutive Years as Chief from 1940 – 1943.

Other family historical facts and highlights include:

- Two Chiefs, who were Father and Son.

- Chief Edward Schluter Sr. was Chief 1913 to 1914, and his son Edward Schluter Jr. served as Chief 1952 – 1954
- William Braun was Chief 1918 to 1919, and his son Vincent Braun was Chief from 1940 to 1943.
- There was only one Grandfather and Grandson that served as Chief.
  - Walter Telender was Chief in 1962 – 1964 and his grandson, Robert Telender Jr. served 7 months as Chief in 2018.

*Note: While Robert is not recognized as a Chief, the By-laws were revised prior to him serving. The by-law now requires that Chiefs must serve at least 12 months to be considered a Chief. Robert spent six years as an Assistant Chief and 7 months as a Chief. It is also noted that in my research, there are several members who did not complete a full year as Chief. However, it was before the By-Law was changed.*

- There were two brother combinations that served as Chief.
  - Henry Schnepf was Chief in 1919 – 1921 and immediately followed by his brother August (Gus) Schnepf in 1922.
  - Patrick McGeough was Chief in 2002 – 2003 and his brother Frank McGeough served from 2014 and 2015.
- Only two Chiefs were not born in the United States.
  - Anthony Manzolillo immigrated from Italy as a child and served as Chief in 1917.
  - John “Jack” Leckie immigrated from Edinburgh, Scotland as a child and served as Chief in 1945.
- Brother-in-Laws.
  - William Mohrbach was Chief from 1915 – 1916 and his brother-in-law, Henry Schnepf was Chief in 1919 and 1921.
  - Owen Magee was Chief from 1984 – 1985 and his brother-in-law, Gerard O’Brien who served as Chief in 1988.



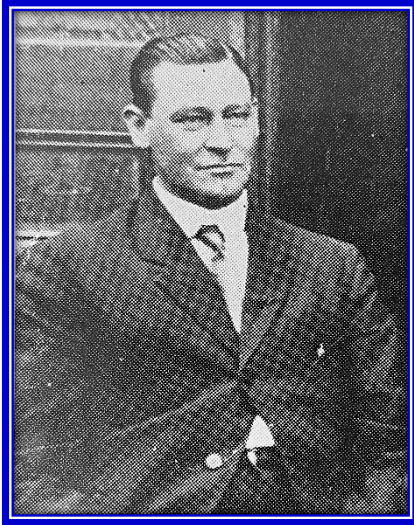
- Son-in-Laws.
  - Fred Fricke who served in 1924 was the father-in-law of Harry Borley who served as Chief in 1937 – 1939.
  - Henry Gebhardt served as Chief from 1926 – 1929 and his son-in-law(s) were Charles Saurer who served from 1959 – 1961 and Vincent Braun who served 1940 – 1943.
  - Melvin Voorhies served as Chief from 1970 – 1971 and his son-in-law was Robert Lang who served as Chief from 2008 – 2009.

	<u>Chief Officer</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>Page #</u>
1.	Arnold G. Heitz	1893 – 1894	17
2.	Henry Menge	1894 - 1895	19
3.	Andrew Heberer, Sr.	1895 - 1905	23
4.	Julius Augustin	1906	27
5.	Jacob Christ	1907 – 1908	30
6.	William Duffy	1908 – 1910	32
7.	Andrew Heberer, Sr.	1910 - 1913	35
8.	Edward R. Schluter, Sr.	1913 - 1914	37
9.	George Neder, Sr.	1914 - 1915	39
10.	William Mohrbach	1915 – 1916	42
11.	Edward Wagner	1916 - 1917	44
12.	Anthony Manzolillo	1917	45
13.	William Braun	1918 – 1919	47
14.	Henry Schnepf	1919 – 1921	50
15.	August Schnepf	1922	53
16.	Henry Kerbs	1923	54
17.	Fred Fricke, Sr.	1924	56
18.	Charles Schaefer	1925	58
19.	Henry Gebhardt	1926 - 1929	61
20.	Jacob Karman	1930	65
21.	John Puvogel	1931 – 1932	68
22.	Henry Gleckler	1933 – 1934	72
23.	Valentine Kerbs	1935	75
24.	Henry Luhmann	1936	78
25.	Harry “Roxy” Borley	1937 – 1939	80
26.	Charles Steinhauer	1939 – 1940	84
27.	Vincent Braun, Sr.	1940 – 1943	86
28.	George Engel	1943 – 1944	91
29.	John Leckie	1945	94
30.	Edward Mack	1945 - 1946	98
31.	George Kunz	1947 – 1948	99
32.	Fred Masters, Sr.	1948 - 1949	101
33.	Daniel Munch	1949 – 1950	103
34.	Stanford “Sam” Weiss	1950 – 1952	105



	<u>Chief Officer</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>Page #</u>
35.	Edward R. Schluter, Jr.	1952 – 1954	109
36.	Arnold Jeanson	1954 - 1955	112
37.	Lawrence Huttie	1955 – 1957	114
38.	Bernard Medard Ofenloch	1957 – 1959	118
39.	Charles F. Saurer	1959 – 1961	123
40.	Walter Werthessen	1961	127
41.	Walter Telender	1962 – 1964	130
42.	John Specht	1964 – 1966	134
43.	Gus Cotsonas	1966 - 1968	138
44.	Clifford G. Davis	1968 – 1970	141
45.	Melvin Voorhies	1970 – 1971	146
46.	Louis "Red" Mertz	1972 – 1973	149
47.	Mario Misturini	1974 – 1975	154
48.	Roy Schaaf	1976 – 1977	158
49.	William Ferber	1978 – 1979	163
50.	Richard Kershow, Jr.	1980 – 1981	168
51.	William Donlon, Jr.	1982 - 1983	171
52.	Owen W. Magee	1984 – 1985	174
53.	William Schuckmann	1986 - 1987	180
54.	Gerard O'Brien	1988	186
55.	Terrence P. Farrell	1989	192
56.	Anthony Wigdzinski	1990 – 1991	197
57.	Patrick Scanlon	1992 - 1993	205
58.	Albert Merk	1994 – 1995	210
59.	Karl M. Schweitzer	1996 - 1997	213
60.	Philip J. LaNasa	1998 - 1999	225
61.	William E. Thunell	2000 - 2001	232
62.	Patrick J. McGeough	2002 – 2003	237
63.	Steven Doucette	2004 – 2005	242
64.	Robert Chiz	2006 – 2007	250
65.	Robert Lang	2008 – 2009	259
66.	Edward Korona, Jr.	2010 – 2011	262
67.	Christopher J. Moskos	2012 – 2013	269
68.	Frank McGeough	2014 – 2015	272

	<u>Chief Officer</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>Page #</u>
69.	Richard Diaz	2016 – 2017	275
70.	Robert Telender Jr.	2018	280
71.	Robert Chiz	2018 – 2019	283
72.	Gary Lewis	2020 – 2021	289
73.	Christopher J. Moskos	2022 – 2023	293



***Served 11 Months***

Arnold G. Heitz was born in Manhattan on September 15, 1870. He is the son of German immigrant, John Frederick, and Jane Heitz. He married Hermie Angelia Tewes on December 21, 1892. He owned a jewelry shop in Manhattan, a watch maker by trade, that he learned from his father. Arnold was also one of largest landowners in Hicksville.

His residence was recorded as 8 Broadway, Hicksville and was very active in community affairs and protecting homes and businesses as a focus. While fire protection was haphazardly organized prior to 1868, there were two individual companies providing the service. Protection Hook and Ladder Company One with a wagon of ladders and buckets built by the local blacksmith and truck builder, Jacob Christ. The ladder truck had many buckets suspended from it and was decorated in red and gold, while the brass work was all shining. The wagon would be hitched to a team of the best horses in the village and driven by deLanguillette.

The other wagon was Chemical Engine Company 1 and Arnold was not only a member, but their Foreman from 1886 through 1890.

Chief Heitz secured property from Mr. deLanguillette and allowed the firemen to build a small place on his land to house the Chemical Steamer. It had a hip roof, and a little tower finished with a flagpole. The manager of the Corbert estate was so thankful for the good work of the firemen a short time before that he donated a bell for the tower.

In 1892, the Chemical Engine Company One was chartered prior to the department and Arnold was elected its Foreman to help them get the start they needed. They would later become Independent Engine & Hose Company 2.

The earliest reports made note that John Kallert almost dropped dead after swinging the hammer against the split 3-foot section of railroad ring that was used to alert firemen of a major conflagration.



In February of 1893 a joint meeting of Fire Companies at the Grand Central Hotel was called for the purpose of organizing a fire department and electing a Fire Chief. The meeting was called to order by Frank Mars and Julius Purick, however, this meeting was protested by Hook and Ladder Company One as they felt this important issue was being rushed and railroaded down their throats. Company One was in favor of joining the three Fire Companies but would not elect a Chief or Assistant Chief and decided to withdraw on that issue.

The vote went forward anyway, and four members were appointed election tellers John Reinhardt, Fred Becker, Robert Wider, and Fred Gleckler to proceed in the elections of a Chief and an Assistant Chief. The following men were nominated for chief: Arnold G. Heitz, and Henry Graf; Assistant Chief: Harry Nicholas, and John Monsburg with the following results: Heitz received 32 votes, and Graf 19. Arnold G. Heitz was duly elected as the first Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department. Chief Heitz's Assistant was Harry Nicholas who received 34 votes, while John Monsburg won 16 of the votes with Henry Graf placing third with two votes.

In June of 1893, Chief Heitz and the members tackled their first major fire at the residence of Henry Graf and M. A Lauck. At 11:40AM firemen worked under great disadvantages, the principal one being the scarcity of water. The engines had to be removed from one cistern to another more than a half dozen times. Seven cisterns were emptied before the fire was under control. The flames had taken full advantage of the second floor and were shooting out of the roof. It was found that it would be useless to save the building and to protect the primary residences.

A meeting of Protection Hook and Ladder Company One was held and the question that was tabled to consolidate all the Companies was voted unanimously to pass a resolution, and they got behind Chief Heitz, who was present at the meeting. Chief Heitz thanked the Company and made a few appropriate remarks when all the companies were united.

The next order of business at this meeting was to appoint a committee to draft a set of by-laws to govern the operations of the department. Chief Heitz appointed five members from each company to investigate and write the by-laws.

During his term while on the way to a store fire in Jericho in 1893, the wagon which was being pulled by a team of horses broke its axle causing nearly all the members who were seated to be thrown. Two of them received broken legs, August Peters, and Nicholas Schmitt.

On July 20, 1893, twelve carpenters were injured when the timbers collapsed at the building they were working on. The firm of Alart and McGuire Pickle Factory had workers in the west of the building, when without any cause the timbers collapsed, and the men fell fifty feet into the cellar. The men were initially cared for by Chief Heitz and his men before local doctors could be rounded up. The men were all later cared for at their homes.

In January of 1894, Chief Heitz relinquished his position to Assistant Chief and good friend, Civil War Veteran, Henry Menge.

Arnold was a member of the Primrose Lodge I.O.O.F Pioneer Lodge 569 and he was Noble Grand Master in 1893. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows fraternity was one of the largest charitable organizations in the world.

In 1897, Arnold incorporated the family cemetery, that was doing business as The Heitz Cemetery at Hicksville. The cemetery was established by Arnold's father Fred in 1840 and it would become the Plain Lawn Cemetery Association. He remained on as its President with Board members; Charles Voigt, Andrew Heberer, Edgard Jackson and Daniel Sutter. The cemetery remains functional today and is located on Old Country Road. Many of the Chiefs listed in this history are interred along with many prominent village residents.

It was a sad event on April 22, 1903, when Arnold's wife, Hermine unexpectedly died of a stomach illness at the age of 28. She left Arnold with three children under the age of 8. The tragedy would set in motion the unexpected move somewhere between 1909 and 1910, when Arnold moved his family to Middletown, New York, where he purchased several hundred acres of farmland, and became a dairy farmer and remarried.

Chief Arnold G Heitz passed away on June 13, 1942, in Montgomery, New York. He is interred at what was once known as the Heitz Cemetery and now known as Plain Lawn Cemetery, in Hicksville, New York.

## Henry Friedrich Menge (1894 – 1895)



***Served 1 Year***

Henrich “Henry” Menge was born in Germany on March 31, 1848, and was the son of Henrich and Anna Menge. At the age of 4, he immigrated to the United States on July 31, 1852, with his parents to New York City. He married Joanna Louise in 1869. He left behind his Brooklyn butcher shop to become proprietor of the Grand Central Hotel in Hicksville. He would later become a silver beater like his brother-in-law, Henry Louise.

Henry and Joanna lived at a home on John Street, of which maps today show that the home still stands at the corner of West John Street and William Street, near the corner of Newbridge Road.

When the Civil War erupted, Henry was a boy of thirteen. Only three years later, however, he seized an opportunity to ease his mother's financial burden. Governor Seymour immediately dispatched 3,000 men in existing National Guard regiments. Henry joined Company H 84; New York Militia Infantry, a Brooklyn-based regiment led by Col. Frederick A. Conkling. Young Menge likely had to misstate his age to enlist. He also spent time with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Battery 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Union Army and when his time was up, Private Menge and his comrades returned to Brooklyn. Henry Menge also took an active role in the *Grand Army of the Republic*, there were 410,000 members at its peak fraternal organization that advocated on behalf of Union veterans of the Civil War. It lobbied for the establishment of pensions for war veterans, and it promoted fair treatment of veterans by society including their being allowed to vote if they happened to be black.

In 1894, when Henry was serving as Foreman of Protection Hook and Ladder Company One, he stepped down as Foreman as required by the By-laws. The by-law required Henry to resign from the Company to serve as Chief.

Chief Henry took pride in keeping the members in a state of readiness. During his two years, Henry would hold unannounced alarms to test the response of his members and their apparatus. Each time, he held his standard to a 5-minute response which was met each time

to his satisfaction. He would purposely light barrels and boxes on fire prior to sounding the alarm to make sure the response was safe and necessary.

In August of 1894, the department was rocked with scandal, Ernest Digby, an Assistant Foreman in Company 1 and agent for the Long Island Railroad disappeared. He left his wife and young daughter with less than \$500 dollars. The 38-year-old was popular because of his prominence and hard work in charitable affairs. He was by personal endeavor a part of the successful benefit that helped raise funds for the widow of recently deceased Foreman, Joseph Soffel. Chief Menge recognized that the money raised disappeared with him and Digby was never found.

The February 1895 meeting of the Hicksville Fire Department at Becker's Hall proved to be a lively meeting when Chief Menge laid the matter of insubordination of Foreman Fred Kloenne of Hook and Ladder Company One. There was a grievance brought forward that the said foreman disobeyed the Chief's order to bring out his company for drill on Thanksgiving Day. The Grievance Committee having reviewed the matter, reported it was accepted as read. An ensuing heated argument from all sides immediately erupted and finally the matter was laid on the table. As a result of the argument, Chief Menge created a new committee to revise the by-laws and appointed members. In addition, Ex-Chief Arnold Heitz brought up a lengthy resolution to appoint a committee to investigate the mismanagement of Company 2. The members that were named to be on the committee refused to serve and the resolution was put before the members and not passed.

In 1918 on Memorial Day, the village of Hicksville held a parade and marched to the Triangle, where three oak trees, one for each man lost, were planted. Chief Menge personally planted one of them. Five weeks later, on Independence Day, the village had a large celebration for its returning veterans, and it then dedicated the commemorative boulder which bears the names of those who served in that war. That boulder now sits at the Hicksville Middle School on Jerusalem Avenue. Henry Menge and Louis Meyer, Hicksville's last surviving Civil War veterans, shared a place of honor in the parade that day, riding in an automobile, together holding up an American flag. Three of his friends and community members Joseph Barry, Walter Wheeler and Charles Wagner were all killed in action during World War I and did not return home.

Henry was part of the 1902 and 1908 Parade Committee for the Southern New York Firemen's Association Convention's Executive Committee. The work of the convention was



held at the Grand Central Hotel on Broadway. All along the line of march on Broadway the stores and residences have been gayly and plentifully decorated with a profusion of colors and the delegates and visiting companies were given a hearty sendoff. Out of the most conspicuous men of the day was the Grand Marshal Henry Puvogel mounted on a prancing charger, the envy and admiration.

Henry was a Republican Leader for the Henry L. Bacon Club based in Hicksville.

Chief Menge passed away on August 8, 1925, and was interred at Cypress Hills National Cemetery, Section 2, Plot 9430 in Brooklyn, New York. The cemetery was chosen by his family to be with his brethren soldiers of the Civil War. He is interred within the three acres that were set aside for the burial of Civil War dead in what became known as Union Grounds.



***Served 10 Years***

Andrew Heberer was born July 12, 1865, in Fosters Meadow (which is now Elmont, Queens, and was the son of Kasper and Elizabeth Heberer. He was first married to Elizabeth Herbst in 1887, and she died at the early age of 41, on May 10, 1905. Andrew went on to marry Florence Pledger on November 15, 1905. He lived at 11 Broadway and then on Old Country Road.

He joined as a member of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1. He was Foreman of the Company from 1887 through 1894 when he was elected to serve as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fire Chief. His Assistant Chief changed a few times during his tenure. There was August Hauser, Fred Becker, Frank O'Brien, William Duffy and Julius Augustin.

In late August of 1895, Chief Heberer was awoken by rattling windows, and the chandelier wobbling, and he immediately called for the members to assemble. Residents took to the streets looking for answers as to what was going on. It would later be reported that an earthquake struck the Atlantic coast from around Delaware. The ground shake only lasted around 10 seconds but stirred the residents about the village. Chief Heberer kept his members milling around the village to make sure there were no fires.

The fires during Chief Heberer's term included a fire at Emil Kerbs butcher shop and dwelling, that was saved with limited damage. A fire at William Fitzpatrick's dwelling, Henry Graf's silver leaf shop and dwelling, Peter Lath's barn which was a total loss; James Murphy, dwelling was saved with small loss; Frank Amori's dwelling, Joseph Schwarzenberger's dwelling were completely lost, but barns and outbuildings were saved. At the latter fire, the fire had gotten much of a headway before the alarm was given. The steamer and the hook and ladder truck both operated excellently and remained in service during the entire fire.

A fire at William Fitzpatrick's property in Jericho, the residents narrowly escaped from being burned out of their home. A water pipe became frozen after the workmen wrapped paper around it, which started the fire. The result was that the floor caught fire, and the flames

spread very rapidly. The Hicksville Fire Department was telephoned and soon had the fire under control.

The home of Postmaster William Duryea of Plainview suffered a total loss of all his outlying buildings, barn, carriage house and corn house. His horses, hogs and farming implements were all lost in the blaze. The department under Chief Heberer's direction was able to save his main residence and the post office. Two firemen were removed from the scene due to heat and smoke exposure.

At a special fire department meeting, a resolution was adopted authorizing Chief Heberer to appoint a committee of three men from each company to see what the firemen were willing to do in the matter of disbanding. The joint committee was to confer with the trustees and have them call another meeting of the taxpayers, to give them a chance to vote again on the \$500 appropriation or a smaller amount. The issue at hand was to see if the department can do with less funding. Chief Heberer appointed August Hauser, Frank Marrs and Frederick Herzog, from Protection Hook and Ladder Company No. 1; Henry Rohrbach, Frederick Peters, and Louis Munch, from Independent Engine Company No. 2; and Hartmann Rohrbach, William Jaegle, and Ernest Lebkie from Citizens' Engine Company No. 3. The residents wanted nothing to do with the fire department and as a reaction to their attempts to disband the department, Chief Heberer gave the village 30 days to come to their senses or they would suspend operations and refused to attend any fires. To ensure the residents knew he was serious, he had the hammer to the fire gong removed so no alarm could be sounded.

In October a pan of fat caught fire in Albert Kramer's bakery and only two neighbors prevented the total destruction of the building. The direct result was due to no residents willing to participate in manning the fire equipment. It took less than a week when the members of the three fire companies were so disgusted that they could not muster enough to response. It would be several months later, the residents finally approved \$200 for the department to get the right equipment. It was Hartmann Rohrbach who would service the steamer engine and Chief Heberer to get things rolling again.

In October of 1897, Chief Heberer ordered Independent Engine Company No. 2, to have Hartmann Rohrbach overhaul their engine and put it in good order. When Mr. Rohrbach was through with the engine it was in as good a condition as it ever was and then Chief Heberer asked that it should be cared for so that it will never get in such poor condition.

On October 17, 1901, a fire at the large kraut and pickle factory of the H. J. Heinz Company began around 8PM when a lamp exploded in the engine room. The engine room was semi fire-proof, and the doors were immediately closed. The Fire Department quickly responded and caught the fire just as it was getting through the roof and within five minutes had it under control. The damage was estimated at about \$500. The factory was running both night and day and if it had burned down many Hicksville people would have been without work.

A meeting held at the Grand Central Hotel on September 12, 1902, after the Town of Oyster Bay granted permission for the creation of a Fire District. Chief Heberer led the effort for almost a year and when the fire district was finally created there were three fire companies. Protection Hook and Ladder Company No 1, led by Foreman August Peters, Independent Engine Company No. 2, led by Fred Peters, and Citizens Engine Company No. 3, led by Frederick Schwartzenberger. They all agreed and signed an agreement to turn over all their property to the district. The property was valued at about \$5,000. In addition to these three companies, there were two juvenile companies, and they do excellent work in getting out in quick time and are training for active work in the larger companies later. Apparatus was stored on Hartmann Rohrbach's property.

During his term the department held its first Parade and Convention. Hicksville played host to the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern New York Volunteer Firemen's Association Convention in October of 1902. The parade was led by Grand Marshall Henry Puvogel who led the parade on horseback starting at John Street and Broadway and looped around ending at the Grand Central Hotel. Chief Heberer and his Assistant Chief Frederick Becker were followed by the Company Foremen; Frederick and August Peters and Joseph Schwartzenberger.

In 1902, Chief Heberer relied on a contract with a water company, who owned the water supply through mains, pipes and hydrants. During his term the village moved away from cisterns to 55 hydrants supplied by the Nassau County Water Company.

In January 1904, Volunteer Hose Company 4 was approved by the Board to organize and was overseen by Chief Heberer. The Board would contract for a new hose cart to be used by Company 4 and the new Company was limited to 25 new members. E.R Day was elected Foreman with Adam Dauch and Frank Brown was elected as his Assistant Foremen.

On November 8, 1905, there was a fire at the Hartmeier cottage on Nicholai Street. The fire was outside the fire hydrant limits and they could do nothing about the lack of water. The cottage was occupied by Jacob Kellner and family. They had barely enough time to exit the cottage with just the clothes on their backs.

Property for a new firehouse was purchased from Fred Herzog for \$375. The property was located on Mary Street, next to the Long Island Railroad tracks. After working on procuring the property for over 10 years, Chief Heberer was able to secure a proposition to erect a firehouse for its members. The Town of Oyster Bay made the resolution to the people of Hicksville. There was opposition between the firefighters and the taxpayers over the proposed \$6,000 expense. Chief Heberer had his members rode throughout the village to muster up support. When the polls were closed, and the tally was made 103 voters of a possible 108 came out and voted. Sixty residents voted in favor while 42 people voted against the proposition. On November 1, 1904, the cornerstone was laid and placed into position by Ernest Liebke, one of the oldest firemen on Long Island. At the age of 85, Ernest was still an active fireman and was serving as Commissioner.

In May of 1905, Andrew's wife, Elizabeth passed away and he was devastated. He would graciously step aside to allow his 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief Julius Augustin to take the reins with John Puvogel going on to serve as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief.

Prior to entering politics, Andrew owned and operated his own grocery store in Hicksville. He succeeded Charles Stoll as the Justice of the Peace in Hicksville in 1925. He was a member of the Board of Education, Charter member of the Bank of Hicksville, Director and past president of the Plain Lawn Cemetery and a member and District Deputy Grand Marshall of the Odd Fellows. Andrew Heberer was a prominent member of the Robert L. Bacon Republican Club and served as its leader. He served as the Chaplin for Nassau County Jail and the Jones Institute. He was an ordained minister at the Hicksville Methodist Church and taught Sunday School.

At the age of 69, Chief Heberer suffered a fatal heart attack while driving home on February 5, 1935, and he is interred at the Bethpage United Methodist Cemetery in Bethpage.



## **4** Julius William Augustin (1906)



***Served 1 Year***

Julius Augustin was born on October 5, 1879, in Queens and was the son of Julius and Louisa (Freytag) Augustin. He lived in a large home on Broadway. The homestead was taken down in 1984 to make way for Delco Plaza. His father, Julius Sr. passed away when he was only 7 years old, leaving his mother to raise him.

In the 1870's, Julius Augustin started a grocery and general mercantile business in the late William Freytag store building on Broadway. He conducted this very successful business up to 1890, when he sold it to Henry F. Huettnner. He continued to manage the furniture business and coal yard. Julius married Helen Bacon in August of 1904 and three years later she passed away in 1907 at the age of 25.

Julius was an Assistant Chief from 1904 – 1905 and it was in 1905 when Chief Heberer stepped aside following the death of his wife. When Julius was appointed to fill the term from October through December. He would go on to be elected to his own term as the 4<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief in 1906. His 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief was John Puvogel, and it was also decided by the Board of Fire Commissioners that a position of 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief be created to help in the leadership duties. Charles Henry Huettnner from Company 4 was appointed.

During his term, Chief Augustin battled a blaze involving several buses of the People's Bus Line. After the buses were getting a supply of gas in front of the Hicksville Garage on Jerusalem Avenue, suddenly the buses burst into flames. If it were not for the prompt arrival of the Hicksville Fire Department with their chemical apparatus it would have been a total loss. It was noted during the investigation that Mr. Lauck, the owner of the bus company, after measuring out 6 gallons of gas was asked to put another 5 gallons into a tank. As he put in the sixth gallon, some of the gas overflowed the tank and flames suddenly burst forth between the tank and the engine. After trying to fight the fire alone, Mr. Lauck finally telephoned the alarm to be sounded. At the time of supplying gas, the motor was not running, so the blame was placed on an overheated motor and defective wiring.

It was on Decoration Day, May 30, 1906, under the direction of Chief Augustin, the Hicksville Fire Department entered their new home. The new firehouse cost \$6,000. It was described in the local paper that *“it was like a wandering spirit which has become tired of its journeys, it fluttered into its new quarters, as if half afraid to enter but as the machines found their way into position, there was quite an amount of satisfaction expressed at the change”*.

There has been a universal demand for years for a new engine or fire house in Hicksville, there were many comments both pro and con. The opening of the fire house settled all the debates by residents. Hicksville had a firehouse that favorably compared with any on Long Island. The building was 40 feet square, two stories high, with an extension of 15 feet by 24 feet, which is occupied with a janitor's quarters. The ground floor is made of cement and had lockers, toilets, and washroom for the firemen. The height of the first floor was 12 feet with a second floor that had a large assembly room. The room was 40 feet square, 17 feet in height, with a dome in the center. In the center of the room between four dome posts was an oak table, surrounded with eight leather-backed chairs and twenty-six polished chairs for the members who attend meetings. Off to the north end was a sliding pole to the lower story to assist in quick call of firemen who may be present at meetings.

In November of 1906, John Puvogel resigned as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief, and it was decided to wait for new elections to appoint a new Assistant Chief. The following month, the Board of Fire Commissioners dropped their role of appointing a Chief each year, allowing the members to choose their candidates. The Board retained their right to approve the appointments. After the Steamer was found in disrepair, Chief Augustin had local machinist and Swedish immigrant Carl Karlson overhaul the unit. In December of 1906, the Steamer was tested and found in perfect working condition.

At the election for 1907 there were some members in the department that were disappointed with Chief Augustin. At the election Chief Augustin was nominated for Chief from Company 3 and 4. However, Company 1 and 2 nominated Jacob Christ. With the snowy weather, voter turnout was low. After 65 votes were cast, Jacob Christ received 36 votes, while Chief Augustin only 29.

When Chief Augustin's wife Louisa died in 1907, he was left a widower with a one-year-old daughter. He would leave Hicksville for Washington State. He left his daughter to be raised by his mother Helen and his Aunt Lou in 1911. Chief Augustin would remarry Dorothy Hill.

Chief Augustin passed away on January 19, 1953, in Spokane Washington and he was brought back home to Hicksville and is interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery.



*The First Hicksville Firehouse on Mary Street – Cost \$6,000. Still stands today across from existing Headquarters on what is now known as East Marie Street or Gebhardt Plaza)*



***Served 1 Year***

Jacob Christ was born December 7, 1859, in Queens, New York and is the son of David and Catherine Christ. He lived at 7 Mary Street (now East Marie Street.)

Jacob married Mathilde Oberfeld in April of 1884, and they held two residences, one on Jerusalem Avenue and Herzog Place and in New York City located at 317 West Thirteenth Street. He was a Blacksmith and Truck Builder, a trade he learned from his father and his grandfather. He built some of the first fire apparatus in Hicksville on Long Island.

Jacob joined as a member of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 before the department was organized in 1880.

In 1880, Jacob and his dad had taken part in a celebration that was recorded as "the grandest affair" that anyone had seen in Hicksville. The community took possession of a ladder truck that had many buckets suspended from it and it was decorated in red and gold, while the brass work was all shining, and it was hitched by a team of horses. It was their creation that was being celebrated when the truck was driven on Broadway several times, between Mr. Hahn's store in the north and to Limberg's corner in the south. There were toasts to the little apparatus at every corner and none were of sparkling water, since prohibition wasn't in power then.

Jacob was elected as the 5<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief after a contentious election in December and sworn into office in January of 1907. His 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief was William Duffy, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief was Edward Wagner. At the fire house the department held its monthly meeting, and it was several hours before the new officers were seated in their respective offices. The meeting was presided over by the former Chief Julius Augustin, to turn over the reins, when Fredrick Schwarzenberger, Chairman of the board of election inspectors handed in his report of the election. When the report was examined, it was found to be incorrect. The inspectors had taken it upon themselves to entertain the protest of Christian Brengel who claimed to have been elected treasurer of the department over Dr. Adolph G. Rave. Brengel claimed that the doctor had not served sufficient time in the department to be eligible to the office. The report caused a general uproar, and everyone wanted to talk at the same time. The

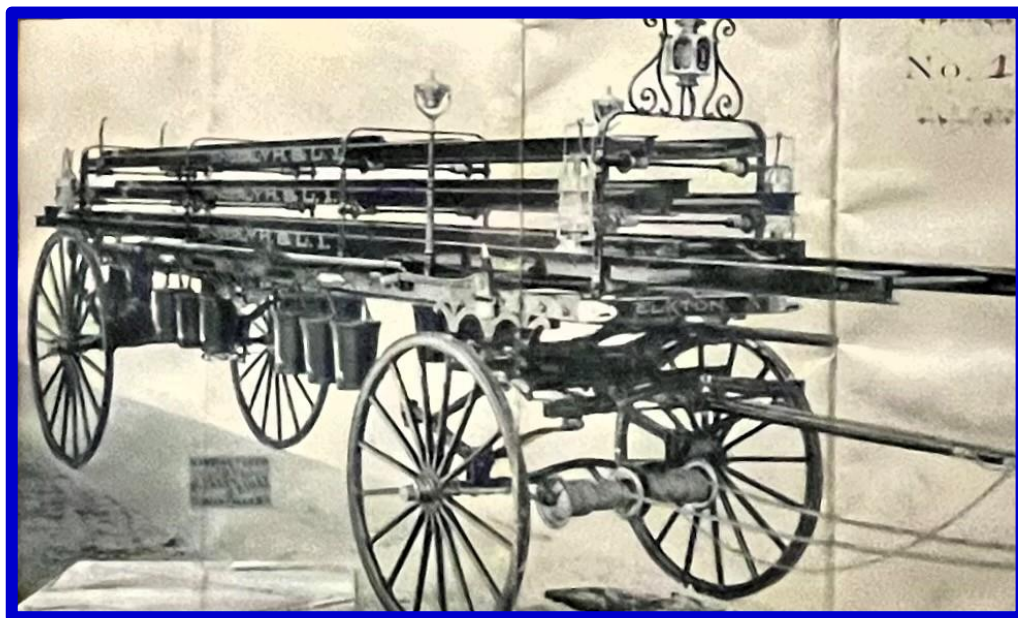


matter was discussed for some time and finally the inspectors were requested to retire and bring in a proper report. They entered the side room and soon returned with a report that did not differ materially from the first and there was more talk, and they were sent out again but without any result. Finally, a recess was declared. The inspectors re-canvassed the vote and brought in a report of the votes cast which showed that Jacob Christ had been elected chief; William Duffy, first assistant chief and Edward Wagner, second assistant chief. They were declared elected by the chair and took their seats.

There was an unfortunate turn of events in his term. At the funeral of Hartmann Rohrbach, Christen Brengel was suspended for a year after he came very close to a fight with Chief Christ at the cemetery.

He was a member of Herte Lodge, F.&A.M Manetto Lodge being one of the charter members. He was also a member of the Hicksville Civic Club and an active member of the Royal Arcanum. He held office in the German Lutheran Church and served as Superintendent of the Sunday School, Deacon and Trustee at various times. Jacob was President of the German Lutheran Aid Society, which had done much for the German Lutheran Trinity Church that was organized on June 7, 1885.

Chief Jacob Christ passed away on November 2, 1924, and is interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery, in Hicksville.

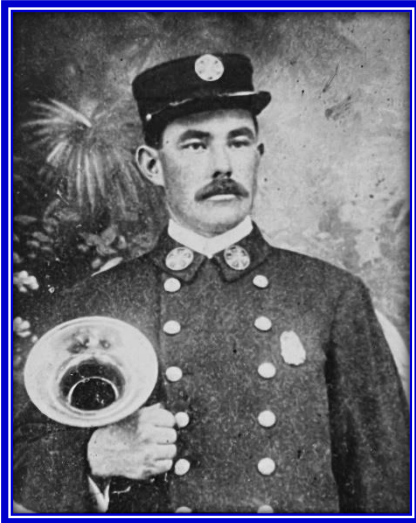


*First Ladder Truck Built by David and Jacob Christ before Jacob was elected Chief*



## 6

### William John Duffy (1908 – 1909)



***Served 2 Years***

William Duffy was born on December 20, 1882, the son of Edward and Elizabeth (Mollitor) Duffy in Hicksville. The Duffy family was already well established in Hicksville, and they had their home at 205 Duffy's Lane. The homestead is still the home of his family, generations later. He married Mary Loretta Mollitor.

William joined as a Charter member of Independent Engine Company 2 and served as their Captain in 1903. In 1902, when the department hosted the Southern New York Firemen's Association Parade, Tournament and Convention, in Hicksville, he was 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief and served on the Executive Committee.

During the department election in 1908, the members would elect Arnold Heitz as Chief with Henry Renne as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant and Louis Munch as 2nd Assistant. However, Arnold Heitz would decline the position, and the department requested and was granted a new election. On February 14, 1908, William Duffy was elected and confirmed as the new Chief. Additionally, during the canvassing of votes, Adam Dauch was then elected 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant with Frank McCormack as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chiefs. William was appointed as the 6<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief by the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Fire destroyed the carriage factory of the Benjamin Abrams Carriage Company, and for a time it was feared that the entire Village would be wiped out by the flames. The fire started in the blacksmith shop of the factory, and it was burning for some time before being discovered.

On September 28, 1908, the fire department responded to the home of Fred Hubschman to fight a fire. On arrival, they found no water in the cisterns and could only stand by and watch the fire burn the house, barn, and other outbuildings. Fred's wife was in the parlor on the first floor when she saw smoke and called in the alarm before getting her three small children out of the home. Fred's brother Steven entered the second floor of the home to rescue his brother Fred who was asleep. Steven had difficulty reaching his brother through

the intense heat but was able to rouse him. As they exited the home, the whole house was on fire.

On October 1, 1908, the village experienced its largest fire in its history, when the large pickle and kraut factory of Alart & McGuire was destroyed. The building spanned over an acre and had forty tons of pickles and sauerkraut ready for barreling that all burned in the blaze. Chief Christ and the men responded and were able to get two streams of water on the blaze, but that failed to do much good. Firemen were able to save the equipment room and a loaded freight car. When the fire was reported, the firemen didn't hear the phone as the carousel out front was too loud. The loss of the building was estimated at over \$50,000 and employed many people. The total loss devastated the building, and it would not be rebuilt, and many were put out of work. It was at this fire that the hose cart operated by Volunteer Hose Company 4 was rendered inoperable and later sold by Chapman Auctions for \$250.

During his term, Chief William Duffy compiled a history of the department, and it was printed and sold to get sufficient funds to meet expenses to host a tournament and convention. Hicksville played host to the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern New York Volunteer Firemen's Association Convention on October 20 - 22, 1908. The parade was led by Grand Marshall John Puvogel, followed by the 22nd Regiment of the New York National Guard, commanded by Col. Munson Morris. The fairgrounds were Broadway, between Carl and Cherry Streets, where the Tournament was held.

In May of 1909, the Steamer maintained by Citizens Engine Company 3 was sold to Mr. Schwartz for \$300 to make room for a new updated model from the Hose Carriage Company of Flushing, New York. The cost was \$600.

Ex-Chief Duffy was elected Fire Commissioner 1911 through 1921, serving 10 Years and serving as Chairman in 1916 and 1920.

William was the President of the Long Island National Bank of Hicksville, from 1927 until the time of his passing in 1952. He owned the Nassau Seed Company on Newbridge Road. He was active in politics and was a Zone Leader. In 1949 when there was strife in the party they ousted the current leader.

He was a 4<sup>th</sup> Degree member of Joseph Barry Council and Mercier Assembly, Knights of Columbus. He was also a Trustee for the St Ignatius Catholic Church.

He served on the Hicksville Public School as a member of the Board for 15 years and he was appointed by Governor Dewey to the Board at Pilgrim's State Hospital in Brentwood.

Chief William Duffy passed away at the age of 69 on November 16, 1951, and is interred at the Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury.

***Served 3 Years***

Andrew Heberer was born on July 12, 1865, and was the son of Kasper and Elizabeth (Grimm) Heberer. He resided at 231 Broadway and Old Country Road. He would marry Elizabeth Herbst in 1887. She passed away in 1905 and he married Florence Pledger in 1905.

This is the second time that Andrew Heberer served as Chief. He joined as a member of Protection Hook and Ladder Co.# 1. He was Foreman of the Company from 1887 through 1894 when he served his first term as Chief in 1895 through 1905. This time around his Assistant Chiefs were Carl Karlson and Albert Miller and Edward Schluter Sr.. He is the only member to serve multiple terms and years.

He served as a Judge and Justice of the Peace in Hicksville, serving out of the local Courthouse (now the Gregory Museum) on Heitz Place. He became interested in politics at an early age and was a member and leader with the Robert L. Bacon Republican Club. He served the Oyster Bay Town Board and was the Chaplain of Nassau County Jail for over 20 years and for the Jones Institute. He was a founding member of the Bank of Hicksville, where he served on its Board of Directors.

As a member and Past President of the Hicksville Board of Education he was instrumental in the construction of what is now the Middle School. He was a Director and Past President of Plain Lawn Cemetery and an Odd Fellow for over 42 years. He was also a Mason Thirty-second Degree and President of Methodist Sunday School.

During his term, Chief Heberer was saddened to learn of the passing of former Commissioner Henry Puvogel. He was a resident of Hicksville for over 65 years and retired from business. He was a native of Germany and owned a farm. He conducted a hotel business in the city and was at one time proprietor of a livery stable on Fourth Avenue opposite Madison Square Garden.

In January of 1911, Citizens Engine Company 3 was disbanded by the Board of Fire Commissioners and supported by Chief Heberer. Some of the members were transferred to Company 1 and 2.

On February 7, 1912, several of the ladies of the village wishing to be of some assistance to the firemen, met and organized into the Ladies Auxiliary of the Fire Department. Under their first president, Hanna Weiss, they grew quickly with Chief Heberer's assistance. They have grown in strength and have continuously provided great assistance. The membership provided homemade refreshments during dinners and other affairs.

At the age of 69, Chief Heberer suffered a fatal heart attack while driving home on February 5, 1935, and he is interred at the Bethpage United Methodist Cemetery in Bethpage



***Served 2 Years***

Edward Schluter was born on February 24, 1883, in Elmont, N.Y. He was the son of Henry and Catherine (Zonnerman) Schluter. He lived at 16 Old Country Road in Hicksville and married Lillian Marie Puvogel in July of 1914. They had a home at 20 Raymond Street, and he was a farmer and General Contractor.

Edward joined as a member of Independent Engine and Hose Company 2. Edward was elected to serve as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1911 and 1912 without serving as a Foreman or Captain. The Department wanted a change in leadership and on December 9, 1912, the election of officers at the annual meeting of the Fire Department was declared illegal by the Board of Fire Commissioners.

The Commissioners ordered another election. There was much controversy and the Schluter ticket won out by a small margin and Edward Wagner who was elected at the first meeting was defeated by one vote. The vote was as follows: for Chief Edward Schluter, 25; Edward Wagner, 24. For 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief Joseph Ofenloch, 28; August Schnepf, 22. For 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief A.J Connery was unanimously elected.

Chief Schluter asked the Board to purchase a new hose wagon in May of 1913. The U.S. Fire Apparatus provided specifications and details (standard pattern.) The wagon was delivered in November and cost \$675.

A fire at Sebastian Wuchter's bakery on Broadway was caught just in time after it started in a sleeping room. When the fire was discovered, the upper floor was in flames and the entire floor was consumed by fire. The firemen responded very quickly and in short time had the fire extinguished. One of the bakers had a watch in the pocket of his trousers that burnt to a crisp. His money was found to be in good shape. The fire loss was estimated at about \$300.

Chief Schluter was re-elected in 1914 only to resign on July 9, after being a resident of the village for several years. He decided to return to New York City and take up his old trade,

of a mechanical fitter. His term as Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department expired December 31<sup>st</sup>. His many friends wished him success.

In March of 1914, A.J. Connery also resigned as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief and he was replaced by George Neder, from Company 2. Before the month had ended, Assistant Chief Joseph Ofenloch was suspended and removed from the Office. George Neder was the only one remaining and he took over as Chief in April of 1914. His Assistant Chiefs were Fred Fricke and William Mohrbach who were appointed by the Board.

At the end of his term, the Board of Commissioners would suspend Volunteer Hose Company 4 and Company 2 would change their name to Independent Engine and Hose Company 2.

When Company 3 was reorganized on April 13, 1925, Edward, who had returned from the city transferred from Company 2, to newly named Chemical Engine Company Co. 3, where he would serve as their first Captain. Edward went onto serve Company 3 as their Captain from 1935 through 1940. He served as the Department Recording Secretary and was Chairman of the Annual Labor Day Parade & Drill in 1940.

His son, Edward Schluter Jr. was also a member of Chemical Engine Company 3 and served as Chief in 1952 through 1954. His other son Harry Schluter was also a member of the Hicksville Fire Department.

Chief Schluter passed away on August 14, 1954, and was waked at Mowen Funeral Home on Barclay Street and he is interred at the Plain Lawn Cemetery.



***Served 2 Years***

George Julius Neder was born January 17, 1869, in Brooklyn to Andrew and Elizabeth Neder and moved to Hicksville in 1900, to his father's farm on South Oyster Bay Road, which was later sold to Leroy Grumman in the 1930's.

George married Pauline Lang and he owned his own garden business at 92 East Marie Street. They had several children, three of which served the volunteer fire service.

George joined Independent Engine & Hose Company 2 in 1903 and served as their Captain in 1906 and 1907. He also served as their Treasurer. When reviewing the meeting minutes, Chief Neder was an influential member

of the department and carried much influence in the operation and dealings of everyday business.

George was appointed as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1913, when A.J. Connery resigned. Just a month later 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief Joseph Ofenloch was suspended and removed from the Office. George Neder, the only remaining Assistant Chief was appointed by the Board as the 9<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief. His Assistant Chiefs were Fred Fricke and William Mohrbach who were appointed by the Board.

Chief Neder's first meeting was not without controversy. It was noted that the Department Recording Secretary was suspended, and a new secretary had to be elected. Charles J. Schmitt was elected and served until October, when he was replaced by Lawrence Braun.

In December of 1913, Volunteer Hose Company 4 was suspended by the Board of Fire Commissioners for rules and infractions governing the department. In an effort to repair morale, Chief Neder with the assistance of Commissioner John Puvogel requested a vote by the Department to solicit the Board of Commissioners to reinstate Volunteer Hose Company 4 on November 11, 1914. The Department voted in favor of reinstating Company 4. However,

at the Board level, two fire commissioners voted in favor while two voted against the motion. The Chairman, William Duffy refused to vote. It would take another meeting to get the Board to allow Volunteer Hose Company 4 to become part of the department again.

At a Special Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners on November 13, the Board voted 3-2 to reinstate Volunteer Hose Company 4. The members who had come back were George Schaaf, Frank Brown, William Braun Jr., Walter Wheeler, Frank Junk, Henry Schnepf, Henry Puvogel, Fred Turner and Joseph Ofenloch. They would be joined by Anthony Manzollillo, John Gebhardt Jr., Eugene Stahle, Charles Ambron, Edward Ruf, and Jacob Karman on December 19, 1914.

Under his term in December of 1914, the firemen responded to the Jericho Hotel when gasoline was being used to clean clothing and ignited. The damage was confined to the room of origin and all items contained were lost in the blaze. The Jericho Hotel was known as the "Death Turn" during the Vanderbilt Cup races.

On January 6, 1915, Chief Neder received word that one of their charter members, Ernest Liebke, passed away at the age of 94. Mr. Liebke came to Hicksville in 1869 and lived on a little farm on Broadway. He was a cigar maker and the largest strawberry farmer at that time. He was a charter member of the old Chemical Engine Company and was an active member of the Fire Department up to 1905, when he resigned to be one of the first Fire Commissioners of the Hicksville Fire District, a position he held for five years.

In December of 1915, Postmaster and fireman, John Puvogel, was on his way to the office, when he discovered a fire in the Kenmore Hotel and turned in an alarm. He made his way through thick smoke and intense heat to reach the occupants. He led Mr. and Mrs. Smith to safety as they escaped in their nightclothes down the back stairway. The building was a total loss. The fire spread to the Chinese laundry occupied by Charlie Wah, who was able to save only his electric washing machine. The Kenmore Hotel loss was \$5,000. It was owned by Mrs. Johanna Taliaferro of Hicksville.

After exiting as Chief, George was elected Department Treasurer where he served 18 years from 1916 - 1934. George served on the annual Hicksville Department Labor Day Parade and Tournament Committee, serving as its Treasurer.

George had two sons that went on to become members. His son Edmund Neder was a Charter member of Emergency Company 5, serving as Lieutenant and his son Robert was a member of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1, serving as Treasurer. His grandson George Edmund Neder Jr. was a member with Volunteer Hose Company 4, serving as an Assistant Chief in the 30's, before joining the Plainview Fire Department where he served as Chief in 1961.

George went onto be elected as Fire Commissioner starting in 1918 and spent 15 years, 3 terms and acted as Chairman of the Board in 1921, 1925 and 1929.

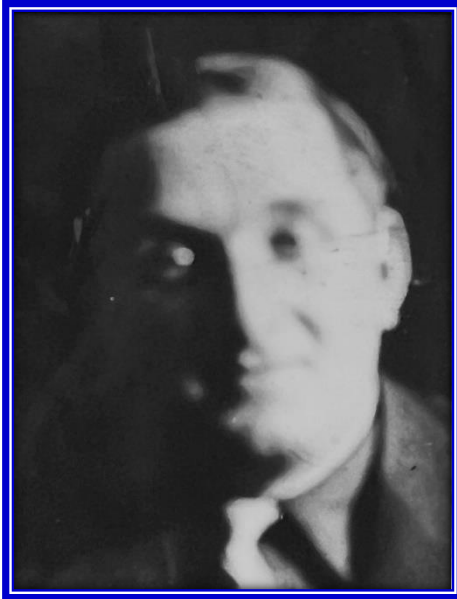
Chief George Neder Sr. was a 54-year member and passed away on June 7, 1964, at the age of 96. He is interred in the family plot at Holy Rood Cemetery in Westbury.



***Edmund Neder, Chief Neder's son as a  
Charter Member of Company 5***



***Robert Neder, Chief Neder's son as a member  
of Company 1***



William Mohrbach was born June 21, 1883, in Pennsylvania and was the son of Jacob and Priscillia (Schaeffer) Mohrbach. He married Valentina Schnepf in October of 1909 and lived on Woodbury Road. William was a signalman for the Long Island Railroad.

William joined Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 and served as their secretary in 1913 and 1914 before being elected the 10<sup>th</sup> Chief in 1915. William never served as Captain and was 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1914, before ascending to Chief. His Assistant Chiefs were Joseph Ofenloch and Francis Mollitor before they were replaced by Tony Manzollilo and Tony Kasten.

***Served 1 Year***

While Chief, he accepted a gift from William Quartitus, former member of the disbanded Citizens Engine Company 3. The gift was a handmade wood replica of the Steamer apparatus. This replica remains in the showcase at Station 1.

After serving as Chief, William went onto be elected as the Department Recording Secretary in 1917. The position of Recording Secretary was a revolving door through 1916. Chief Mohrbach was replaced by Edward Schulter and Lawrence Braun.

In 1916, while serving as Chief, William was selected to serve the Hicksville Athletic Club and the Patriotic Order Sons of America. The purpose of these two committees was to provide comfort and do all in their power to help along those members serving overseas. The members of this comfort committee serving alongside William were Frank Chlumsky; Edward Ruff; Henry G. Eisemann; Clerks, John Puvogel, and Joseph Smith.

His brother-in-law was Henry Schnepf, an Ex-Chief with the Hicksville Fire Department. William and Valentina divorced. He would move to Darby, Pennsylvania where he remarried in 1925 and was employed by the Reading Railway Company. Chief William Mohrbach is listed on the 1950 United States Census living with his second wife Laura in Darby Township, PA. There is no record of his death.



***Served 1 Year***

Edward Wagner was born on November 7, 1878, and he is the son of John and Hesse (Dorm) Wagner. He married Lottie Ballys Layton on November 8, 1900. He was employed as a Salesman for Andrew Heberer and lived above his store on Broadway before becoming an ordained minister and reverend.

Edward was a veteran of the Spanish American War from May 14, 1901, through May 13, 1904. He was a Private in Troop L, 11<sup>th</sup> Calvary.

Edward was never elected as an Assistant Chief. At the election of officers at the annual meeting in December of 1912, there was a lot of controversy when Edward Schluter edged out Edward Wagner as Chief, by a single vote. The election was declared illegal by the Board of Fire Commissioners, and they ordered another election. Edward Wagner would win the new contest when one member changed his mind and voted for Wagner. Edward Wagner was elected as the 11<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Department in December of 1916 and again in 1917. His Assistant Chiefs were Anthony Manzolillo and Edward Kastur.

On February 2, 1917, Chief Wagner drafted a letter to the Community that attempted to install confidence in the Department. He expressed the need for a motorized apparatus and to treat the decision in the vote, not as an economic business proposition or to buy the cheapest, but for the safety of our residents. He fought long and hard to raise funds to supplement the nearly \$2,000 raised at the time. The Department needed about \$7,000 from the motor truck fund and the last \$5,000 would be needed to be raised by taxation. He reminded everyone that insurance rates are made in accordance with firefighting operations. He provided many answers to the many questions that were raised at a packed meeting of the local taxpayers, including the need for a high-priced apparatus, that the cheapest apparatus is not adequate for fire-fighting purposes, the need for more than one apparatus, and, what the taxation per hundred on an investment would be to motorize our department. His dream wouldn't be realized until 1918.

Early in the morning of March 4, 1917, over one hundred boys at John's Home were led down a fire escape to safety by five religious nuns. The fire started in the washroom and spread to the dormitory where about seventy of the boys were sleeping. Sister Mary Braga found herself cut off from the exit down the fire escape and jumped from the second-floor window. It was reported that John Puvogel found one of the boys sleeping under his bed and carried him out. Firemen Puvogel was removed from the residence for smoke inhalation immediately after he searched for additional boys. About twenty of the boys were sent to Brooklyn while the others slept in the chapel. Fire damage was confined to the second floor and estimated at \$10,000. About three hundred pounds of potatoes were also ruined from the water that made its way to the basement storage area.

At the Fire Department meeting on March 12, 1917, Chief Edward Wagner surprised the members by handing in his resignation as chief, due to his intention to move away to Huntington. The resignation was accepted and turned over to the Board of Fire Commissioners for final acceptance. He was honored with a gold watch from the department and a silver cup from the members of Volunteer Hose Company 4. First Assistant Chief Anthony Manzolillo was recommended to the Board of Commissioners for its approval to succeed Mr. Wagner as chief for the unexpired term by the department.

Chief Wagner worked as a clerk at Heberer's Store before he moved to Spiro's store for several years before accepting a position as manager of the O. S. Sammis Company store in Huntington. Chief Wagner sold his residence and property on East Marie Street to Joseph Engel as he relocated to Huntington permanently. Mr. and Mrs. Wagner were very popular in this village, especially in church-circles.

On July 31, 1928, Reverend Edward Wagner, pastor of the Congregation Church at Centereach, suddenly passed away. As a young man, he was consecrated, a local preacher in the Methodist Church and had recently been ordained as a minister in the Congregational Church, thereby realizing the great ambition of his life.

Chief Wagner is interred at the New Village Congregational Church Cemetery in Lake Grove, New York.

***Served 1 Year***

Anthony Manzolillo was born July 15, 1881, in Rean del Rojale, Italy and immigrated with his parents in 1913 at the age of 4. He was a carpenter and roofing contractor by trade. He resided on Mary Street. He later moved to 66 Notre Dame Avenue and 95 Jerusalem Avenue.

In March of 1917, the Board of Fire Commissioners accepted the resignation of Chief Edward Wagner. The Board then appointed 1st Assistant Chief Anthony Manzolillo to the position as the 12<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department. Anthony remains as only one of two immigrants to serve as Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department. Henry Schnepf was advanced to First Assistant and Lawrence Braun was appointed the new Second Assistant Chief.

At a Dinner meeting of the fire department in September of 1917, the Chiefs tendered a farewell supper to the members of the Department who have been drafted into World War I in France. The supper was provided at the Fire House. It was well attended, prepared and served by the members of the Ladles' Auxiliary. Chief Manzolillo presided and gave an appropriate address to the members of the department, all from Volunteer Hose Co. No 4: Fred Davis, Jacob Karman, William Becker, Ferdinand Kerbs and Frank Jung. Both Davis and Kerbs were already at Camp Upton, and the others were to leave shortly for the same Camp. Chief Manzolillo presented an eight-star service flag representing and in honor of the eight local firemen who are now serving their country. In addition to those listed above, also serving were Nicholas Taliaferro, somewhere in France, Frank Sutter, Camp Upton, and John Kerbs, U.S. Navy, Brooklyn Navy Yard.

On December 9, 1917, Chief Manzolillo led his men at a fire that destroyed the Hotel Bon Ray. The only occupants at the time were the proprietors, Hans Slogel, and his family. They were awakened by their dog barking. Water pressure was limited, and the building could not be saved. The damage was estimated at \$15,000.

Mrs. Mary Zimmerman, a widow, 80 years old, and for many years a resident of Hicksville met a horrible end by being burnt to death. The aged woman, who lived alone, occupied a small building in the rear of the premises at Wyckoff Street, near West John Street. After raking leaves in the yard, she lit a match to the pile of leaves. Before she knew what happen, a strong wind was blowing, and her clothing became ignited by the flames. It appeared that she was too frightened to call for help and managed to drag herself about 50 feet from the fire, where she was found dead. The woman was discovered when someone called the fire department who responded with the motor chemical apparatus. Justice Steinert, coroner, was hastily called to the scene and after viewing the remains ordered their immediate removal to H. A. Turnure Morgue.

During Chief Manzolillo's term, subscriptions were solicited. Within a short time, enough money was raised so that a Ford chemical motor apparatus could be purchased and installed, replacing the Hose Company 4 hose reel, which had become unsafe to use. Chief Manzolillo received \$1,426.30 in funds from the taxpayer committee and the department purchased their first chemical apparatus. Volunteer Hose Company 4 took possession of the apparatus.

He was a member of the Hicksville Athletic Club from 1907 - 1925 and was a well-known century rider, riding for the Century Road Club of America. Anthony Manzolillo was a past president of the Grand Lodge of Primrose Lodge. No. 569, I. O. O. F.

Chief Manzolillo passed away on December 20, 1958, and is interred at Nassau Knolls Cemetery in Port Washington.

***Chief Manzolillo Getting Ready to step off at parade***



***Served 2 Years***

William Braun was born on April 17, 1887, in Hicksville and was the son of William Sr. and Sophia (Betcha) Braun. They lived at Dutch Lane. William married Mary Catherine Jacobs in November of 1909, and they lived at 77 Broadway, then 83 Halsey Avenue. William was a painter before inheriting the butcher shop from his grandfather on Broadway.

William joined as a Charter member of Citizens Engine Co.# 3 before transferring to Volunteer Hose Company 4 where he served as their Captain from 1909 through 1911. After leaving office as Captain, he was elected as the Department Recording Secretary in 1911.

In 1918, William, without previously serving as an Assistant Chief was elected the 13<sup>th</sup> Chief to serve the Department. In December of the same year, during nominations, there were members that wanted a change. After the vote was taken Chief Braun received 28 votes, while Ex-Chief William Mohrbach received 27 and Ex-Chief George Neder garnered 25. William was duly elected for his second term. As for his Assistant Chiefs, Henry Schnepf was re-elected with 20 votes to Lawrence Braun's 12. The second Assistant Chief position was also not without challenges. Henry Puvogel and Charles Schaefer both received 16 votes. After a second vote on election night, one member changed his vote. Henry Puvogel received 19, while Charles Schaefer came up short with 17.

During his first year of 1918 the second motor apparatus, a replica of the first, was received, replacing the old hand engine of Company 2.

The same year, a fire at the Joseph Keller property destroyed the barn and outlying buildings on Woodbury Avenue. The damage was worse than it should have been due to several frozen fire hydrants.

In April 1918, the department responded to Jericho, the home of William Underhill, for an outlying building on the estate. Firemen prevented the flames from spreading to the handsome Underhill home. The grain building was destroyed, including the area on the second

floor used for the hired hand. The cause was from the stove overheating and setting fire to the building.

A fire broke out in the barn on the Henry Kuhl farm located on West John Street. The quick response by the fire department using their motorized apparatus, contained the blaze before it would have destroyed the building.

On October 14, 1918, Chief Braun introduced a resolution recognizing the deepest sympathy for Walter Wheeler, offering sincere and heartfelt sympathy for his act of heroism, and paying the ultimate sacrifice in the great war of World War I. The Fire House was draped in mourning and the flag placed at half-mast in memory of Private Wheeler, who died in France serving his country, on August 24. The deceased private was an honored and beloved member of Volunteer Hose Company 4.

Just a few weeks later, Chief Braun was notified that a gold star was added to Hicksville's honor roll as another member had given up his all in his country's service on foreign soil. Sergeant Joseph A. Barry being the second member of the community and member of the department to die in a French hospital. Notification from the War Department reached the Chief on November 8, 1918. Once again the Fire House was draped in mourning and the flag placed at half-mast in memory of Sergeant Barry who was a member of Independent Engine and Hose Company 2.

Due to a business decision, William resigned after serving 3 months into 1919, turning over the reins to Henry Schnepf.

At the end of 1919, William was elected to serve as Fire Commissioner, a position he held for over 27 Years. He was elected to five, five-year terms and served as Chairman of the Board in 1923, 1928, 1931, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1945, and 1950. It has been said by the early members that William had a passion and drive that steered the district in a positive direction.

William was a member of the Joseph Barry Council of the Knights of Columbus and served as a Charter member and their first Grand Knight.

William's son, Vincent was also a member of Hose Company 4 and was Chief of the Fire Department. The Braun family extends through many generations and across several

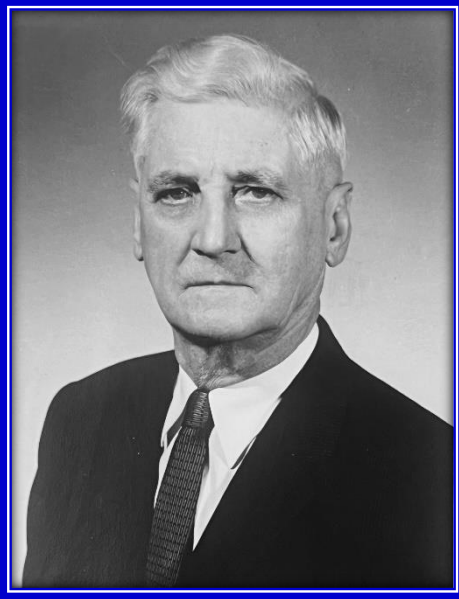


notable families within the firefighter community (i.e. Gebhardt, Schuckmann, Saurer, Ofenloch). Vincent's great grandchildren, William and John Zike, continue the family tradition as 4<sup>th</sup> generation volunteer firefighters in Volunteer Hose Company 4. His great-great-grandson, Steven served as well in Volunteer Hose Company 4 before transitioning to the New York City Fire Department.

Chief William Braun passed away on January 19, 1969, and is interred in the Cemetery of the Holy Rood in Westbury.



*Circa 1918, showing the 2<sup>nd</sup> motor apparatus which was a replica of the first as seen in the center bay, replaced the old hand engine of Company 2.*

***Served 3 Years***

Henry Schnepf was born November 15, 1893, and is the son of Martin and Pauline (Kerbs) Schnepf. He was born at the family home that once stood on the property of St. Ignatius Church. He married Anna Youngheim in November of 1915, and they had a home at 133 Park Avenue.

Before he was Superintendent of Nassau County Highways (1932 - 1971) Henry was a painter and wallpaper hanger and was an assessor for Hicksville for 4 years (1928-1932.) He later opened his road paving business, known as Henry Schnepf and Sons, which operated until the 1950's.

Henry first became familiar with the Hicksville Fire Department when he joined the "juveniles", which is the equivalent to our present Junior (Explorer Post) Firemen until he reached 18 years of age. He joined Volunteer Hose Company 4 in 1911 and served as their Captain in 1916.

Henry Schnepf quickly took an active part in the fire service. He held all offices in the Department: Department Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, just to name a few. He also took much interest in the many various Committees in the department. One Committee that Henry worked most diligently on was the formation of the first by-laws of the Hicksville Fire Department.

With the sudden departure of William Braun in April of 1919, Henry Schnepf was elected as the 14<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Department and held that position for three years. During his term, George Shaaf and John Kerbs would serve as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief.

There was a fire on December 1, 1921, at a large home in Central Park, now Bethpage. The loss was total and was investigated by Nassau County. Before Hicksville firemen could get to the location, the home was consumed with fire. This was the second fire in a short time at this property and it seemed to be fueled by an incendiary nature.

Chief Schnepf held a welcome home supper for the members of the Hicksville Fire Department having served their country during the late World War I. All the firemen, exempt members, ex-Chiefs, and Fire Commissioners were present.

The Firemen/Soldiers honored were:

George Ambron	Henry Janka	Fred Turner
Fred Braun	Frank Jung	Fontaine N. Taliaferro
Joseph Barry (KIA)	Fred Kerbs	Joseph Valentine
Lawrence Braun	John Kerbs	Walter Wheeler (KIA)
Fred Davis	Jacob Karman	William Wollenbecker
Frank Sutter	Fred Hasten	Edward Van Nostrand
Philip Eisemann	Jack Kantor	Edward Barry
August Fassbender	Frank Milacek	Peter Ewing
John Gebhardt	Rowland Monico	
Harry Hubbs	George Schaaf	

All the living heroes were present, and each received a firemen's badge Inscribed "World War Hero". Over one hundred guests were present. A fine supper was served, and speeches were made by the various dignitaries.

It was during his term that the Maxim Diamond "T" Hook and Ladder truck was purchased and used until it was replaced with a Seagrave Ladder in 1951. After serving as Chief, Henry transferred to Company Three and many years later he returned to Company Four. Henry served as Honorary Grand Marshal of the Annual Labor Day Parade & Drill. At the Labor Day Parade and Drill in 1964, the oldest living former Hicksville Fire Department Chiefs were recognized. Henry Schnepf, and Henry Gebhardt were honored as "Honorary Chairmen" of the Labor Day parade and tournament. In 1978, Henry was again honored for his service on Labor Day with Ex-Chief Jack Leckie.

His brother, August Schnepf, was also a member of the fire department and served as the 15<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief, immediately following Henry's term.

Henry was a Master Mason and part of the masonic organization for over 60 years. He was also a long-standing member of the Hicksville Republican Club.

Chief Henry Schnepf passed away on June 10, 1985, at the age of 91 and is interred at the Plain Lawn Cemetery. At the time of his passing, he attained 74 years of active service to the Hicksville Fire Department.



*Circa 1908 showing the Junior Firefighters group with Henry Schnepf (5<sup>th</sup> child in front row) holding a trumpet in the middle*

*Ex Chief Schnepf is shown with ex Chief Gebhardt receiving awards for the service to the Department at a Labor Day Parade in the 1970's*





***Served 1 Year***

August (Gus) Schnepf was born at his home on Woodbury Road December 4, 1886, and is the son of Martin and Pauline (Kerbs) Schnepf.

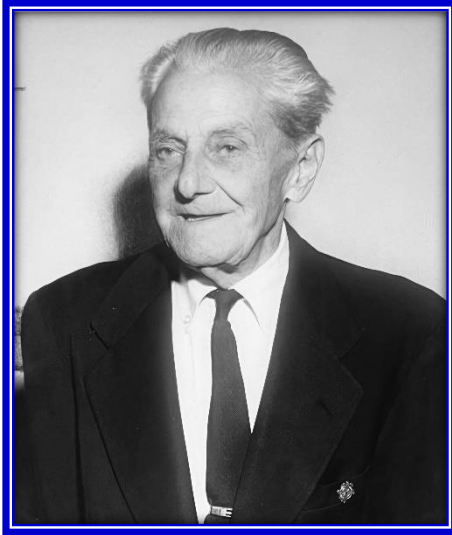
He married Coralie Crawford in June of 1910, and they had a home at 7 Maple Street. They divorced in 1927. He married Beatrice Fletcher and moved to Hollywood, Florida in 1930. He was a self-employed contractor for many years.

In 1915 he was appointed a Truant Officer and Election Inspector for Oyster Bay. In 1917 he served as President of the Carpenters and Joiners Local Union 1771.

Gus joined Protection Hook and Ladder Co. 1 and served as their Captain in 1914. In 1913 Gus ran for 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief but when the vote was tallied, Joseph A. Ofenloch received 25 and August Schnepf, 22.

In 1922, without serving as an Assistant Chief, Gus was elected the 15<sup>th</sup> Chief Officer of the Hicksville Fire Department. Gus' brother Henry Schnepf was also a member of the Fire Department and served as the 14<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief, the year prior. During his term, George Schaaf and John Kerbs served as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief.

There were no major fires or significant events noted during his term. Chief August "Gus" Schnepf passed away on June 28, 1952, and is interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery.

***Served 1 Year***

Henry Kerbs was born June 29, 1882, at his home on Woodbury Road. He was the son of Joseph and Pauline (Jacobs) Kerbs. He married Marion Morton in January of 1923, and they had a home at 33 Fountain Street. He was a plumber for many years. After the untimely death of his wife at the age of 30, Henry lived at 26 East John Street in the 1940's.

Unlike Arnold Heitz and Henry Menge who were members prior to the formation of the Department, Henry joined as a Charter member of the Hicksville Volunteer Fire Department in February of 1893.

Henry was a "Tinsmith" by trade working for John Pepper and Sons in Brooklyn. He joined Volunteer Hose Company 4 and served as their Captain in 1922. In 1923, never serving as an Assistant Chief, Henry was elected as the 16<sup>th</sup> Chief of Department. He was a veteran of World War I drafted in September of 1917.

It was during Chief Kerbs' term when the municipal water district was formed, and two pumping units were installed enabling water to be pumped from an elevated storage tank that stood 146 feet in the air with a capacity of 150,000 gallons. The pumps were able to provide 175 gallons per minute to the mains and tank. The new wells began producing two million gallons of water per year—traveling through 17 miles of new pipelines—all while maintaining 65psi of hydrant pressure. Following his term as Chief, Henry was asked to serve as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1924.

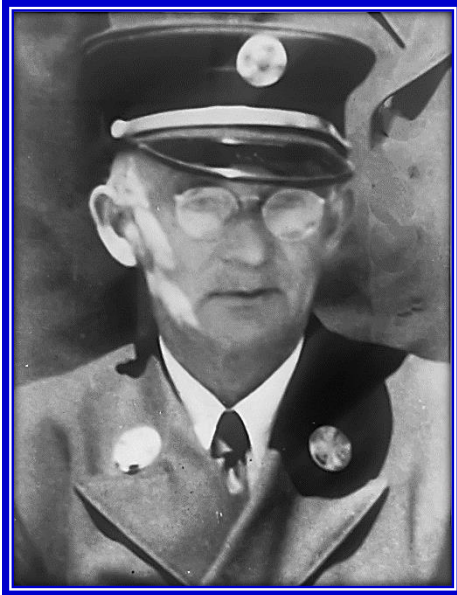
Henry was an original member of the Annual Labor Day Parade and Drill and went onto serve as Chairman in 1928. Henry was elected as Fire Commissioner in 1930 and served one term and was chosen to serve as its chairman in 1933.

Chief Henry Kerbs passed away on October 23, 1963. There is no record of his internment.





*Ex Chief Kerbs in middle of rear seat is shown with ex Chief's Gebhardt and Braun at a Labor Day Parade in the late 1960's*

***Served 1 Year***

Fred Fricke was born April 6, 1884, in Manhattan and is the son of Fredrich and Maria (Onhalz) Fricke. The family moved to Hicksville and took up residence on Woodbury Road. The family owned and operated an ice cream store on Woodbury Road.

He married Lillian Weston in September of 1905. They had a home at 75 Heitz Place. He was a ship builder and general carpenter for many years, working for the Long Island Railroad. He was a founding member of the Carpenters Local Union 1772.

Fred joined Independent Engine and Hose Company 2 and was elected as their Foreman, before transferring to Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 where he served as their secretary in 1933 through 1936 and again in 1938 and 1939. Before going onto the Honorary List, Fred transferred to Company 3.

Fred was elected as the 17<sup>th</sup> Chief in 1924 and served one year. Ferdinand (Fred) Kerbs and Charles Ambron would serve as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chiefs. During his term, the new water district was attempting to terminate fire hydrant maintenance from the private water company. Each and every time a fire hydrant was used, the private Water Company was required to be notified. Chief Fricke was routinely threatened with civil and liable damages. Chief Fricke met with the local water commissioners to push for a full takeover of the fire hydrants in 1924.

He unsuccessfully ran for Commissioner of the Hicksville Fire District on three separate occasions. He lost in 1925 to Charles Van Wickler and then to John Werthessen in 1932. He tried again in 1936 and lost again to Charles Van Wickler.

Fred had a vision and started it all in 1925 with a parade and drill that was held on Labor Day. He was the 1<sup>st</sup> Chairman and served in 1927 and 1934 as well. His vision and foresight remain a significant event in Hicksville for over 75 years, before ending in the 2005.

His son, Fred Fricke II was also a member of the fire department and his sons-in-law August Jud, Harry Borley, and Herman Auer, were all volunteer firemen in Hicksville.

Chief Fricke passed away on January 5, 1954, and is interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery.

***Served 1 Year***

Charles Schaefer was born on April 20, 1887, at his home on Broadway to his parents Charles and Elizabeth (Meyer) Schaefer. He married Alice Chapman in July of 1910, and they lived at 69 Woodbury Road and then at 34 Bay Avenue. He was a carpenter working for James Stewart Company and he helped organize Local 1772 of the Carpenter's Union.

He joined Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 in December of 1909 and served as their Captain in 1920, 1921 and 1922. In 1925 Charles was elected as the 18<sup>th</sup> Chief to serve the Hicksville Fire Department. His Assistant

Chiefs were Henry Gebhardt as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant and George Gleckler as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief.

It was during his term that the Department installed the first on Long Island, a reliable fire alarm system, by "Gamewell". The first box was installed at Broadway and Marie Street and given number 6-1. The system was hooked up to an air-operated horn on the roof of the firehouse. When the horn blew, it was with limited air pressure and people in town were quoted as it "sounded like a cow". The horn could be heard as far south as the salt marshes and as far north as Oyster Bay.

In January, Chief Schaefer received a petition signed by ten members asking that Company 3 be allowed to reorganize now that the village was growing rapidly. After 14 years the Department Chief Schaefer welcomed back Company 3. In 1911 they were disbanded by the Board of Fire Commissioners and in 1925, they were reorganized as Chemical Engine Company 3. Twelve members would transfer from Companies 1, 2 and 4.

Edward Schluter Sr. was elected Captain, William Baker elected as 1st Lieutenant and Henry Schnepf would serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. The other members were William Braun, Edward Van Dorn, Albert Loeffler, Fred Fricke, William Duffy, August Haffner, Frank Chlumsky, James Henshell and Frank Mollitor.

In March of 1925, after many years of patiently waiting for new motorized trucks, the department staged a demonstration and parade to welcome their new White Company fire

apparatus. In 1924, the Board of Commissioners provided a most thorough and exhaustive investigation of many makes of fire apparatus, had unanimously decided to purchase White fire apparatus. Their expectations apparently were more than fulfilled, and the trucks received Chief Schaefer's approval.

The new apparatus, consisting of two 350-gallon pumpers and one chemical truck, cost \$20,000. The pumpers were complete in every detail. The pump chosen by the White Company engineers and adopted by them as standard equipment is the Hale pump. The equipment on the pumpers consisted of search light, electrically operated siren, locomotive bell, ladders, pike poles, axe, hand extinguishers and the usual amount of small equipment efficiently fighting fires.

The chemical truck had more equipment to catch the eye and made a distinct hit with the department and the newly reorganized Chemical Company 3. The chemical is mounted on the same size chassis as the pumpers; has two 60-gallon copper lined chemical tanks; 250 feet of hose, hose baskets and ladders and the rest of the necessary equipment. Mr. Miller was the representative of the White Company, and he spared nothing to have these trucks come up to the specifications required and it is his opinion that these trucks for their size are the finest manufactured and delivered on Long Island. The White Company also arranged for one of their instructors to be stationed at the firehouse to train members.

The two Ford fire chemical trucks were sold at auction after the new "White's" were placed in service. Robert Schwarzenberg and Frank Mason bought the trucks for \$220 and \$120 respectively.

Chief Schaefer was able to make good on his predecessor's prior effort to move away from the private water company to the local water district having full control of fire hydrants in October of 1925. One immediate joint opportunity was to have the water district agree to paint the hydrants red with aluminum bonnets and caps. This would make hydrants more visible to responding firefighters.

On November 21, 1926, Morris and Bertha Kellner were found dead from an accidental gas poisoning in their three-room apartment at 19 Broadway. The couple was married for 3 weeks. When firemen arrived, the kitchen stove gas was found turned on and fumes overcame the couple who were sleeping in their bedroom.

Chief Schaefer welcomed the new renovations to the firehouse in 1926. This was the first time that the firehouse received extensive renovations, including an addition to the side of the building and movement of the interior staircase to the side of the building. The renovation included adding concrete foundation, basement and hose drying tower. The cost of the renovation was less than \$20,000. Nineteen years earlier, the entire firehouse cost a mere \$6,000.

Charles served on the Annual Labor Day Parade & Drill and was the Chairman in 1926. He was a member of the Nassau County Firemen's Association and Charter member of the Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville.

Charles' son Harold Schaefer was a Captain, and his grandson, Bradford Schaefer were members of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1.

Chief Schaefer passed away after a long illness on April 14, 1963, at the age of 74 and is interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery.



***Served 4 Years***

Henry Gebhardt was born on October 10, 1890, and is the son of John and Emma (Schuckmann) Gebhardt. Henry married Marion Anna Tinmann in August of 1913. He was employed by the Hicksville Fire District, where he lived on the third floor of the fire house on East Marie Street.

Henry joined Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 in 1911 and served as their Captain in 1923 and later as their Treasurer from 1937 through 1960. After retirement he lived on Notre Dame Avenue.

Not since Andrew Heberer has anyone served longer than two consecutive years, when Henry was elected in 1928 and 1929. Chief Heberer was appointed by the Board of Commissioners, but Henry was “elected” by his peers in 1926 and remained there through 1929. His Assistant Chiefs were Walter Dano and Jacob Karman.

During Chief Gebhardt’s term he oversaw the creation of the fifth fire Company. It was on September 14, 1928, a meeting was called to order at the office of Lebkucker and Duffy when Oscar B. Berry was appointed by Chief Gebhardt to act as chairman. The meeting was called for organizing Emergency Company Five of the Hicksville Fire Department. When the first roll call was taken, it was under the direction of Chief Henry Gebhardt, and Board of Fire Commissioner Chairman William Braun. Mr. William Cisler acted as Secretary and the following organizers were found to be present: Anthony Adessio, Harry Borley, Joseph Braun, Robert Cisler, William Cisler, Louis Hartmeier, Valentine Kerbs, George Kunz, Edmund Neder, Henry Purnhagen, and Calvin Van Winkler.

A notable fire during Chief Gebhardt’s term was soon after that first meeting of Company 5, when he led members to 3 fires within 30 minutes. The first call took them to Bay Avenue where there was a good size fire that was approaching the residence of George Blyman. As they were returning from this alarm, a second call took them to Field Avenue to the home of Justice Charles Stoll. The grass fire threatened the garage, but firemen were able to douse the flames. Just as they were backing into the firehouse, a recall was sounded for

Bay Avenue, where the grass rekindled and menaced the Breslin Lumberyard. Chief Gebhardt was able to keep the damage to a minimum.

On June 19, 1929, while responding to a grass fire around upper Broadway, two fire trucks had a rear-end collision. While traveling on Broadway, a private car entered off a side street and cut off the responding trucks. The Chemical Wagon was forced to apply its brake suddenly when the 2<sup>nd</sup> truck could not stop in time. Several firemen were thrown from the truck but did not sustain any injuries.

Two firemen were injured on November 14, 1929, when a fire started in a cellar of the tire store of Sam Kellner on Herzog Place. The blaze caused over \$50,000 in damage to the tire store and Rohrback's Glass store located adjacent to the fire. Jacob Kellner, father of the owner was asleep in the upstairs apartment when the fire broke out and he was treated for smoke inhalation. Two firemen, Charles Schaefer and Charles Ambron were also overcome by some smoke and heat and were treated at the scene.

Henry would be the 1<sup>st</sup> Chief to have a sign with the lettering "Chief" made for his private vehicle to help him get through traffic when responding to alarms. The fire commissioners would end up procuring signs for his assistant chiefs as well. The signs were so well received that the Board ended up purchasing plates for all officers by year-end 1929.

Henry's son also joined the Fire Department in Volunteer Hose Company 4. He was killed on June 15, 1944, during the first battle of Saipan. Henry Jr. was a Seabee in the United States Navy during World War II. Word was received that on D-Day in Saipan, Henry Jr. ran into a Japanese patrol and threw hand grenades. His patrol wiped them out, but three men were wounded. Henry Jr. was hit badly in the leg. He was given aid and plasma. He was put aboard a boat to return him to the ship but died on his way out. Henry was returned to Saipan Island and buried with the rest of the heroes of the 4th Marine Division. A few years later he was returned to the United States and buried at the Greenfield Cemetery at Hempstead and awarded the Silver Star Posthumously.

Henry was an active participant of the Hicksville FD Labor Day Parade and Tournament Committee, where he served as Chairman in 1932 and 1933. In addition, he served as a Judge and member of the Nassau County Drill Team Association for many years.

He was a Charter Member of Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville and Past President 1945 - 1946. From 1926 to 1957, he was a New York State Fire Warden. Chief Gebhardt was president of the Nassau County Firemen's Association and the Saint George Association of the Firemen of Nassau County. He was a member of the Nassau County Fire Chiefs Association, the State Firemen's Association (FASNY), and the Southern New York Volunteer Firemen's Association.

For a time, Chief Gebhardt lived on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Fire House on East Marie Street and held the duties of emergency dispatcher and firehouse man.

On October 22, 1977, the portion of East Marie Street between Broadway and the LIRR was re-named in honor of the late Hicksville ex-chief Henry Gebhardt. It is the first time a street in Nassau County was named in honor of a person - a volunteer - of any type. TOB Supervisor Joseph Colby presented the family of Henry A. Gebhardt a proclamation to proclaim October 22, 1977, Henry A. Gebhardt Day. The proclamation stated *"Hicksville will forever be the beneficiaries of the skills he directed to assure our residents a conscientious and vigilant volunteer Fire Department. It was a day that was dedicated in respect for a man whose esteem shall stand forever as his own living memorial. Ex-Chief Owen Magee said "Into every lifetime, at least once, a man appears whom you not only respect, admire and revere, but honor as a person of integrity and as someone you really relate to. Normally this is a national hero, an athlete, or a star of major magnitude. Seldom do you find such a man in a comparatively small group that is so honored by all who know him. That is the case, however, in the Hicksville Fire Department. Henry Gebhardt, Ex-Captain, Ex-Chief, Counselor, Advisor, Confessor, Confidant and Friend is just such a man. "Gebby", as he is affectionately known, does not simply belong to one HFD Company, but to the whole of the Department and has become a legend in his own time. In the image of Don Quixote, Walter Raleigh, The Lone Ranger, and the U.S. Calvary of old, "Gebby" is always there when you need him most, inspiring, directing, giving you the benefit of not only his firematic experience but his personal contact with life itself."*

"Gebby" was seen as a guide and mentor to members of HFD for all of his long 66 years of service. Just how many members have joined, served twenty or more years, retired, some having answered their final alarm, and some yet to come, all under the tenure of Henry Gebhardt is difficult to determine, but all have benefitted in knowing this man. He had imported his knowledge, advice, and experience to all who have sought his counsel.

"Gebby" has fostered, fathered, aided, and given support to so many firematic organizations. It is impossible to list them all. Because of his dedication and dedicated service, he had become a well-known member in the Nassau County and Statewide fire service.

His son-in-laws were Vincent Braun and Charles Sauer, both former Chiefs. Chief Gebhardt passed away on April 11, 1977, and is interred at Greenfield Cemetery.



*Ex Chief Gebhardt leading a Division at a Labor Day Parade at the Mid Island Plaza*



*The East Marie Street Dedication in 1976 shows Town of Oyster Bay Councilman Saladino, Marion Braun, Ruth (Gebhardt) Saurer, Town Supervisor Colby and Chief Roy Schaaf*



*Ex Chief Gebhardt receiving an award for his years of service with Ex Chief Schnepf, flanked by Ex Chief Weiss and Ex Chief Ofenloch at the Mid Island Plaza*



Jacob Karman was born September 17, 1892, in New York City and was the son of George and Mary (Maria Helfring) Karman. Jacob's parents moved the family to Sackett Street in Hicksville. His father passed away when Jacob was just 8 years old, leaving his mother Mary to look after Jacob and the 8 other siblings on her own. He was employed as a gold beater before taking on employment with the Long Island Railroad. He married Hilda Reidlinger on June 30, 1920 and moved to Park Avenue (now 4<sup>th</sup> Street) in Hicksville. His Brother-In-Law was Hicksville tow truck owner/operator, Gus Reidlinger of the "Don't Cuss, Call Gus" fame.

***Served 1 Year***

Jacob had three children: Virginia, Evelyn, and George. Jacob joined as a member on May 14, 1917, and his brother George was a member of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1.

In 1922, the members appointed Jacob Karman captain of the racing team. Jake, as he was affectionately known was a very popular fireman and had the men behind him. As Captain he planned the racing team entertainment and suppers. Captain Jake had experience in the racing game and was one of the Hicksville Fire Department's crack runners.

He was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1927 and 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1929, before being elected the 20<sup>th</sup> Chief in 1930. George Neder and John Puvogel served as his 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chiefs.

On February 9, three youths were charged with setting a fire at the Nustone Corporation on Charlotte Avenue that caused about \$30,000 damage. The youths entered the business to rob it and when they found no money, they spread gasoline around the inside of the building. The youths were later found guilty of burglary and arson in the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree. Just days later February 12, 1930, the department was summoned to heavy smoke coming from a two-story stucco office building at 6 Herzog Place. Carpenters had left the building sometime prior to the fire and they had left behind benzene and turpentine being used to finish the

floors. Nassau County Police Detectives investigated the fire and found that it was started by spontaneous combustion.

On April 22, 1930, there was a gasoline explosion and fire in the hangar at the Long Island Aviation Country Club. The department had limited the overall damage to just three of the 23 private planes. The members used grappling hooks and their trucks to pull planes out of the hangar onto the runway. A 21-year-old auto mechanic suffered burns to his hands and face and the damage was estimated at \$150,000.

In 1930, Jacob slipped from the roof of a house fire in Plainview and badly bruised his elbow, spending weeks recuperating.

It was December 13, 1930, when firemen were called out to the home and business of William Weickman, 54, Village Goldbeater. It appeared that an oil stove exploded, and he was found by his neighbor, Helen Hauxhurst on the floor with burns over a good part of his body. He was not expected to make it. The firemen were able to extinguish the fire and get William to a Nassau hospital. His brother Henry owned a Goldbeating shop near Sackett Street and the family have been residents of Hicksville since the late 1800's.

As part of his term, Jacob gave members auto plates which were to be placed on the radiators of the cars of the firemen, which gives them right of way to the fire house or the scene of the fire. When the alarm sounds, all signal lights in the village will turn red, holding up all traffic but that of the firemen.

Jake was an active part of the Annual Labor Day Parade and Drill, and he served as the Chairman in 1931.

Jake was a World War I Veteran, serving in the 4<sup>th</sup> Company 152 Deputy Brigade as a Private, before transferring to Company F 327 Infantry as a Corporal and he was slightly wounded in action in 1919. The 327th Infantry Regiment trained out of Fort Gordon, Georgia and after training, Jake and his Division embarked to northern France. The 327th Infantry by the end of the summer of 1919 was one of the first American units to see combat at St. Mihiel. This was the first operation in World War I conducted entirely by American forces. The Regiment then occupied defensive positions on the Lorraine Front in eastern France. The final allied offensive, in November, found the 327th Infantry engaging in the great Meuse-Argonne offensive, before Jake's Regiment took a prominent part in the operation leading the flank



attack on the Foret de Argonne and the attack north of Sommerance, where he was wounded and received a purple heart.

He was a member of the Charles Wagner American Legion Post, St. Ignatius Roman Catholic Loyola Church and Joseph Barry Council of the Knights of Columbus.

His Great-Grandson, Kevin Karman is a former Captain of Independent Engine and Hose Company 2 and still active today.

Chief Karman had thirty-five years of service when he passed away on April 22, 1947, at the age of 54, of a heart attack and he is interred at Holy Rood Cemetery in Westbury.

***Served 2 Years***

John Puvogel was born on June 4, 1876, in Manhattan and is the son of Henry and Caroline (Fass) Puvogel who had a residence at 164 Broadway. John married Anna Fehring in October of 1917. John was local Postmaster, Insurance Salesman, Auctioneer and Water Commissioner.

John joined Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 and served as their Captain in 1915 and 1916 and was elected for a second separate term from 1924 through 1929. After he left office the first time, he was elected Treasurer of Company 1 for a two-year term in 1919 – 1920. John was also the Department Treasurer in 1915. In 1931, John was elected as 21<sup>st</sup> Chief in 1931 and served a second year in 1932.

During his term as Chief, while responding to a brush fire on Broadway, the Larabee Car's (used by Company 5) brakes failed and it ran into Company 2's truck, hospitalizing Henry Auer.

Hicksville had followed in the footsteps of many of the departments throughout the county. In 1931, ten members completed fifteen hours of study over a period of ten weeks and took their final examinations under direction of Benjamin Gammage, instructor of first aid and life saving for the Nassau Chapter of the Red Cross. Members of the newly organized Hicksville Department Rescue Squad were John Bedell, Frederick Braun, Vincent Braun, William Christiansen, Herry Gleckler, Roy Rusch, Richard Butler, August Cardella, Harry Barley and Charles Steinhauer.

Chief Puvogel had the members train on the newly purchased smoke masks. This "Smoke Excluding Mask" was a filter-type mask that had a small bag of water that was suspended by a neck strap. Connected to the water bag were two sponge filters that were kept wet when the bag was squeezed. Air was drawn through the filters to the mouthpiece in the face mask.

A significant highlight during his term as Chief was when the new firehouse was proposed to be built on the existing site. After a vote was taken by the residents, the result was 353 to 298 in favor of building the firehouse at a cost of \$80,000.

On May 20, 1932, the house movers took control of the firehouse and once it was emptied used rollers and horses to move it. It would sit in the middle of Mary Street overnight until it was lifted onto a concrete pad. Chief Puvogel ordered the apparatus removed to a parking area at West John Street and Broadway next to the police booth. Following the temporary move, the apparatus will then move to the Taliferro property next to McCullagh's plumbing shop until the new construction is completed. While the apparatus was by the police booth, Chief Puvogel assigned three men from Company 5 to be on constant watch in 3-eight-hour shifts. When an emergency is called in, the on-call firemen drove the apparatus up Broadway to Cherry Street to Jerusalem Avenue and back to the booth, blowing its siren. Following the siren all other firemen responded to the police booth area and take up their apparatus.

With the work of removal of the firehouse completed the excavation for the new \$80,000 Hicksville fire Department commenced. The new structure was being built under the direction of Gustave A. Wagner, Hicksville contractor. On May 20, 1932, the fire apparatus was home again after the fire house was moved across the street and left on Mary Street overnight. Once it was set in place, a new telephone was installed with the same number "26".

Fire wrecked the bungalow of Anton Schultheis on Cantiague Road shortly after 9 o'clock March 13, 1932. The blaze which was discovered by a passerby was extinguished by the department, but not until it had done considerable damage. The building was used by Schultheis and his family as a summer home.

Chief Puvogel had several alarms in a single day. Stacks of corn stalks at the Heitz property, burning in a lot on Sixth Street and Fifth Avenue. The cause was unknown, but it was suspicious as having been set on fire. Then, there was a fire at Dante Street and Jerusalem Avenue, at the property of Fippinger Bros. The blaze was caused by an oil stove. The damage to the contents was greater than to the building. A third alarm at the corner of Herzog Place and Newbridge Road, where leaves and a fence burned with slight damage. Within a few hours there was a reported fire at Woodbury Road and Oyster Bay Road, that included grass and a small building. The damage was light. Finally, there were a few grass and rubbish fires ending

the day at Ketcham Road and Woodbury Road, Rave Street and Broadway and a car fire in Jericho.

In 1931, the firemen went to Saranac Lake, New York to participate in the Annual New York State Firemen's Tournament. When the day ended, the "Hicks" captured eight 1<sup>st</sup> Place trophies securing the title as Champions. This would never happen again even to this day. Those members were Chief John Puvogel, Team Captain, John Jeanson, Joseph and Gerald Braun, John Werthessen Jr., John Werthessen Sr., Louis Fricke, Arnold Jeanson, John Miller, William Braun, Otto Jeanson, Harold Hauxhurst, Richard Kershow, Harry Borley, Edmund Neder, Valentine Kerbs, William Geyer, Vincent Stolz and William Cisler. The silver cups have been on display at Station 1 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor showcases since they were brought home.

On December 27, 1931, fire roared through the A&P Grocery store at 112 Broadway with adjacent stores suffering smoke damage. Chief Puvogel and the firemen brought the blaze under control within 30 minutes but not before causing \$3,000 in damage.

When Chief John Puvogel ended his term, he was presented with an Elks charm and watch chain by the members of the fire department at the annual Installation of Officers. Puvogel, who served as chief for two years, was succeeded by Harry Gleckler, who was elected at the annual department meeting.

Chief Puvogel was recognized for his life saving efforts for his actions taken in December of 1915. John was on his way to the Post Office, when he discovered a fire in the Kenmore Hotel and turned in an alarm. He made his way through the thick acrid smoke and flames to reach the occupants, Mr. and Mrs. Smith. He led them to safety as they escaped in their nightclothes down the back stairway. The building was a total loss. The fire spread to a Chinese laundry occupied by Charlie Wah, who was able to save only his electric washing machine. The Kenmore Hotel loss was \$5,000. It was owned by Mrs. Johanna Taliaferro of Hicksville.

John was a Charter Member of Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville and Past President 1939 – 1940 and was Chairman of the Annual Labor Day Parade & Drill in 1930.

John was elected as Fire Commissioner in 1915 and served one-five-year term and was Chairman in 1918.

John Puvogel was a Club Leader in the Hicksville Democratic Association of the Third and Sixteenth Election Districts for many years. A special election was held by the Town Clerk and Justice Morey on August 20, 1927, to fill the vacancy created by the expired terms of Water Commissioners, August Deppish and Ernest Francke. John was elected to serve as Water Commissioner, a position he held through 1943. John's father Henry also served in the Hicksville Fire Department.

On April 18, 1946, Chief Puvogel passed away after suffering a heart attack from striking his head on the pavement in front of his Broadway home. He was 69. He was laid to rest at the Plain Lawn Cemetery in Hicksville.



***John Puvogel (far left) was Chief when the "Hicks" Drill Team took the New York State Championship in Saranac Lake, 1931 and the team is shown in front of the firehouse with their silver cups***

***Served 2 Years***

Henry Gleckler was born March 11, 1899, to John and Henriette (Rinne) Gleckler at 15 John Street in Hicksville. He married Margaret Dolliber in 1925 and resided at 19 Sterling Place. He was employed as a plumber for Braun Bros for 45 Years.

He joined the Department in 1918 as a member of Volunteer Hose Company 4, where he served as their Captain in 1927.

Harry, as he was known in the department, was elected the 22<sup>nd</sup> Chief in 1933 and again in 1934, with Valentine Kerbs serving as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief and Henry Luhmann as his 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief. Members were given first aid insignias to be sewn on their uniforms.

At the April meeting of the Department, the members voted in favor of creating the position of Financial Secretary. When the vote was tallied, William Cisler had 65 votes, Edward Strong had 40, Fritz Gleckler with 2 and rounding out the field with one was George Gleckler. William Cisler was declared elected and would receive an annual salary of \$40.

On February 18, 1933, the fire alarm sounded at about 3PM and the Hicksville Fire Department lost no time in getting to the burning building. It was the Fred Kunz house, located on Ninth Street, and Jerusalem Avenue. While working at the fire one of the ladders broke in two and August Jud dislocated several knuckles, misplaced his knee, while Tony Fussalo broke a rib. They were attended to by Dr. Rave. The origin of the fire was a mystery. The family was visiting neighbors across the street when the blaze was discovered.

Chief Gleckler dedicated the new Firehouse in May of 1933. Prior to construction in 1932, the old firehouse (now Peppercorns Restaurant) had been moved to its current location. A combination of brick and stone, the new headquarters has many up-to-date features and is among the best equipped firehouses in the county. It was built on the site of the old building which had served the community for 25 years. The new building is complete in every detail. The main floor accommodates the apparatus of all five companies of the department. A large



recreation area, company and commissioners' meeting room and the lounge are on the upper floor. Kitchen facilities, shower rooms and an indoor drying rack, as well as space for a billiard table are in the basement. During his term, after the new station was opened, he ordered a Department photo betaken at the new fire station.

At the July meeting of 1933, the department members requested that a new Company be created as Company 6. This Company would be a Rescue Company to handle first aid alarms. When the vote was taken, 96 members voted and there were only 26 votes affirming the request while 67 members voted "no" and the motion was defeated. In September of the same year the members voted against the creation of a new By-Law that would have forced members who were elected as Fire Commissioner to take a leave of absence from their respective Company. When their term was completed, they would rejoin their Company with all missed time counted as active service. The resolution was overwhelmingly defeated.

On August 20, 1934, Chief Gleckler mourned the untimely passing of his brother Edwin Glecker at the tender age of 23. Edwin was hospitalized with kidney trouble in New York City. He was Captain of Volunteer Hose Company 4 and a member of the Department for 7 years at the time of his passing.

In November, just as Henry Puvogel finished a practice game of polo at the indoor field of the Hempstead Riding Academy on Mill Road, as he dismounted, he collapsed. He was carried into the dressing room, to which Dr. Stewart Ross of Hempstead was summoned. The doctor said Puvogel was dead when he arrived. Puvogel was 41 years old and was well known as a polo player and former member of the Department and father of Ex-Chief John Puvogel.

In late 1934, the Department Surgeon, Dr. August Rave resigned and was given Life Member status with a Gold Badge. In his place, Dr. Walter Stillger took his place.

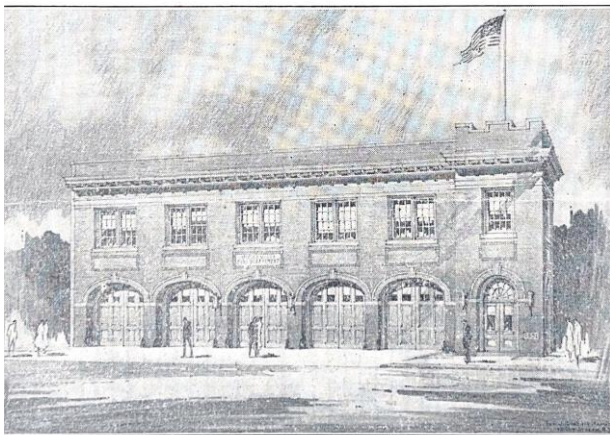
Henry was Chairman of the Annual Labor Day Parade and Drill in 1935. He was elected Fire Commissioner in 1939 and was reelected to four terms or twenty years. While in office, he served as Chairman in 1943, 1947, 1952 and 1957.

After 50 years of service, Henry (Harry) Gleckler moved to Trumbull, Connecticut, in 1968 where he lived out his final days and passed away on September 25, 1987. He is interred at Nichols Farm Burial Ground in Trumbull, Connecticut.



## *Hicksville Fire District*

HICKSVILLE, N. Y.



NEW HOME OF THE  
*HICKSVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT*

## OPENING OF NEW HOME FOR HICKSVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

BUILDING WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR INSPECTION FROM JANUARY 2 TO JANUARY 7. EDIFICE WILL BE THE MOST MODERN BUILDING OF ITS KIND ON LONG ISLAND, AND IS UP TO THE MINUTE IN EVERY RESPECT.

The opening of the new home for the Fire Department will take place on January 2 and will be open to the public for inspection from January 2 to January 7 inclusive.

The ceremonies will close with a dance which will be held under the auspices of the Fire Department.

The building was designed by Joseph J. Gunther, Architect, of Valley Stream, N. Y. and was constructed under his supervision.

The new building is located on Marie Street adjoining the Long Island Railroad.

The building has a frontage of 82'-0" and a depth of 74'-0", is of steel frame and masonry construction. The exterior is faced with Tapestry Brick and trimmed with Cast Granite. The walls of the apparatus room are finished with a wainscoting of glazed Terra Cotta approximately 5'-0" in height and colored cement plaster.

The first floor of the building has an apparatus room 57'-0" wide and 55'-0" deep, men's toilet and shower rooms, workroom, store-room, alarm-room, entrance vestibule, stairhalls, and hose drying tower.

On the second floor is located the assembly room 40'-0" by 54'-0" in size with a seating capacity of approximately 300 persons, stage, dressing-room, coat room, commissioners' room, company meeting room, committee room, men's toilet, women's toilet, and chromium plated sliding poles extending down to apparatus room.

An apartment for the use of the caretaker is provided on the Mezzanine floor.

The basement has a recreation room, 38'-0" wide and 54'-0" deep, billiard room for two tables, coat room, lounging room, men's toilet, battery room, meter room, kitchen & boiler room.

The heating plant is operated by an oil burning apparatus featuring all the most modern safety devices.

***Served 1 Year***

Valentine Kerbs was born on February 14, 1905, in the hamlet of Hicksville to German immigrant parents, August and Elizabeth (Werling) Kerbs. He married Madeline Guerin in December of 1924. Val, as he was affectionately known, owned a plumbing company and heating business and lived at 182 John Street. Val was later employed by Nassau County Department of Parks and Recreation.

He joined the Hicksville Fire Department on August 3, 1925, as a member of Independent Engine and Hose Company 2 and was assigned badge 178. Val was a charter member of Emergency Company 5 in September of 1928. He served as their first Captain and was instrumental in securing the Larabee Car from Volunteer Hose Company 4, with the 12 newly chartered members. He remained in office as Captain until 1930.

It was befitting of Val Kerbs to be elected Chief following his tenure as the first duly elected Captain of Emergency Company 5 from 1928 through 1930. Val Kerbs ran successfully for 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief against Daniel Munch, beating him 74 votes to 33. In the ensuing 1933 election for the 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief position, Val Kerbs was elected overwhelmingly with 115 votes. Val was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1932, and 1934, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief 1934-1935 and was elected in April of 1935 as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Chief of Department following the term of Chief Harry Gleckler.

In early July of 1935, Chief Kerbs attended a legislative session with other Chief Officers in petitioning them to pass legislation that would provide compensation for firemen killed in the line of duty and legislation absolving firemen from all civil liability from acts done in the performance of their duties as firemen unless willfully negligence or by malfeasance. Both articles introduced were passed later that afternoon.

October 15, 1935, a train struck a gas truck, and one man was instantly killed, and two others were injured, one seriously. A small kerosene tank truck exploded after being struck by a speeding Long Island Railroad train at the unguarded Charlotte Avenue grade

crossing. The explosion scattered the inflammable fluid over the locomotive and first two coaches, setting fire to them and the railroad ties. The driver of the truck who was killed came from Brooklyn. He suffered third degree burns and a broken neck. The two injured people both suffered third degree burns and were brought to Meadowbrook Hospital in serious condition. The fire which followed the crash threw passengers into panic and necessitated speedy work on the part of members of the crew to quiet them. The fire was finally extinguished under Chief Kerbs and damage to the train was slight due to the fact the flaming kerosene was on steel and iron portions of the train. The truck was demolished.

On December 27<sup>th</sup>, a fire that started in an overheated furnace caused over \$500 damage to a two-story dwelling at 78 Notre Dame Avenue. Just before leaving the office, a second fire resulting from an overheated lighting fixture caused significant damage that estimated at about \$2,000 to the City Lunch Restaurant on Herzog Place and Broadway. The blaze, which was confined to the rear of the building, was extinguished under the command of Chief Kerbs.

In December Chief Kerbs asked the Board of Commissioners to procure much needed equipment and apparatus for the Department. Unfortunately, four of the seven appropriations sought for the operation of the department were defeated by taxpayers at the greatest surprise to Chief Kerbs. Included among the appropriations defeated was \$7,500 for the purchase of a new hook and ladder truck; \$760 for red lights to be placed over 38 alarm signal boxes, \$1,000 to remodel and change the chemical truck and \$1,500 for the purchase of a new emergency truck. The vote on propositions were overwhelmingly defeated 82 yes with 176 against the propositions. Val took the defeat personally as a reflection of his tenure and he would not seek re-election and would serve only one term.

Val served as the “Hicks” Drill Team Captain during the championship years and was a member of the “Hicks” Drill Team when they won the only NYS Championship in Saranac, New York in 1931. He was a Charter member and 1st Vice President of the Exempts Firemen’s Benevolent Association in 1938. A member of the Firemen’s Association of the State of New York (FASNY), Nassau County Firemen’s Association (NCFA) and South Shore Firemen’s Association (SSFA).

Ex-Chief Kerbs reached his fifty years of active service in 1973 and was recognized as the Honorary Grand Marshal at the Labor Day Parade.



Chief Kerbs passed away on March 14, 1984, after 60 years of dedicated service where he was buried with full honors and Department Services and is interred at the Cemetery of the Holy Rood in Westbury.

### Chief Kerbs Gets Instrument of Office at Hicksville



Harry Gieckler, left, retiring chief of the Hicksville Fire department, presents the incoming chief, Valentine Kerbs, with the mallet of office as a group of officials watch. The presentation was part of the installation cere-

monies in the firehouse, last night. In the picture, left to right, are: Commissioner John Westhuesen, George Neder, Sr., Treasurer Frederick Miller, Second Assistant Chief Harry Borley, Chief Gieckler, Chief Kerbs, First Assistant

Chief Clarence Elyman, Commissioner William Braun. In the back row are John Devoget, chaplain, and Commissioner John Kerbs.

Review Staff Photographer



**Val Kerbs is shown as the Charter Captain of Emergency Company 5 in 1928**

***Served 1 Year***

Henry Luhmann was born on October 16, 1905, in the Bronx to his parents, Ahron and Wilhelmina (Prigge) Luhmann. He married Wilhelmina “Minnie” Kasten on June 28, 1927. They lived at 25 Flower Street. He was a Milkman at the M. H. Renken Dairy for over 25 years.

He joined Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 in 1928 and was a member until 1958, when he moved to Blue Point to be with his daughter. He served as Captain in 1931 and 1932.

In 1933, Henry was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief and in 1935 he moved to 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant and was subsequently elected the 24<sup>th</sup> Chief in 1935. His Assistant Chiefs were Harry Borley, (1<sup>st</sup>) and Charles Steinhauer (2<sup>nd</sup>).

During his term, a new resolution was passed that all ex-chiefs would have a change in their dress uniform. They would no longer wear white hats and a gold badge, but switch to blue hats with gold badges with a “blue” dot in the middle.

In February, two fires caused extensive damage to a house and barn of Al Swinge on Heitz Place and the home of Michael Geuna at 69 Jerusalem Avenue. Both fires were of undetermined origin.

While serving his term, Chief Luhmann assisted the Street Sign Committee for the community. This committee was an offshoot of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) that would rename the duplicate streets in Hicksville. At the time of his term there were 7 Maple Streets, 6 First Streets, 3 Fifth Streets, 3 South Parks Streets along with multiple, Howard, Oak, Regent, Elm, Pine and William Streets. This effort not just aids the postal service, but it will eliminate confusion for responding firefighters.

After leaving office, Henry was Chairman of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Labor Day Parade and Drill in 1937, and he would become a charter member and past President (1944-1945) of the Volunteer and Exempts Firemen’s Benevolent Association of Hicksville.



Chief Luhmann passed away at the age of 57 on July 19, 1963, and he is interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery.

Harry "Roxy" Borley (1937 – 1939)***Served 2 Years***

Harry Borley was born on June 26, 1903. He is the son of John and Frederica (Schwitzer) Borley who lived in the hamlet of Hicksville. He lived at 174 West Cherry Street, 135 Woodbury Road, and 162 Willoughby Avenue. His brother Arthur was a member of Company 5 for 21 years. Harry was an electrician by trade but went on to open a very successful bottling company known as "Roxy Beverages". He originally joined the Hicksville Fire Department on July 2, 1925, as a member of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1. He was assigned badge 146.

Harry was a charter member of Emergency Company 5 in September of 1928 where he served as their 2nd Lieutenant. In 1929, when Calvin Van Wickler resigned due to his work schedule, Harry was elected 1st Lieutenant, with Gerard Braun elected as 2nd Lieutenant. Subsequently he was elected as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain of Emergency Co.# 5 in 1931 and 1932. His Lieutenants in 1931 were Gerald Braun and Edmund Neder.

Harry Borley ran unsuccessfully for 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief, losing to Henry Luhmann in a highly contested event 48 – 46 votes with Daniel Munch once again trailing 3<sup>rd</sup> with 27 votes. The very next year Harry Borley was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief, defeating a field of three opponents, Gustave Efinger, Daniel Munch and William Bosch in 1934. He was then elected 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1935 and 1936. The By-laws were revised to have elections in April and Harry was elected in April of 1937, as the 25th Chief succeeding Chief Henry Luhmann. His Assistant Chiefs were Charles Steinhauer and Charles Jud. He stayed in the office until March 30, 1939.

During his term, The Hicksville Fire Department Field Club Football Team won top honors on Long Island and several members of Emergency Co. # 5 were part of the team, including Val Kerbs, Gerald Braun, and Lou Millervolte.

In January of 1938, Chief Borley and Commissioner John Werthessen held a ceremony where 45 members received new veteran service awards for being members of the

department. Presentations were made to William Schuckmann with 35 years of service and many others who achieved service milestones from 30, 25, 20, 10 and 5 years of service.

During his term, a Fire Prevention Poster Contest was started in cooperation with School Superintendent E.H. LeBarron. Over 30 entries were received and after the judging by the Art Department, George Simon an Eighth-Grade student won a \$5 prize. The department also held its first Open House with over 500 people jamming the fire station. The event kicked off with a parade through the town with members of the Jericho and Plainview Fire Department taking part. The keynote speaker was Dr. Walter Stillger, the department's surgeon. The closing keynote speaker was Arthur F. Bell, supervising instructor of the Firemen's School of Instruction. The Hicksville high school's band played several selections. The fire prevention contest is an annual tradition during Fire Prevention Month.

On January 27, 1937, Harry commanded the Department as flames blazed through wood frame structures on Broadway. Four Broadway stores were destroyed, 50 people who lived in apartments on the second floor were driven to the streets. A dentist's office was burned out and the branch office of the state motor vehicle bureau was gutted and several stores on each extremity of the fire were damaged. The fire started in the rear of the Grand 5 & 10 Cent store. It was believed that a defective furnace or stove was the cause. This store was gutted and apartments on the second floor were destroyed. All occupants of the apartments escaped safely. The Freitag building, which was originally built in 1886 and was one of the oldest buildings in the village was also destroyed. The Hicksville Sweet Shop, and the office of Seaman, Taliaferro and Eisenmann, realtors, all in this building were burned out. Occupants escaped Bahrenberg's bakery and the apartment overhead. Guerin's dress shop and Dr. Elkind's dentist office overhead were also gutted. The Hicksville cash meat market, Bohack's store and Spiros department store suffered considerably from smoke and water. The final damage was estimated at over \$150,000.

In August of 1937, a misplaced lit cigarette left a New Jersey man without the front seat of his brand-new car. Charles G. Pfeffer of Fairlawn, N.J, parked his car on Broadway and came out from a nearby store a little later to find firemen pouring chemicals on the smoking vehicle. Two fire companies answered the alarm and fought the flames which threatened to consume the entire automobile. According to the police, a lit cigarette dropped between the seat cushions was the probable cause of the fire. The front seat and back headrest were damaged by fire and chemicals used to extinguish the blaze. Patrolman Arthur Talbot and Edward Plat assisted at the scene and directed highway traffic around the burning automobile.

Chief Borley never knew what hit the Hicksville community when a hurricane struck Long Island on September 21, 1938, that came almost completely unannounced. The official weather bureau forecast for the day prior was rain and cool until less than two hours before when the full force of the storm was felt. A Manhattan news broadcast said the storm probably would hit Long Island. Travelling at over 75 MPH, the storm which arrived 10AM had been off Virginia, landed at Jones Beach and continued north-northeast across Long Island. The community of Hicksville was suddenly and almost without warning in the very midst of one of the worst storms ever to hit Hicksville. All of nature's destructive forces came in a furious onslaught against the works of man. Fires, flooding, and cloudbursts were followed by the howling 90 MPH winds. While not the hardest hit, Hicksville firemen raced to many alarms as water rose from 2 feet in some spots to 4 feet in others. Damage estimates ran as high as 26 million dollars with a unprecedented fury which uprooted huge trees and tangled electric wires. Reports noted train service was interrupted; motor traffic was disrupted and a tree six feet in diameter crashed on Duffy Avenue. The storm tore up Long Island and uprooted 6,000 trees, 600 telephone poles and local crops were levelled. While only three people died in Nassau, 59 others died in Suffolk, by the east end that was hit the hardest.

Harry's term ended with two smaller fires, at a dwelling located at Maple Street and West John Street that caused \$200 in damage and a fire in a barn that held potatoes at the farm of Michael Dwyer on Newbridge Road causing over \$10,000 in damage.

During his term the department's racing team at the Lindenhurst tournament won a new mascot that they would name "Susie". The monkey, that was won, had the children of the community calling her Susie. At the department meeting the members voted to keep the monkey. The little animal, which was as wild as a wild cat when delivered, is now reasonably tame according to members. Susie had created many visitors, putting on a considerable show on the various pieces of apparatus whenever two or three arrived to watch her. She ate regularly, and it costs 50 cents a week to feed her.

On April 20, 1937, Chief Borley accepted delivery of a new American LaFrance, that would be assigned to Volunteer Hose Company 4. This new 400 Series featured fresh, new styling with highly, rounded hood lines and a raked one-piece windshield built into the cowl. It had an open cab and ground ladder banking. The total cost was \$7,500. During his term, two pieces of equipment were sold to the highest bidder. The Pierce Arrow Racing truck and the old Diamond T Ladder Truck.

Between 1937 and 1939, the department had a significant increase of membership with over 45 new members being sworn in. Among the members were four future Chiefs.

Chief Borley passed away on November 16, 1987, with 67 years of service and is interred at Cemetery of the Holy Rood in Westbury.



Harry Borley shown in 1928 as a Charter Lieutenant of Emergency Company 5



***Served 1 Year***

Charles Steinhauer was born July 31, 1897, on the family farm in Central Park (Bethpage, NY) to Charles Sr. and Josephine (Krauss) Steinhauer. He married Mildred Herte in September of 1923 and was employed as a Machinist and Automotive Mechanic for M.J. Knipping & Sons in Westbury. He lived at 32 West Cherry Street, 45 Park Avenue, and his last home at 19 First Street, all in Hicksville.

Charles joined Volunteer Hose Company 4 in 1915 and served as their Captain in 1928 and as their Treasurer. Charles was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief 1936 through 1938 and as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1938 and was ultimately elected the 26<sup>th</sup> Chief in April of 1939. His Assistant Chiefs were Charles Jud and Vincent Braun.

It was during his term that the district would purchase members dress uniforms, adopting a new style uniform. It was in June that the Hicksville Water District decided that they would paint fire hydrants “yellow” that were at the end of the water main. This would allow responding firefighters the ability to recognize that the water pressure was low and that they should not hook up more than one apparatus on this same main line.

At a Fire Prevention demonstration Chief Steinhauer explained that common sense will go far toward reducing the loss of life and property from fire. Joining Chief Steinhauer was Captain Jack Sweeney of the Nassau County Firemen's school. A battery of speakers discussed before the large audience in the auditorium of fire headquarters several things which should be done and a greater number which should not be done to guard against fire in homes, business buildings and elsewhere. The demonstration followed a parade through the center of the village, under command of Chief Steinhauer with firemen and apparatus from the Hicksville, Jericho, and Plainview Fire Departments. Chief John McDonald was in command of the Jericho Department and the Plainview Department was under command of Chief Conrad Staehler. The Charles Wagner American Legion post band played. Chief Steinhauer insisted that fire prevention should be practiced 52 weeks in the year, not one week. He paid high tribute to Erie H. LeBarron, Superintendent of Hicksville Schools, who



would never allow a minute to pass without some discussion on fire prevention. He believed that the school was the best setting to teach fire safety to school children. The system inaugurated and followed by Mr. LeBarron should be taken as a pattern for all schoolmen throughout the country.

On October 2, 1939, fire damage to the plant of the Press Radio Corporation on Cantiague Road was estimated at \$300. The fire was caused by a short circuit and the damage was mainly to the one-story frame building housing the plant although some repairs and replacements must be made to apparatus, it was reported. Hicksville firemen were under command of Chief Steinhauer who controlled the blaze before serious damage was done to receiving apparatus. The plant is one of the receiving stations of the corporation in the metropolitan area.

Chief Steinhauer received his 25-Year Gold Badge with Henry Schnepf in 1940 from Chief Vince Braun. Charles was a Charter Member, Trustee and President (1942) of the Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville.

Chief Steinhauer passed away at the age of 57 on July 28, 1955, and he is interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville



***Served 3 Years***

Vincent Braun was born September 2, 1910, to his parents William and Kathryn (Jacobs) Braun. He married Marian Gebhardt in November of 1937. They lived on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and he owned and operated his own Butcher Shop on Broadway, which was established by his uncle, Fred Braun.

Vince was a World War II veteran serving as a Corporal, then Sergeant in the United States Army from 1943 through 1945.

Vince followed in his father's footsteps and joined Volunteer Hose Company 4 and served as their Captain from 1934 through 1937. In 1941, his father William installed Vincent, as the 27<sup>th</sup> Chief of the fire department. Braun succeeded Charles Steinhauer by defeating Lawrence Small by a vote of 80 to 57. There were contests for the two assistant chief's positions. Stanley Cheslock was elected first assistant, receiving a vote of 61 to 45 for Gustave Efinger and 34 for John Leckie. George Engel defeated George Gleckler for the second assistant's post.

In January of 1941, fire caused by a defective chimney caused an estimated \$2,500 damage to a coat factory at 21 West Nicholai Street. The building is a one-story structure formerly used as a movie house. As is customary in the case of blazes in mercantile establishments, Chief Braun referred the matter to the fire marshal's office for investigation. The blaze, which started between the walls, apparently was well underway before it was discovered by workers. Firemen had difficulty in bringing the fire under control because they had to break through metal walls and ceiling to reach the flame.

In March of 1941, fire roared through a three-story frame factory building which was visible for nearly 10 miles, leaving the structure a bed of ashes and twisted machinery. Unofficial estimates of the loss made at the scene ran as high as \$100,000 although officials of the company could not fully estimate the value of materials and machinery in the structure. All that remained of the building itself was fragments of the walls of the lower floor, mostly along the eastern side of the building. The plant was occupied by the Lakeville Manufacturing

Company which manufactured wood and metal cabinets including kitchen equipment and special cabinets for commercial purposes. It was located on Bethpage Road, adjacent to the Long Island Railroad.

The flames and smoke blacked out the tracks halting service on the railroad for about 20 minutes as the firemen, directed by Chief Braun, carried hoselines across the right-of-way to keep the blaze from the ties of the roadbed. It started on the upper floor on the south side of the factory and spread through the interior of the building. The intense heat hampered the firemen and kept more than 500 spectators well away from the building. Hard work by the firemen kept the flames from the distribution plant of the John P. Trommer, Inc., brewers, which is the closest building to the factory site in the east. Hoselines were kept trained on the roofs of nearby homes as sparks threatened to spread the flames. The destroyed building was a landmark that had stood for about half a century, being used at one time by the Breslin Lumber company as lumber yard and for wood products, and later by the Trommer company.

In September of 1941, a fire of undetermined origin destroyed a large one-story frame warehouse filled with grain and hay in Hicksville after inventory was taken by the owners, the Nassau G. L. F. Farmers' Cooperative. Flames shooting high into the air at two minutes before midnight was the first warning of the fire, the second bad warehouse fire in the community in six months. The warehouse was located on West Barclay Street. Only the blackened walls remained, the entire inside gutted by the blaze which fed on the combustible grain and hay stored in the building.

In November of 1941, a fire caused by an overheated kerosene water heater caused an estimated \$1,000 damage to the lower part of a two-story brick building at 17-19 Broadway. The blaze began in the cellar, and the flames, spurred by kerosene, were seeping into the first floor, occupied by a bar and grill, when firemen under Chief Braun brought the fire under control. The building was owned by Mr. & Mrs. Joseph and Amelia Jablonsky, who lived in an apartment above the tavern.

In February of 1942, Chief Braun commanded a fire at a Gas Station. The fire loss to the building was estimated at \$51,000. The fire was of undetermined origin damaged the station building, a one-story frame structure, and situated at 145 Broadway, and was operated by Eli Friedman of 49 Lenox Avenue, Hicksville. The firemen extinguished the blaze in about an hour.

In April of 1942, fire destroyed Bonura Florist located at Old Country Road and Duffy's Lane and took the life of a worker sleeping on the second floor. The alarm came in at 3:30AM and firefighters were on scene within minutes. Firefighters attempted to access the attic where the resident was located, but they were driven back by the intense heat. Firefighters would locate the charred resident on a couch where he had fallen asleep.

During his term Chief Braun, required residents who burn refuse on their property to obtain a permit and that the permits were obtainable from Henry Gebhardt, recently appointed fire warden for the district.

It was during his term and under the direction of the United States Department of Defense, Chief Vince Braun created the Fire Police Civil Defense Squad. This was similar to those used during World War I. Chief Braun authorized the use of the old Ford to transport members to fires for the purpose of maintaining order. The Squad was staffed by five members from each Company who served extra duty. During his term many members joined the war effort with the United States Army. Many other members would begin to work long hours in factories that would support the war effort in Hicksville, including Grumman. Chief Braun also had the Board staff the firehouse between 11PM and 7AM due to recent sabotage at other area fire departments.

The members that were selected to serve as Fire Police were.

Arnold Jeanson – Co 1	Clarence Valentine – Co 2	William Ulman – Co 4
George Metz – Co 1	Edward Schluter Sr – Co 3	George Rennie – Co 4
Henry Gebhardt – Co 1	Edward Schulter Jr – Co 3	Howard Heberer – Co 5
Arthur Maxey – Co 1	Wm Christensen – Co 3	Henry Walton – Co 5
Charles Schaefer – Co 1	Sid Rigby – Co 3	John Jeanson – Co 5
Charles Jud – Co 2	Jack Leckie – Co 3	Ralph Kraemer – Co 5
August Jud – Co 2	Joseph Goettleman – C 4	Edward Devlin – Co 5
Arthur Reimels – Co 2	Joseph Jablonsky – Co 4	

In February of 1941, work of the Hicksville Fire department was expedited for residents to use the new electric alarm system for reporting fires, instead of telephoning headquarters. Chief Braun expressed that by pulling the switch at a box causes a numerical signal to be sounded by the siren at the firehouse. Firemen would proceed directly to the scene of the blaze. After pulling the switch, the person reporting the fire was asked to remain near the box to direct

firemen to the scene. Chief Braun pointed out that alarm boxes, located at intersections in all sections of the community, cost the district \$2,000 a year to maintain. The boxes were marked at night by red lights.

Chief Braun established five substation Civil Defense Points in Hicksville as rallying points for civilian defense workers and equipment in event of an emergency call. Chief Braun announced that two stations were at the police booth at Broadway and John Street and on the opposite corner: the others at service stations at Old Country and Newbridge Roads, at Old Country Road and Broadway and at Plainview Road and Park Avenue.

Twenty-six members were presented with first aid certificates by Chief Braun. The firemen passed the first aid tests after receiving instruction from Edward Smeller, of the physical education department at Farmingdale High School.

Chief Braun was elected to an unprecedented third term in 1943 when he was re-elected. He again was looking to stay in office in 1944 but was defeated at the annual election of officers by George Engel, his opponent, who was elected by a vote of 73 to 48.

Vince was a member of the Annual Labor Day Parade and Tournament Committee, serving as its chairman in 1947 and again in 1956. He was also a Charter Member of Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville and served as its President 1948 – 1949.

After serving as Chief, Vincent was elected as Fire Commissioner in 1946 and was elected to five 5-year terms spending twenty years on the Board, serving as Chairman in 1949, 1954, 1959, and in 1964.

As a business owner in Hicksville, Vincent was a member of the local Lions Club, serving as its President.

The Braun family extends through many generations and across several notable families within the firefighter community (i.e. Gebhardt, Schuckmann, Saurer, Ofenloch). Vincent's grandchildren, William, and John Zike, continue the family tradition as 4<sup>th</sup> generation volunteer firefighters in Volunteer Hose Company 4. His great-grandson, Steven served as well in Volunteer Hose Company 4 before transitioning to the New York City Fire Department.

Vincent passed away on October 21, 1969, and he is interred at Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale, NY.



*This was one of several fires that Chief Braun served in Command. This was the Lakeville Manufacturing Fire in 1942*

*Chief Braun's grandchildren John, William and Stephen all served as members of the Hicksville Fire department in Volunteer Hose Company 4*







***Served 1 Year***

George Engel was born August 16, 1907, and was the son of William and Lena Engel. George married Mildred Kuhn in June of 1928. He worked as a laborer for the Hicksville Water District and lived at 186 West John Street. George joined Emergency Company 5 on November 9, 1932, when they were stationed on Marie Street.

When Bill Cisler and Edward Devlin resigned as Lieutenants at the end of 1935, George was elected 1st Lieutenant and was subsequently elected the 7<sup>th</sup> Captain in 1937. His Lieutenants were Stanford "Sam" Weiss (1st Lieutenant) and Robert Heberer (2nd Lieutenant).

During the height of World War II in 1943, George Engel would normally progress up the chain of command. However, Vincent Braun wanted to stay on as Chief for another term. After the dust cleared, George Engel was victorious over Vincent by a vote of 73 to 46 and elected as the 28th Chief. His Assistant Chiefs were Edward Mack and Stanley Cheslock. He would be re-elected in 1944.

George served as the "Hicks" Drill Team Captain in 1938 and 1940, during the championship years. George was a participant on the Annual Labor Day Committee for many years and served as Chairman in 1946. When the United States was at war in Europe, many fire departments including this department, found themselves without many young firefighters. They were serving their Country. The annual labor day events in Hicksville, came to an abrupt halt and George would Chair and host a community dance, which took place until 1945. It included the participation of Grumman's Orchestra, "The Contentials", playing the sounds of big band music. The events included a raffle for War Bonds and War Stamps.

George Engel lost his first attempt at running for Assistant Chief in a very close election to Charles Steinhauer, with a margin of 31-27. Two additional candidates made their mark with less votes (Joe Eisemann 19, and Fred Mason with 17). Two years after departing as Captain, George Engel would be elected 2nd Assistant Chief in 1940.

Chief Engel demonstrated a new fog nozzle type attachment and its effect in controlling oil fires with a fog pattern. The Chief set ablaze 50 gallons of used crank case oil and allowed the members to take turns using the nozzle under actual conditions.

It was during his term that the Hicksville Fire Department lost three members overseas during World War II. Henry Gebhardt Jr., Gregory Stock and Arthur Noeth all were killed in action and laid to rest with full military and fire department honors.

The question of making the department by-laws more flexible in regards to the number of consecutive meetings a member might miss before being expelled from the department was given back to each Company to address individually. Many of the members were working in war plants at night and therefore unable to attend night meetings. Chief Engel decided that the solution to the problem should be handled by each of the five companies separately.

During World War II, Chief Engel had to move operations off the second floor of the firehouse to accommodate the War Department. Press Wireless took possession of the entire second floor to participate in the war effort. This lasted until the end of the war.

In his report to the Community and Board of Commissioners, Chief Engel reported that fire damage was at an all-time low in 1943, with less than \$5,000. Most of the fires were grass fires. He was also beginning to see a reduction in firefighter response due to effort in World War II.

In 1944, a fire broke out under the metal and wooden roof of the Atlantic Concrete and Pipe Company located on West John Street. Firefighters were hampered by the need to climb ladders and catwalks near the ceiling to reach the building and access the roof.

A fire was started by a 4-year-old child at the home of 78 Notre Dame Avenue. The grandchild was playing with matches on his bed when the fire caught the bed spread. Fire damage was limited and put out quickly.

During his term, the department was saddened to learn of the passing of Fire Commissioner Sebastian Wuchter. He served for over 17 years.

Upon his retiring as Chief, he was presented with a Black Onyx Ring from Commissioner Harry Gleckler and incoming Chief, John “Jack” Leckie.

George was elected Fire Commissioner and served two-five-year terms from 1950 to 1959, serving as its chairman in 1953 and 1958.

George served as Treasurer from 1943 through 1962. He was President of the Volunteer Firemen’s Exempt’s Benevolent Association in 1947 - 1948. He was a member of the Firemen’s Association of the State of New York (FASNY), Nassau County Firemen’s Association (NCFA) and South Shore Firemen’s Association (SSFA).

On June 11, 1962, George was placed on the honorary rolls, with 29 years active service to the Hicksville Community.

Chief Engel passed away on February 12, 1973, and he is interred at Washington Memorial Park in Coram.



***Chief Engel leading a resident to safety during an apartment fire***



***Chief Engel shown at the Hicksville Inn with Sam Weiss, Gerry Offenloch, Bill Cisler, John Hanley and others during an inspection dinner***

***Served 1 Year***

Jack Leckie was born February 13, 1906, in Edinburg, Scotland. He immigrated to the United States with his parents James and Gemime Leckie in 1909. His family moved to Hicksville in 1927 from Glen Cove. He married Mary Elinore Deppish in January of 1928. They resided at 111 West Nicholai Street. He was employed as a Maintenance Worker at the Nassau County Sanatorium in Plainview. This was a hospital that isolated tuberculosis patients from the rest of the population. He retired from the Sanatorium in 1967.

Before joining the Hicksville Fire Department, Jack was a member of the Glen Cove Fire Department for five years. Jack joined Chemical Engine Company 3 in 1932 and was given badge 264. He would go to serve as Lieutenant and as their Captain.

In 1940 he ran unsuccessfully for 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief against Stanley Cheslock. In April of 1945 John Leckie was endorsed by members of the five companies to serve as the 29<sup>th</sup> Chief after serving one year as an Assistant Chief to replace George J. Engel, who had served for the prior year. His Assistant Chiefs were Edward Mack (1<sup>st</sup> Assistant) and George Kunz (2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant). Chief Leckie was only the second Chief elected that immigrated to the United States. Anthony Manzollillo was the first immigrant elected Chief.

During his term Jack helped celebrate VJ Day in August of 1945. An estimated 1,500-men, women and children crowded the streets of Hicksville immediately following the announcement of Japan's surrender, parading, shouting, and regaling in a hilarious demonstration. Police closed traffic at the intersection of Broadway and West Marie Street. They halted automobile traffic temporarily as excited persons jammed Broadway waving flags, throwing paper, using noisemakers, and shrieking unintelligibly. The reaction that released pent-up emotions began with the sounding of the village fire horn one minute after President Truman's official announcement that peace had come. Seven fire trucks followed immediately from the firehouse, and no sooner had they reached the street when residents jumped aboard for a ride through the main streets of the village. Chief Leckie led the parade. Cars, decorated

with multicolored crepe paper and filled with persons inside and on the running boards, civilians and servicemen and women waving American flags and children dressed in costumes.

Chief Leckie represented the department as part of the Hicksville World War II Memorial Committee. Leckie was designated to act on behalf of the department in voting on the memorial suitable for the community as part of the Committee. Several proposals were discussed by members of the department, and all were deemed acceptable, depending upon Leckie's approval.

At the Memorial Day Parade that year, Chief Jack Leckie and the members paraded in full dress uniform with two fire trucks that included a wreath donated by the members of Company 1. It was placed at the village honor roll in memory of three members who gave their lives in the recent war. Chief Leckie approved a bronze plaque to be placed on the Firehouse in honor of those served. Ceremonies were held with 300 residents in attendance with NYS Assemblyman David S Hill as the keynote speaker. It was noted that 42 firefighters from Hicksville served in World War II and three did not return. They were Henry A. Gebhardt, Jr., Gregory Stock and Arthur Noeth.

In September of 1945, the Hicksville Airpark Club closed its doors. Opened since 1929, this 80-acre airfield on Jerusalem Avenue to Hempstead Turnpike had fallen victim to rising land values. While Hicksville was charmingly rural in 1929, by late 1945 it was about to become solidly suburban. As the houses closed in towards the airfield, it became dangerous to operate an airfield. That was when William Levitt offered \$2,200 an acre and the club ceased flying. Chief Leckie and the firemen were asked to aid the fire support during the demolition of the aviation park buildings.

In November of 1945 several fire calls at the town dump located on Charlotte Avenue prompted John R. Brandt, Town of Oyster Bay Superintendent of Highways, to team up with Chief Leckie and to issue warnings to dump only noncombustible materials into the dump. Fires have been caused by spontaneous combustion and a plastics plant nearby forced firemen to spray water on intermittent outbursts of fire for days. The fires are particularly hazardous because of the adjacent plastic products plant where high acetones are used. During the early years of the war, bullets and high explosives were manufactured at the plant. As a precautionary measure, the Superintendent and Chief Leckie had to place a high fence around the dump and prohibit dumping.

During his term, there were a few notable fires that included in June of 1945 a fire in the warehouse of the Armour Fertilizer company, Jerusalem Avenue, that did considerable damage.

In December of 1945 Chief Leckie accepted delivery of the Ward LaFrance, 200 HP, Model I85, Waterous Pump and 750 GPM pumper with closed cab (#2248) for Company 2. The old "White" pumper was used as a trade in.

In December, just 9 months into his term, John Leckie resigned to take on the role as Fire Commissioner. Leckie was appointed to fill the vacancy left by the recent death of Commissioner John Werthessen. He was appointed to his new position during a meeting of the board of commissioners. The members of the department chose Edward Mack, who was serving as first assistant to become chief, and George Kunz was raised from second to first assistant. One of the final acts in office by Leckie, was to appoint Charles Ambron chairman of the memorial committee.

Just a year after taking office as Fire Commissioner, Leckie was met with opposition to fill the unexpired term of three years. Jack lost to Ex-Chief Vince Braun. However, Jack ran again in 1950 and was elected Fire Commissioner with 751 votes against Daniel Munch who had 202 and Henry Quimby with 94. In 1950 through 1955, while he was Commissioner, the Hicksville Fire Department received its first ambulance, which was donated by the people of the town. Commissioner Leckie was an important figure in the purchasing of the grounds for the sub-station houses at Briggs Street and Strong Street. Jack served as Chair of the Fire District in 1955.

Jack helped organize the Exempt and Benevolent Association of Hicksville in 1938 - 1939 and he would go on to served, as their President in 1946 - 1947. He continued to serve as the Company 3 Trustee of the Association for many years.

In the mid 1960's Jack helped to organize Floodlight Company Number 8. Along with everything else that Jack would do, he found the time to be active on many Department Committees: Budget, Welfare, and Tournament Committees, just to mention a few.

Jack served as the Honorary Grand Marshal of the Annual Labor Day Parade and Drill. He was a member of the Hicksville Robert L. Bacon Republican Club.



He was a long-time trustee of the Hicksville United Methodist Church. He was a trustee of his church for 18 years and was instrumental as president of the trustees in the decision to sell the former church site on Broadway and build a new church on Old Country Road in 1949.

After 54 years of service, Chief Leckie passed away on March 7, 1987, and he is interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery.

***Served 1 Year***

Edward Mack was born March 4, 1894, in Manhattan and is the son of Gustav and Margaret (Volk) Mack. He married Charlotte Grieb in December of 1921. They resided at 50 East Barclay Street and then 30 Maple Place. Edward was employed as a Laborer with the Town of Oyster Bay Highway Department.

Edward was a veteran of World War I, serving as a Corporal Company C, 39<sup>th</sup> US Infantry, 4<sup>th</sup> Division in the United States Army Corps from August of 1917 through October of 1919. He was assigned to the Prisoner War Escort Company before being honorably discharged. Chief Mack was awarded the Purple Heart at the American Legion Post for his injuries sustained in Chateau Thierry, France.

Edward joined Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1. When George Metz was drafted into the war, Edward was elected as their Captain in 1940 and 1941. He was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1944. He was elected the 30<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief without serving a full term as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief due to the resignation of Chief Leckie. His Assistant Chiefs were George Kunz (1<sup>st</sup>) and Fred Masters (2<sup>nd</sup>). It was his military leadership that gave the men confidence in his ability to lead them.

Chief Mack passed away at the early age of 53 on October 18, 1947, and is interred at the Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale, N.Y.

***Served 1 Year***

George Kunz was born on March 7, 1897, in the hamlet of Hicksville and is the son of Louis and Rosina (Bauman) Kunz. George married Helen Nelsen. He owned his own butcher store and lived at 163 Woodbury Road, 17 Spruce Street and 30 Lowell Street. George originally joined the Hicksville Fire Department as a member of Independent Engine and Hose Company 2 in August of 1918 and was given badge 66. He transferred to the new chartered Emergency Company 5 in September of 1928.

George was elected as the 5<sup>th</sup> Captain in 1935, without ever serving as either 2nd or 1st Lieutenant. His officers in 1935 were Lawrence Small (1st Lieutenant) and George Engel (2nd Lieutenant).

George was elected as the 31<sup>st</sup> Fire Chief in 1947 through 1948. His Assistant Chiefs were Fred Masters (1<sup>st</sup>) and Daniel Munch (2<sup>nd</sup>). In 1947 a 60-year-old woman died from smoke after becoming trapped in a closet in her home located on 13th Street, near East Avenue. It appeared that woman was woken from her sleep and attempted to escape the smoke. She must have become confused and disoriented. Upon entering the rear vestibule there were two doors, one to the exterior, the other to a closet. She entered the closet and could not find her way out and died of smoke inhalation. She was pronounced dead at the scene by the County Coroner.

A fire broke out at the butcher shop of Kollner's Inc. at 97 Broadway. The fire originated in the refrigerating system of the shop when it was discovered, but not before it caused considerable damage.

George was a member of the Drill Team, and he was a Charter member of the Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association. He served as Labor Day Parade and Drill Chairman in 1948. Additionally, he was a member of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY), Nassau County Firemen's Association (NCFA) and South Shore Firemen's Association (SSFA).

George was elected Water Commissioner in July of 1955, when Commissioner Colthurst

decided to step down that July. He received 657 votes during an election which saw a record-setting turnout. He ran on the platform urging the controversial fluoridation question be decided by a public referendum and not forced on by local officials.

By the end of his term, the Board of Fire Commissioners passed a resolution that would only allow Chiefs to serve no more than two consecutive years.

George gave 34 years of active service to the Hicksville Community before requesting Honorary status on May 7, 1962.

Chief Kunz passed away on September 1, 1969, with full Department Services and is interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery.



*George Kunz is pictured here in 1928 as a Charter Member of Emergency Company 5*



Fred Masters was born on April 13, 1896, in New Jersey, the son of Frederick and Palma (Olsiro) Masters. They lived at 19 East Barclay Street. He married Mae in September of 1921. They lived at 19 East John Street. He was employed by Griffin & Rushmore and Aircraft and later as a Mechanic for Grumman Aerospace.

He was a Veteran of World War I, where he served as a Private in the United States Marine Corp from July 1917 through August of 1919. He served in the 5<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion in the battle of Meuse-Argonne, France.

#### ***Served 1 Year***

Fred was a member of Independent Engine and Hose Company 2. He was elected and served as Captain in 1943 and 1944 before being elected as the 32<sup>nd</sup> Fire Chief in 1948. His Assistant Chiefs were Daniel Munch (1<sup>st</sup>) and Stanford (Sam) Weiss (2<sup>nd</sup>).

Steam locomotives of the LIRR were believed responsible for two fires which destroyed more than two acres of a grain field between Duffy Avenue and the railroad, near Underhill Avenue. The fields were part of a 160-acre parcel that were planted in grain and owned by William Duffy. Flames raced across the tinder-dry grain fields towards the house on the north side of Duffy Avenue.

Chief Masters was instrumental in the conceptual design and procurement of the new racing truck for the department. The Ford F5 had a Speed wagon body (1320) and was also used to carry floodlights and had a canvas top to keep the driver dry during inclement weather. The truck, known as "Truck 6", when not used by the department was used as a racing truck. The total cost of the rig was \$3,058.08, and built by Hill Motors, Hempstead Welding and George Neder Jr..

In November of 1948, Chief Masters accepted delivery of the Seagrave fire truck for Emergency Company 5 from Columbus, Ohio. The pumper started production on March 22,

1948, and it was completed on October 28, 1948. This engine was a Seagrave model 66 with serial number D-9205. On November 16, 1948, following the Underwriter's test, Chief Masters accepted the delivery of the 1948 Seagrave, and a final check was drafted by the Board in the amount of \$13,902.50. It was also during his term that the department parted ways with three of its most used apparatus. The 1925 Larabee was sold to William Gebhardt (Henry's Brother) for \$255 and Roland Heberer purchased the two old White Fire Trucks for \$100 each.

Chief Masters served on the Hicksville FD Labor Day Parade & Tournament Committee and served as its chairman.

Chief Masters passed away on March 16, 1959, and is interred at the Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale, New York.



*Chief Masters is shown with Chief Weiss (left) and Ex Chief Gebhardt (right) during a racing tournament*



***Served 1 Year***

Daniel Munch was born September 15, 1903, the son of Louis and Louise (Shaefer) Munch at their home on East Marie Street. He married Lillian Henne in July of 1926, and they lived at 199 and 207 1<sup>st</sup> Street. He was employed with the Long Island State Park Commission, working as a foreman at Jones Beach.

He joined Volunteer Hose Company 4 and served as their Captain in 1930 and 1931.

In December of 1933, Daniel was appointed Teller to oversee the election under compliance with the Kirkman Act. The election board consisted of William Stolz, John Fitting, Andrew Heberer, Jr. and John Puvogel. There were

seven candidates for the offices of fire commissioners and two for secretary-treasurer. There were 726 votes cast of which only four were declared void. The positions given in the following order as per number of votes received: Sebastian Wuchter, 5-year term, 584 votes; Charles Van Wickler, 3-year term, 505 votes; John N. Kerbs, 4-year term, 571 votes; William Braun, 2-year term, 455 votes.

In 1949 Daniel was elected as the 33<sup>rd</sup> Fire Chief and his Assistant Chiefs were Sam Weiss (1<sup>st</sup>) and Edward Schluter Jr. (2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant).

It was during Daniel's term that the Department would start the discussions to canvass businesses to help support the annual Labor Day Parade and Drill. More than 15,000 people witnessed the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Parade and Tournament, coordinated by Chairman Edward Dwyer. It was dubbed the biggest competition for volunteer firemen held in the State with 54 companies and departments participating. The parade route was Broadway from Herzog Place south to the racing course on New South Road (near the Glass Floss Plant).

Chief Munch would direct training on the use of the Chemox Mask. He placed 3 on the new Seagrave. The Chemox mask was a chemical O<sub>2</sub>, closed-circuit apparatus with a

disposable canister. It was developed and marketed by MSA in 1946 as a one hour breathing apparatus.

As the community continued to grow, a new modern circuit switch board was installed to support the Gamewell Alarm System throughout Hicksville. This fire alarm telegraph system was a series of fire alarm boxes located on street corners and telephone poles. Each box was assigned a specific number and when a box is pulled or activated, a “code wheel” containing “teeth” would spin, causing the normally closed circuit to open for a momentary pulse. These pulses corresponded to the box number, alerting the fire department to the activated box alarm. The box number was transmitted four times, known as rounds, to assure it is received properly at the fire station. These pulses would cause the blasting of the signal via the horn at the main firehouse.

In March, the biting cold and winds hampered firemen with two fires within a half hour of each other, around midnight. Both fires were off Duffy Avenue, the first was grass fire behind Nassau Seed, and the second, a half hour later, was a shed behind the town highway barn. Prompt action by the firemen quickly brought the blaze under control, although the spray from the hose line ice-crusted the firemen. Damage was small in each case.

The Board of Fire Commissioners provided all companies with the recommendations of Civilian Defense authorities of the county and state and directed that the company increase their membership. A new limit was set at 40 men, compared with the previous limit of 35. At the same time, companies will be permitted to enroll as members not more than five men who are 35 to 45 years of age, the previous limitation on age was 35 years for all applicants.

When William Braun stepped down as Fire Commissioner in December of 1950, Chief Munch ran for Fire Commissioner and was beaten by former commissioner Jack Leckie who had 751 votes against his 202 votes.

Chief Munch was a Charter member of the Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville and past Treasurer. He had a son Maynard Glenn Munch who was a member of Volunteer Hose Company 4 and Fire Commissioner.

Chief Munch passed away at the age of 53 on June 9, 1956, and he is interred at the Plain Lawn Cemetery in Hicksville.

***Served 2 Years***

Stanford “Sam” Weiss was born on December 31, 1906, and was the son of Harry and Hannah (Goodman) Weiss. They lived at 35 Broadway. He married Catherine “Kitty” (Waller) Weiss in June of 1929. They lived on Herzog Place, at 109 Plainview Road and on Bethpage Road. Sam was first a Dairy Farmer that ended in 1930 and later owned his own electric business, known as Ultra Electric, for over 20 years.

Sam’s father, Harry, owned a grocery store on Broadway, and he was a member of Company 2 around 1915. His mother Hannah was a founding member and the 1<sup>st</sup> President of the Ladies Auxiliary. Sam was a Veteran of World War II, serving in the United States Army in 1943.

Sam joined Emergency Company 5 on April 4, 1930, and was assigned badge 234, when they were stationed on Marie Street. Sam was appointed 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant to fill the remaining term of August Cardella when he resigned in August of 1937. He would be elected as 1st Lieutenant in 1937 and would become the 8<sup>th</sup> Captain in 1938. As Captain, Sam would create a new Committee to oversee the publicity and post notices in the local paper.

Sam was elected by the membership as the 34<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Department from 1950 to 1952. His Assistant Chiefs were Edward Schluter Jr. (1<sup>st</sup>) and Wilber (Arnold) Jeanson (2<sup>nd</sup>).

A letter was presented to the Board of Commissioners after a small fire in a Levitt-built house. The letter was placed in circulation by the North-Levittown Homeowners Committee after a 5-day investigation. The report branded the fire department as incompetent, and the report was considered a barefaced attempt to besmirch the integrity of the Hicksville Fire Department. The charges which were presented were ridiculous and show a complete lack of knowledge of the workings of the fire district or fire department. An independent committee of the Board of Fire Commissioners was made public into the fire at the home on Fork Lane, that proved conclusively that the charges of negligence on the part of the fire department are without foundation.

In March of 1951, an oil stove explosion burned out the lower floor of a house and injured a 71-year-old man, John Kelsey who was filling the oil stove reservoir in his home at 142 West John Street when the blast spewed liquid flames on living room furniture. Treated at the scene by Dr. Harriet Jackson of Meadowbrook Hospital East Meadow, for burns of the face and shock. Kelsey was taken to the hospital where he was reported in fair condition.

On July 3, 1951, property damage estimated at \$3,000 was caused to the Just Rite Bakery on Broadway and Cherry Street, when the floor over the ovens in the rear of the building ignited. Additional damage of \$300 to bread and cake dough ready for baking was also calculated. Thick smoke and clouds of steam hampered the firemen under the direction of Chief Stanford Weiss.

A resident at 218 Lee Avenue was burned when the gas tank in the car of which he was working on exploded and he was taken to Meadowbrook Hospital where he was treated for burns to his eyes and lacerations to his face.

On a cold November night, firemen were forced to drain the giant high overhead water tank next to the railroad station on Jerusalem Avenue. Over 500 spectators watched with anticipation as firemen searched for a small boy that they were told fell into the tank. Chief Weiss put up floodlights that would light up the sky as they shined on the 44-foot tank. To the hundreds of spectators, it seemed like an ominous death, when they located the boy's bow and arrow that he was playing with. Chief Weiss decided to drain the tank through the feed line that served the railroad as he feared that the body in the tank would be drawn down the 34-inch pipe and become lodged at ground level where the pipe tapers. Assistant Chief Schulter and his crew on the top of the tank worked hours using grappling hooks to locate a boy. Firefighter Harold Hauxhurst had his employer, C.W. Lauman bring over 100 feet of metal piping that would be used to drain the tank. The futile 7-hour rescue ended when that tank was drained and no body was found. It would later be found out that it was the imagination of a young boy looking for attention.

The Department distributed 10,000 stickers to homes in the district, advising them to call a special number in case of fire. The number is Hicksville 3-0026. The red on white sticker measures 3 inches by 5 inches and is used for posting to a phone book or near the household phone. The listing of a number to call in case of fires is expected to eliminate much confusion

and a delay in the routing of alarms to the Department. For more than a decade the phone number had been “unlisted” and was only connected in event of an emergency.

In October, Charter Department member from 1893 and past Assistant Foreman, Adam L. Dauch passed away and funeral services were held with Department honors. He was interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery.

On November 10, 1951, the entire department mourned the sudden death of Walter Francis Stillger, M.D. and Department Doctor, who served as a family physician and as an active civic leader for more than three decades. He died suddenly at the age of 60 and was interred with full Department Honors. The Department was also saddened to learn of the passing of former Chief William Duffy.

During Sam’s term, he was instrumental in bringing the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO), a major electric utility to Hicksville. An office building complex was constructed that fronted Old Country Rd. This would become LILCO’s headquarters in Hicksville.

The Department, under Sam’s direction, was on duty for two successive nights fighting a persistent fire in tons of rubbish in the pit of the Searington Sand and Gravel Co. on the south side of West John Street. The fire continued to smolder and smoke throughout three days, until the debris was completely buried with sand by the pit operator. An estimated 60,000 gallons of water or more were poured into the flaming pit by the firemen to extinguish the blaze.

Sam also served as President of the Exempts Benevolent Association in 1949 – 1950 and served on the Labor Day Committee serving as Chairman in 1953 and 1957. As the Chairman in 1957, Sam was able to secure the newly opened Mid Island Shopping Plaza as an area to host future events. Sam worked with Stackler and Frank to host the 29th Annual tournament at this location. It would become a long-lasting agreement with the Mid Island Plaza. That year the Parade was attended by 4,104 firemen and ladies and a record 25,000 spectators showed up to witness the day’s events. The events ended with less than 1,000 spectators when the contest ended around midnight. The cause for the delay was due to the underground water main which broke, and a temporary water supply was provided by Karlson and Reed Contractors and the Hicksville Water District.

Sam was elected Fire Commissioner in 1959, serving one- five-year-term and served as Chairman in 1963. In 1972, Sam was elected as Water Commissioner, a post he held until

1980. During his term of office at the Hicksville Water District, residential homes and commercial buildings grew. The district increased their facilities to serve all its customers adequately. During his term of office, the district built its first Water Treatment Plant at Bethpage Road to improve the quality of water.

Sam served as Past President of; 9th Battalion Chiefs Council, Nassau County Firemen's Association, FASNY; South Shore Firemen's Association, and as a Nassau County Parade and Drill Official. In 1984 the membership elected Sam to receive the American Legion Award for his fifty years of active service to the community.

Sam was a long time Committeeman for the Ernest P. Francke Republican Club, Masons and Kismet Shriners.

Chief Weiss gave 56 years of active service to the Hicksville Community before passing away on July 12, 1988. He is interred at Montefiore Cemetery in Springfield Gardens, NY.



***Chief Weiss shown fueling an antique fire apparatus during an upstate parade***



***Ex Chief Weiss shown with a member of Engine Company 7 at a store fire Circa 1958***



***Served 2 Years***

Edward Schluter Jr. was born July 23, 1916, and the son of Edward Sr. and Lillian (Puvogel) Schluter in Hicksville. He married Matilda Erb in October of 1946, in Mechanicsville. They lived at 20 Raymond Street, and he was a General Contractor.

Ed was a Captain in the United States Army during World War II. He was with the 78th Division, 309th Regiment Cannon Company and was awarded the Bronze Star. Capt. Schluter served in the European Theater.

He joined Chemical Engine Company 3 and was a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation firefighter. His father was Chief Edward Sr. and his brother Harry Schluter served as well. He served as

Captain in 1950 and was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1950 and 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief 1951, before being elected as the 35<sup>th</sup> Chief in 1952 through 1954. His Assistant Chiefs were Arnold Jeanson (1<sup>st</sup>) and Lawrence (Larry) Huttle (2<sup>nd</sup>).

In May of 1952, the Department approved a new by-law that would allow any member having served at least 25 years in the Department, or at least 15 years upon reaching their 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, the ability to request to be placed on the Honorary List. This list would exempt members from fines, dues, and assignments. This is similar to what is now “Life Active” status.

In 1953, voters approved the purchase of an RCA 60-watt base station to enhance radio communications. Only Chief Schluter would have a radio to communicate with the fire dispatcher. During his term it was an active year for fire and emergency alarms. Chief Schluter commanded the members at a fire in the Soda Spa on South Broadway. The blaze started in the basement when a Christmas Tree and rubbish fueled the basement fire. A second fire at Bea’s Luncheonette located at 200 Broadway and a fire gutted at Zike’s Barn on New South Road. The barn was slated to be demolished when the fire was discovered at 11:15PM on December 30<sup>th</sup>.

In November, a young mother died of coal gas poisoning and her two children were felled by the gas in their home at 27 North Drive. The mother was unconscious in the bedroom

and the children had fallen in the living room. Firemen worked on the victims for two hours using up two large tanks and six small tanks of oxygen. The 29-year-old mother died at the hospital and the two children (3 and 6) recovered from gas poisoning.

During the holiday season in December, an explosion split open a new home in Hillside Terrace off Woodbury Road. The explosion caused the death of an oil burner repairman and put a mother and two young children in the hospital. The mother was preparing her baby's bottle in the kitchen at the time. The flashfire roared through the house, blackening walls, particularly in the kitchen where all the white woodwork was blackened. Windows were smashed and the walls of the house buckled. A wall in the bedroom was pushed a foot out of line. The cause was a gas heater and kitchen range that ignited when the switch was thrown to start the oil burner. The repairman for the Whale Oil Products of Brooklyn was in the semi-basement of the new dwelling when the explosion took place. His clothes were shredded and ripped from his body by the blast. Her children were taken to Meadowbrook suffering severe burns.

Two-way radios were added to the apparatus fleet. The new system was linked to the fire station on Marie Street. It was tied into the current Gamewell fire alarm box system.

At the Department meeting in October of 1953, it was voted on and approved to issue Ex-Captain's badges to members who have attained the title and purchased by the Board of Commissioners.

During the Labor Day 25th Anniversary in 1953, over 4,000 volunteer firefighters and hundreds of Ladies Auxiliary members participated in the events. Edward set up a committee to coordinate a special event that took place on the Saturday prior to Labor Day with the "Bug House" Comedy Parade, which was well attended by many Nassau County departments. Following this was a block party opposite the firehouse, complete with a 5-piece orchestra, lasting until the wee hours of the morning. Chief Schluter oversaw the first televised Labor Day firemen's tournament on September 7 that was held on Levittown Parkway. It was televised on NBC.

The notable fires under his command were a gas main explosion on Broadway and Somerset Avenue that sent flames over 30 feet into the air, taking hours to control, but not after one building was destroyed. Two people were hurt, including Edward Dwyer who was

taken to Meadowbrook Hospital with 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree burns. The year ended with a fire at Hudson Motors on 206 Broadway,

A seven-year-old boy who resided at 33 Picture Lane, was a victim of the tragic accident in a newly dug drainage pit. His death was a result of lack of fencing at the pit which is under construction as a sump for a new housing development. There were several children playing around the rim of the new pit which was still being dug. The child slipped and pitched down the bank, loose sand and gravel cascaded downward and within seconds the sand had covered him to a depth of about two feet.

During his term, the Department was saddened to learn of the passing of former Chiefs, Fred Fricke, and Julius Augustin. Edward served on the Annual Labor Day Parade and Drill as their chairman in 1955.

In March of 1975, Oyster Bay Town Councilman Warren M. Doolittle announced the Town Board appointment of Edward Schluter, Jr., as Commissioner of the Hicksville Water District. Schluter whose appointment was effective immediately, filled the vacancy caused by the death of Commissioner W. Arnold Jeanson. He is a resident engineer with Charles H. Sells Inc., and had experience in all phases of sanitary sewer, storm water sewer and drainage.

Edward moved to Halcottsville, NY in 1980 and was a member of the Halcottsville Fire Department. Chief Schluter passed away on July 11, 2009, and is interred at Kelly's Corner Cemetery in Margaretville, New York.



*This is an actual photograph when a 7-year-old boy was killed during a tragic accident in a newly dug drainage pit. The boy's death brought was a result of lack of fencing at the pit which is under construction as a sump for a new housing development*



***Served 1 Year***

Wilber Arnold Jeanson was born August 20, 1910, in Hicksville and is the son of John and Martha (Mahoney) Jeanson. He lived in the Jeanson homestead on the corner of Broadway (next door to St John's Orphanage). He married Beatrice Mohrbach in 1946. He was employed as a Well Driller for CW Lauman Water Contractor and later for Grumman Aerospace.

Although born with the name "Wilber" he went by his middle name, Arnold. He joined Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 on March 31, 1932, and served as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in 1943, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 1944 and went onto serve as their Captain 1945 – 1946.

Arnold was elected the 36<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief in 1954 and his Assistant Chiefs were Larry Huttle, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant and Medard Ofenloch, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant.

Coming into the mid-fifties, the Northwest Civic Association completed a six-month effort to petition the Fire Department to accept a Chevrolet Ambulance, which the residents were able to raise the necessary funds. It was estimated that \$ 13,000.00 was raised and the Fire district accepted the keys during the Labor Day ceremonies in 1955.

The Board of Fire Commissioners proposed to Chief Jeanson local properties for sub-fire stations of the district. The appropriation of funds for the purchase of three locations was included in the 1954 district budget. The Board accepted contracts that have been signed by the Board of Fire Commissioners for the purchase of three sites for sub-firehouses. The sites include (1) triangular piece, about 170 ft. fronting on Woodbury Road at Briggs and Ronald Streets; (2) 180 x 100 piece on west side of Newbridge Road at corner of Buffalo Street and (3) property on west side of Strong Street measuring 183 x 119 feet and about 125 feet from the corner of West John Street. Architect plans were drawn for buildings to be proposed for each parcel.

There were three notable fires while he was Chief. The first on the property of Phil Barberie Property on Cantigue Road; the 2nd had firefighters answering a call at the Stackler and Frank property, the former St. John's Protectory barn on North Broadway when the building caught fire. The third fire caused damage estimated at \$40,000 and ruined the Aircraft Restaurant at the corner of Herzog Place and Broadway. The blaze broke out apparently in the kitchen and the blaze gutted the restaurant kitchen. It caused damage to an adjacent decorating shop and a dress factory on the second floor. It was the most destructive fire in the community in over 10 years.

Chief Jeanson was a member of the Hicksville FD Labor Day Parade & Tournament Committee. During his term, the department was saddened to learn of the passing of Ex-Chief Edward Schluter Sr. who served as Chief in 1913 - 1914.

Arnold's two brothers, John, and Otto were members of Company 5 and 1. John served as Captain on two separate occasions. The family homestead has its own street named after the family, known as "Jeanson Place", located off Nevada Street close to the entrance of the Broadway Mall. The Jeanson home once stood next to the St. John's Orphanage.

In 1969 Arnold was appointed to the post of Water Commissioner after the passing of George Kunz. He was appointed by both the Town of Oyster Bay and Town of Hempstead and took his post immediately. He was elected to his own term the following year and while in his 3rd year of his term, the district was stunned with his untimely passing.

He was corresponding secretary of the Hicksville Republican Club, secretary of the Hicksville Committeemen's Counsel and a member of the Manetto Lodge No. 1025 of Hicksville.

Chief Jeanson passed away on January 21, 1975, and he was interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery in Hicksville.

***Served 2 Years***

Lawrence (Larry) Huttie was born on March 31, 1914, in Brooklyn N.Y. and was the son of John and Edna (Hopgood) Huttie. He married Margaret “Peggy” Gordon in September of 1940. He worked for the Long Island Railroad and lived on Notre Dame Avenue.

Larry joined Volunteer Hose Company 4 on August 13, 1945, and was elected 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 1954, then without serving as Captain, he was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1952 – 1953, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief 1954, before rising to rank as Chief in 1955 through 1957.

During his term as Chief on November 15, 1955, firefighters were called out to help find a missing two-year old girl. She went missing near the Hicksville Farmers Market near Vincent Road and Miller Road. Just after darkness fell the floodlights were turned on and little Kathy Kenehan was located by Anthony Cannizzaro with the help of Joe Graham and Eddie Richardson.

During the Labor Day Parade, a fire was discovered at the Good Bar Ice Cream warehouse at Newbridge Road and Duffy Avenue causing considerable damage.

A fire broke out in the Bing’s Chinese laundry at 146 Broadway, firefighters had to fight their way into the thick smoke and searing flames. Prompt response by the firefighters kept the fire in the laundry, which was gutted, along with hundreds of shirts. Fire also threatened the French Cleaners in the same building and the occupants of second floor apartment were driven from their home.

In August of 1955, fire gutted the paint shop of Perfect Line Manufacturing Co. on Old Country Road, next to the LIRR tracks. Efficient work by firemen under the leadership of Chief Huttie brought the blaze under complete control in less than 30 minutes. Thick smoke poured from the building and the paint shop interior was a roaring inferno with flames feeding on paint



and lacquers. The fire apparently started while a paint spray gun was being cleaned. Wearing smoke masks, the firemen battled the blaze with foam and water. The only casualty was William Westerberg of Co. 2 who suffered finger and arm lacerations while helping rip metal fume vents off the flat roof of the building.

Two families were evicted when flames swept Olga's Specialty Shop at 134 Broadway, in April. The alarm was reported at about 10PM and firemen were on the scene for more than 3 hours. Smoke filled the building which was owned by Repetti Brothers who lived on the second floor. Damage to the Specialty Shop was extensive. The fire appeared to have started in the front of the store and swept across the stock area.

Chief Larry Huttie decided it was necessary to provide a special squad to perform the duties associated with the ambulance. In October 1955, the Rescue Relief Squad was organized by Assistant Chief Medard Ofenloch and John Specht was appointed as Captain.

The construction of two new fire stations that were built on Woodbury Road at Briggs Street and Strong Street at West John Street were completed. The community's growth had the Chiefs, with the support of the Commissioners, create a Sixth Fire Company for additional protection to the Northwest area of Hicksville. On February 6, 1956, a group of men transferred from other Companies and organized Hook & Ladder Company Six. That year, Chief Huttie, Captain Harold Hauxhurst, Company 6 and Andy Claus, Company 5, opened the new Sub Station on Strong Street.

Chief Huttie would have the membership train on the new MSA Asbestos Safety Suit. In October of 1957, the Mid Island Plaza would open its doors and Chief Huttie and the members were part of the celebration and on hand for the opening ceremonies.

Chief Huttie went public in July of 1956 asking for support in gathering portraits of the members who served as Chief Officer of the Hicksville Fire Department. He was assigned a 6-member committee consisting of Fred Noeth, Harold Manaskie, Henry Gebhardt, Joseph Eisemann, Jack Leckie and Vince Braun. The project was a success as family members of former Chiefs were able to get the missing photographs and they were arranged in the Department Meeting Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor at Fire Headquarters. All but Jacob Christ was located. Today, the portraits of 71 Chief Officers are arranged in year order in the basement of Station 1 (Headquarters).

The Fire Prevention Week in 1957 had the new Rescue Squad displaying the latest lifesaving equipment placed into service. The Batronic Resuscitator operates on an electric shock principal.

In 1958, Ex-Chief Huttie ran unsuccessfully for Fire Commissioner against Ex-Chief Ofenloch, Ex-Chief Weiss, Firefighter Cono Brigandi and James Matienzo. Ex-Chief Weiss was duly elected to a 5-year term.

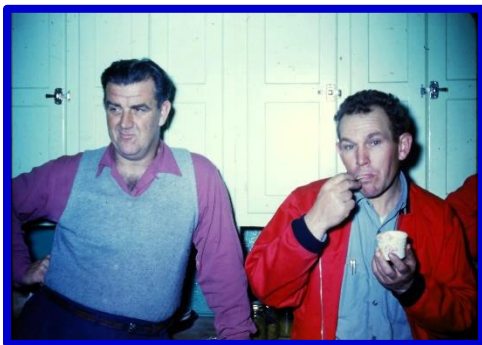
Larry was also elected as Department Delegate to the 9th Battalion and served as Chairman of the 9th Battalion Fire District. Larry served as a Trustee of Firemen's Benevolent Exempt Association and as its President in 1972 through 1973. Larry had always assisted the Department in its many activities. He had always been first to give aid in and counsel in the unending projects that keep a department functioning. He is always available to show members how to build or to make the items necessary so the Volunteer Fire Service can continue. He served as the 1<sup>st</sup> Fund Drive Chairman in 1959 and was instrumental in raising funds for the department through 1972. Larry was a member of the Annual Labor Day Parade and Drill Committee for many years and served as its chairman in 1958, before being honored as its Honorary Grand Marshal at the Annual Labor Day Parade & Drill in 1974.

Larry's two sons, John (Jack), and Jimmy were members, and his three grandchildren, Richard, and Ronald Proffe, and John Huttie Jr., all served as members of Volunteer Hose Company 4. Additionally, his son-in-law Donald Zinkhan, was a fire dispatcher and a member of Protection Hook & Ladder Company 1.

Chief Huttie passed away on March 31, 1992, and is interred at the Cemetery of the Holy Rood in Westbury.



***Chief Huttle and Chief Davis  
consult during an auto accident in  
the mid 1950's***



***Chief Huttle leading the members during a Memorial Day Parade  
in 1956***



***Chief Werthessen with  
Commissioner & Ex Chief Vince  
Braun along with Ex Chief Huttle  
shown during a Fund Drive press  
event in 1960***

***Served 2 Years***

Bernard Medard Ofenloch was born September 7, 1921, in the village of Hicksville, the son of Joseph and Margaret (Jacobs) Ofenloch. He married Alice Apgar in October of 1947. They lived at 59 West Cherry Street and 86 Benjamin Avenue. Medard worked for Grumman Aerospace, before taking on a career with the Nassau County Police Department.

Medard was a Veteran of World War II, serving in the US Army participating in several battles in the South Pacific of Saipan, Iwo Jima, Timian, and Japan. Sgt. Ofenloch had a bird's eye view over Tokyo Bay when the Japanese signed the surrender document while circling overhead in B-29 Superfortress, from about 800 feet up in the air.

Medard, as he was affectionately known, was a 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Firefighter, and his grandfather, Phillip was Foreman in 1858 of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1, before the Department was organized. Following in his family tradition, he joined Protection Hook and Ladder Company One on February 12, 1942. He served as Lieutenant in 1947, and subsequently became Captain from 1949 to 1950. Medard's brothers all served in the department at the same time; Henry, Hubert, Anslem, and Gerard. Medard's son Thomas, also became a member and served as Captain and Fire Commissioner.

Medard was narrowly elected in 1954 to serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief when he edged out Charles Saurer, 68 to 66 votes with Conrad Schlauch coming in a distant third with 22. Medard would continue to serve in 1955, and he was elected as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1956 – 1957, before taking on the rank as the 38<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief in 1957 – 1959. Ofenloch turned away a challenge from Charles Saurer as he was going into his second term. Chief Ofenloch received 118 votes with Saurer garnering 31. It was during his term as Chief that the department changed to have their elections in April of 1958 and added a 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief.

The increased backlog of prospective members and increased fire alarms had Chief Ofenloch and the department requesting the Fire Commissioners to consider the possibility of forming a seventh fire company. Through the continued efforts of Chief Ofenloch, his request

became reality on April 25, 1957, when Engine Company Seven was organized with Ex-Captain Cliff Davis of Volunteer Hose Company Four acting as their interim captain. That company was assigned the old 1939 Seagrave which was once the apparatus of Volunteer Hose Company Four.

The department made a motion to ask the Fire Commissioners to have them purchase a Chief's car, a Chevrolet Wagon for Chief Ofenloch. This would be the first car to be used by any Chief in Hicksville.

During his term on September 14, 1957, the members were placed on 24-hour duty with round-the-clock shifts stationed at the Strong Street firehouse. The members staffed radio shortwave systems, operating on emergency generators, and remained in full operation. This all while a hypothetical "H-Bomb" was dropped on Long Island in a full-scale drill. The Mid-Island Plaza with almost a mile of underground tunnels was converted into a Civil Defense operation headquarters. In this underground shelter was the Civil Defense Command Post, communications center, as well as sizable accommodations for the Welfare and Medical Units.

There were several significant fires during his term.

Intense heat caused intensive damage to second-floor apartments in the professional Building at 108 Broadway. The elderly tenants were found in the smoked filled hallway by Sam Weiss and Joe Braun with the help of Jack Leckie. The tenant was transported to Meadowbrook Hospital in the Fire Department ambulance.

In February, seventy-five firemen fought flames on the second floor of the Rainbow Restaurant at 108 Broadway. Thick smoke hampered the volunteers, and the burned-out staircase made it difficult to tackle flames with exterior ladders. Damage to the first-floor restaurant was minimal because the bar was open for business the same day.

A lightning bolt struck the Dwyer barn on Newbridge Road, next to the Village Green, shortly after midnight in May and set fire to the roof. When firemen arrived on the scene, flames were already breaking out of the roof at three points. The three farm trucks stored in the barn were backed out to safety despite falling ember and portions of the ceiling. Moments after the trucks were rolled out, the ceiling and roof of the barn crashed down.

In December, a pre-dawn fire caused extensive damage to Hubert's Delicatessen and the Carle Restaurant on the west side of Broadway near Nicholai Street and included the dramatic rescue of two people from a second-floor apartment. The residents who live in the apartment over the restaurant climbed out on a one-story extension roof in the freezing cold when they realized that their exit down the stairs was blocked by smoke and flames. The alarm, which was sounded by the owners of the delicatessen, were aroused by the smoke in their apartment over the store and made their way down the stairs to the street. The fire apparently broke out in the walls between the Restaurant at 128 Broadway and Hubert's Delicatessen at 130 Broadway. The smoke and heat caused extensive damage to both establishments.

Fire caused over \$150,000 in damage to the County Neon Sign Company that was located at Jerusalem Avenue and at the Railroad Trestle on Broadway.

Another fire proved to be challenging at the Magnesium Casting Company located on Duffy Avenue at the corner of Charlotte Avenue. Mutual aid was provided by McArthur Airport, Grumman, and the Bohemia FD due to the G1 Powder that burned for hours.

In March of 1958 Chief Ofenloch received the newest apparatus to its fleet. The Mack 1,000 gpm pumper cost \$30,000 and assigned to Company 3, replacing the war-time Dodge fire truck.

The department attended funeral services for Ex-Chief Anthony Manzolillo with department services and internment at Nassau Knolls Cemetery in Port Washington.

Medard was Chairman of the 100th Anniversary Parade in 1968, celebrating fire protection for the community. Medard was also a charter member of the Rescue Squad in 1955 and was the Department's Sergeant-At-Arms and its Chaplin from 1987 – 2008.

Medard took active rolls in several major department committees including the Welfare Committee, Fund Drive, and the Annual Hicksville FD Labor Day Parade & Tournament Committee, where he served as its chairman in 1959 and again in 1964. In 1977 he was recognized for his efforts as the annual Grand Marshal. Medard was a mainstay each year in setting up the temporary grandstands at the annual event.

He was a member of the "Hicks" Drill Team for over 30 years and was their Captain in 1968 and 1969 and again in 1973 through 1976.



Medard was a long-time member of the Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville and served as their President in 1954 - 1955 before taking on the role of Trustee for many years. He was President of the 9th Battalion Chiefs Council, a member of the New York State Fire Chiefs Association and the New York State Firemen's Association.

In 1965, Medard Ofenloch was elected Commissioner of the Hicksville Fire District and served until 1969, serving as its chairman in 1968.

He was a member of the Hicksville Veterans of Foreign War (VFW), the American Legion and he was a 4th Degree Grand Knight of the Joseph Barry Council.

Chief Ofenloch passed away on February 19, 2008, and is interred at Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale NY.



*Chief Ofenloch was the 1st Chief to be issued a car by the fire district*



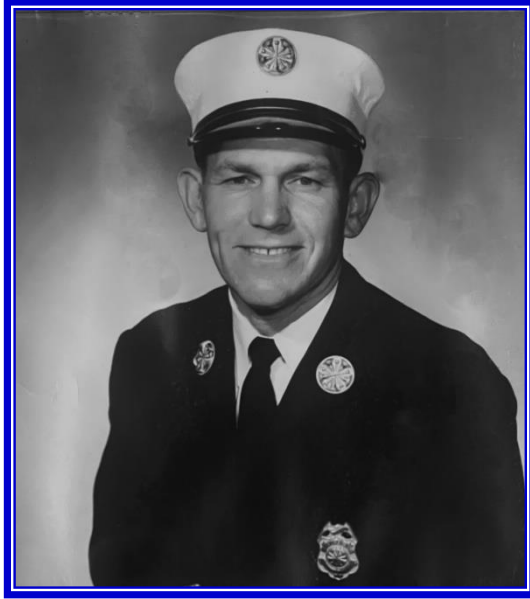
*Chief Ofenloch shown during the overhaul stage of a store fire*



*Ex Chief Ofenloch as a Grand Marshal during the Protection Hook & Ladder 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade in 1968. He is steering the Wantagh horse drawn truck.*

*During the heyday of the Rheingold Beer contest from 1941 to 1964, the election of a new Miss Rheingold was an exciting, anticipated event. The picture shown of the six young women were at the annual Labor Day Parade with Chief Ofenloch. Designed to sell Rheingold Beer, it did that and much more. It became an annual event with everyone voting for their favorite. At the height of the campaign there were 35,000 boxes displayed at the end of aisles, atop crates of Rheingold beer and on bar tops – always with pictures of the six finalists framing the box*



***Served 2 Years***

Charles Saurer was born on September 3, 1916, in New York City and was the son of Charles and LuLu (Weibert) Saurer. Charlie moved to Hicksville and graduated from Hicksville High School. He married Ruth Gebhardt in September of 1942 and was employed as an Aircraft Mechanic at Grumman Aircraft before becoming a Mail Carrier for the United States Postal Service, with a business route in Levittown. Charlie lived his entire life in the family home at 51 First Street. Charlie was a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Veteran. His father a veteran of the Spanish-American War, Charlie was a veteran of World War II, serving in the United States Navy aboard the USS Siboney (CVE-112), an aircraft carrier in the Pacific.

Charlie joined Volunteer Hose Company 4 in 1937 and served as Lieutenant and Captain, before being elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1955 – 1956, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1957 – 1958 and subsequently elected as the 39<sup>th</sup> Chief in 1959 through 1961. Charlie received 118 of 120 votes cast. His Assistant Chiefs were Walter Werthessen, Walter Telender and John Specht.

His ever-present smile and good cheer made him more than just a fellow fireman, it made him a friend to everyone he met.

During his term in office, the Department would issue new orders that allowed officers' fire helmets to be painted with each company color on the rim and line officers were color coordinated with "Red" for Captain and "Yellow" for Lieutenants.

Chief Saurer started a campaign to help in the locating of permanently bedridden invalids in the event of a fire in their home. He had stickers made up and available to the residents to be displayed on the window of where the invalid was located. To ensure proper placement he sent out firemen to the homes of those requesting the stickers. This remained in effect until the 1980's and was morphed into child alert stickers for a short time.

The Hicksville community was making room for widespread progression with the Long Island Railroad train tracks being elevated, and the State Department of Transportation would widen Broadway, from two lanes to four lanes. Many prominent businesses on the West Side of Broadway were destroyed. Businesses were not the only things destroyed on Broadway.

In early December 1959, a little frame dwelling at Jerusalem Avenue and West John Street was the scene of a fire next door to the Empire Diner. The Diner owner confessed to dumping gasoline into the building before igniting it. A local patrolman notified firefighters, and it was feared that an elderly occupant was living there. The patrolman observed someone enter the building. He followed to investigate and as he pushed open a door, there was an explosion, which tore off his clothing and put him in Meadowbrook Hospital. The diner owner was apprehended and booked for second degree arson. Police revealed that the diner owner said he sought to buy the property to provide an enlarged parking area for the Empire Diner.

During the year of 1960, the Hicksville community saw two beloved businesses ravaged by fire. This was Hicksville's most destructive fire in almost 25 years and caused damage estimated at \$300,000. It destroyed the Nassau Press Printing plant, a Tenant office building, and the roof of an adjoining private dwelling on West John Street. 10 firemen were injured or suffered smoke poisoning, and several were removed to Meadowbrook Hospital and then discharged. The alarm was sounded at 5:55 am and the roaring inferno which apparently started in the printing plant in the rear was brought under-control in about two hours. The flames, fanned by the wind, leaped from the printing plant about four feet to a 2-story frame building at 31 West John Street.

When flames swept the garage of Preferred Transmix Concrete Company in the pit at Duffy and Charlotte Avenues, firefighters drove six of the heavy concrete mixer trucks out of the structure and moved about a dozen other trucks in the immediate vicinity out to safety where damage was estimated at \$30,000.

Another fire at the Kantor Brothers tire recapping plant on Broadway started in the late afternoon and took many hours with mutual aid assistance from neighboring departments. The damage was estimated at over \$350,000 and 27 firefighters were taken to area hospitals. Following the Kantor Bros fire, the 1948 Seagrave maintained by Company 5, was inadvertently left in pump in for several hours causing major malfunctions that would leave the Seagrave unsalvageable.

In September several fire department members were part of a contingent that stood by and welcomed Vice President Richard Nixon who stopped by Hicksville while enroute to Grumman Aerospace. Over 10,000 residents greeted him at the Mid Island Plaza.

This was the year that Nassau County broke ground on the construction of a Firemen's training facility in Bethpage. Charlie would lead the department services for Ex-Chief Fred Masters Sr., who passed away in March.

Chief Saurer was recognized for his heroism on September 6, 1957, when he arrived at 26 East John Street to find the dwelling with a large volume of fire and smoke coming from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Chief Saurer entered the structure first and led the rescue, confronted by heavy smoke. After removing the occupant from the bedroom, he was met by ex-Chief's Medard Ofenloch and Arnold Jeanson, and they removed the occupant to the front lawn. It was determined that a mattress started the blaze and Chief Saurer was taken to the hospital for smoke inhalation and released a day later. Chief Saurer would be recognized for his efforts years later.

Charlie was a Charter Member of Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville and served as their President 1955 – 1956. He was elected Fire Commissioner from 1964 with 467 votes against his challengers Medard Ofenloch with 390 and Nick Brigandi with 189. Charlie served through 1968 and was Chairman of the Board in 1967.

Chief Saurer was a charter member of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Fire Chiefs Council and a member of the Nassau County Firemen's Association, and the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY).

In 1997, Chief Saurer was recognized for his 60 years of active service when several fire trucks and nearly 100 members showed up at his residence to wish him well.

Chief Saurer passed away on February 1, 1998, and is interred at the Long Island National Cemetery in Calverton New York.





*On September 6, 1957, Chief Saurer arrived at 26 East John Street to find the dwelling with a large volume of fire and smoke coming from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Chief Saurer entered the structure first and led the rescue, confronted by heavy smoke. Chief Saurer would be recognized for his effort's years later.*



*Chief Saurer, left is shown with his Assistant's Telender and Offenloch*





***Served 1 Year***

Walter Werthessen was born August 11, 1923, in the hamlet of Hicksville and he was the son of John and Gertrude (Wirtz) Werthessen. Walter married Dorothy Clara Reinard. He was a house painter before working as a Labor Foreman for the Hicksville Water District. They lived at 70 Burns Avenue.

Walter joined Emergency Company 5 on April 4, 1942, and was given badge 309. He was a second-generation fireman; his father John was a member of Independent Engine & Hose Company 2 and former Fire Commissioner, transferring to the newly chartered Emergency Company 5. His brother John also was a member for a short time in Company 5.

Shortly after joining, Walter joined the United States Army in February of 1943 where he remained until December of 1945. After returning from service during World War II, Walter was elected in March of 1947 as 2nd Lieutenant and less than 3 months later Walter would be moved up to 1st Lieutenant in June. Walter remained as 1st Lieutenant in 1948 and would be subsequently elected as Captain in 1949.

In April of 1956, the Department created the position of 3rd Assistant Chief and as a result there were four members who sought the coveted position: Raymond Veittheer of Co. 7, Harold Schaefer of Company 1, William Dyckman of Co. 2, and Walter Werthessen. Walter received 90 votes of the 169 votes cast and was duly elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief and subsequently became the 40<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief in April of 1961. He assumed command of the Department from Chief Saurer who completed his term of office. That same evening, shortly after midnight he would command the department at a fire at the old Griffin and Rushmore Warehouse.

Residents were urged by Chief Werthessen, by mail in 1961, for Annual donations, the first such appeal which was and still is the major contributor for the Department.

Chief Walter Werthessen accepted the delivery of a new Mack Floodlight unit and initiated a Deputy Squad to man this apparatus with 2 members from each company.

In July of 1961, the Department's first cab over-engine fire truck with automatic transmission was delivered to the community and went for testing before it was accepted by Emergency Co. 5. It replaced the Seagrave which was decommissioned following the Kantor Bros building fire. Chief Werthessen welcomed the C95 Mack, 1,000 GPM pumper, a twin to the Independent Engine Company 2 and placed it into service. The cab had seating for four; two up front and two in jump seats behind the cab on each side of the engine housing. There was a split hose bed with access from the rear with seating for more firefighters. The Mack had a Thermodyne, gasoline engine (6-cylinder/276hp) and a five-speed manual transmission. The unit had a Waterous 1,000-gpm two-stage centrifugal pump and a 300-gallon water tank.

Chief Werthessen presented a gold badge notably inscribed to Labor Day Parade and Drill to William Koutensky, President of the Long Island National. The badge was made by him and Honorary Chief of the Department for his long-standing support of the Labor Day and Fund Drive activities.

At the 33rd Annual Labor Day event a heat wave with temperatures above 95 degrees cut short the event at the Mid Island Plaza, but not before tragedy struck the event when Chief William Michaelson, of the East Norwich Fire Department collapsed while leading his unit. He was pronounced dead upon arrival at Meadowbrook Hospital.

Walter's term in office, there were four fires that caused significant damage. There were two separate fires at the Sutter Building on Jerusalem Avenue, a fire at Fairway Farms on Burns Avenue and a tremendous blaze at the Litmor Publications printing plant at 18 East Nicholai Street that caused over \$50,000 of damage and sent two firefighters to local hospitals.

Heroic actions were no stranger to Walter as he climbed the department aerial to rescue a child stuck in the 60' tree on Miller Road. In 1974, Walter was recognized as Fireman of the Year for his heroic actions leading several people to safety during a building explosion on West Cherry Street.

Walter was a member of the "Hicks" Drill Team for many years.

Chief Werthessen gave 50 years of active service to the Hicksville Community before his passing on January 26, 1993, with full Department Services and is interred at the Cemetery of the Holy Rood in Westbury.



***3rd Assistant Chief Werthessen Circa  
1956***



***Ex Chief Werthessen with his wife, Dot is accepting the Firefighter of  
the Year Award from Schaefer Beer for his efforts at the Stericola Fire  
in 1973***



***Ex Chief Charles Saurer turns over the mallet to  
Chief Werthessen in 1961***



Walter Telender Sr. was born July 26, 1918, and was the son of Anthony and Anna (Pilowski) Telender. They lived at 222 Second Street in Hicksville. Walter married Kathleen McGunnigle, and he was a tailor in the Garment District in lower Manhattan. He would later be employed as a Dispatcher for the Hicksville Fire District.

Walter Telender joined the Hicksville Fire Department in June 1948, as a member of Chemical Engine Company 3. He was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant (1952-1953) and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant (1954-1955), before subsequently being elected as the 15<sup>th</sup> Captain of Chemical Engine Company 3 in 1956 and again in 1957.

### ***Served 2 Years***

After leaving office as Captain, Walter would announce his candidacy for the position of 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in early 1957 and would be elected to that position, edging out August Jud and William Dykman. Walter moved through the ranks serving as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1959 and 1961 and as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1961, before being elected as the 41<sup>st</sup> Fire Chief of Department in 1962 through 1964.

In the early hours of August 1962, firemen finished their job at Fairway Farms at Burns Avenue, bringing under control a fire in an office-garage-warehouse combined with living quarters which caused extensive damage. The alarm was sounded at 4:05AM and it was 7:30AM before the last standby crew left the scene.

In June of 1963 a fire broke out at the property owned by Frank Antun at 240 Old County Road that would take firefighters over seven hours to bring under control. The roof and 1<sup>st</sup> floor caved in from the intense heat. The fire started from a pile of trash and debris outside the building which spread to the interior via a nearby conveyor chute. The blaze was fed by large amounts of combustible materials including paper and kerosene. Two firefighters were injured, and the blaze caused more than \$250,000.

During Thanksgiving weekend, there was a tremendous blaze at the Litmor Publications printing plant, 18 East Nicholai Street, that caused over \$50,000 in damages. Extensive



damage occurred due to the type of composite floors on the first floor to the engraving plant. The fire started in the basement of the former telephone company exchange office and thick smoke and fire hampered firefighting efforts and sent two firefighters to local hospitals.

A fire in an old barn on West John in the Hicksville freight yard, used to store building materials, was severely damaged by flames of undetermined origin on August 20. Firemen were called out at 10:08 and eighty-men responded.

Fire damage was estimated at \$40,000 at the Newbridge Lumber Supply at 197 Old Country Road, near Newbridge Road. The wind stirred a blaze that threatened residential homes on First Street which backed up on the lumberyard property.

About 300 shoppers were evacuated when a fire broke out in the huge Gertz department store. It had an estimated loss of \$1,000,000 to Gertz and other Mid Island Plaza stores, including a total loss to the Brown Cow Restaurant. This stubborn fire broke out on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor stock room and the heat of burning foam rubber, carpeting and other goods set off 160 sprinkler heads in the windowless building.

It was during this year that a new telephone alert system was put in place for notifying department members. The system was developed by New York Telephone and the equipment was controlled at headquarters. The system linked to members phonelines in their home with a distinctive short ring. When members picked up their phone, a recorded message from the dispatcher was heard telling the details of the alarm. This enabled firemen to be alerted for all types of emergencies without using the sounding the siren late at night.

In December of 1963, the Department planned to open its headquarters for the 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Prevention Open House, not held during the month of October, but was canceled due to 10 inches of snow. The very next year on December 16, there was a rousing success as Santa distributed gifts to approximately 2,000 children who had waited for as much as two hours to get a glimpse of the jolly bearded old gent. Standing in line that at times reached a block long and four deep, the children and parents once inside headquarters saw many displays and exhibits that depicted fire hazards commonly found around the home. In addition to the displays, the rescue squad gave demonstrations utilizing equipment found on the new ambulance operated by the Department. Ladder and engine companies were outside the building giving further demonstrations on department equipment. That year the 4,000 people in attendance had a clear cold night to contend with, however, each of the seven companies

who sponsored the event, felt that the tremendous turnout and interest in the firematic displays was an indication of not only the children's determination to see Santa, but the interest in finding out what the average homeowner can do to prevent fire, the theme of the open house show.

The Department placed into service in May of 1962, a Mack C 85-foot extension cab-ahead fire truck for Hook and Ladder Company 6. It was seen by many for the first time in the Memorial Day Parade. The 85-foot extension reaches the roof of the four-story Gertz building. Later that year the Seagrave fire truck assigned to Emergency Company 5 that was rendered unrepairable was sold to Vergennes, Vermont on October 23, 1962.

Chief Telender and the membership stood honor guard for the funeral of former Chief Henry Luhmann, who passed away in 1963.

Over his fifty-year tenure, Walter also found the time to serve in the Rescue Squad and become a Charter member of the Fire Police Squad in 1988. In 1998, Walter was chosen as one of the Honorary Grand Marshal's during the Parade and celebration of the Hicksville 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and Walter proudly took his place in the parade.

His son, Robert Telender Sr. was a Captain in Company 3 and was recognized for 50 years of active service. His grandson, Robert Telender Jr. was also a Captain of Company 3 and served as an Assistant Chief and Chief for a short tenure in 2018.

Chief Telender passed away on June 8, 2002, and is interred at the Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York.





*Chief Telender leading the members during the 1962 Labor Day Parade.*



*Chief Telender shown in the right photo surveying overhaul operations during a building fire and below with his Assistant Chiefs Specht, Cotsonas and Davis*





***Served 2 Years***

John Specht was born on May 24, 1924, in Valley Stream, New York and was the son of John and Theresa (Holst) Specht. He married Dorothy Hoffman in May of 1947. He was employed by the Nassau County Fire Marshal's office and reached the highest office as Nassau County Fire Marshal. They lived at 3 Crescent Street in Hicksville.

John was a veteran of World War II and enlisted in 1942 as a Signal Corpman of the United States Army.

After serving with the Valley Stream Fire Department for six years, John Specht joined the Hicksville Fire Department as a member of Independent Hose Company No. 2 in 1952 and given badge 510. He transferred to Hook and Ladder Company 6 as a Charter member in February of 1956, serving as their first Captain. After his service to Company 6, John transferred back to Company 2 after his term as Chief in 1967.

He ran for 3rd Assistant Chief in April of 1959, and was elected to that position, then ascended to 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief 1960 – 1961. He was elected 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief from 1962 – 1964 and subsequently as 42<sup>nd</sup> Fire Chief in 1964 through 1966. His Assistant Chiefs were Gus Cotsonas (1<sup>st</sup>), Cliff Davis (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Mel Voorhies (3<sup>rd</sup>).

A significant change in the District By-Laws took effect December 8, 1964, when Ex-Chiefs and former Fire Commissioners became "Life Members" at the completion of their term and were presented with Life Membership Cards. They would enjoy all benefits of active members and not be counted against the Company membership quota. They would also be exempt from all penalties and assignments.

Fire damage was estimated at \$50,000 when it broke out in the Trading Post on East Marie Street, next to the entrance of the Hicksville Theater. The alarm was sounded at 1:30AM, and smoke damaged a stationery store, Starlight Shop and Terard Jewelers.

A fire sent plumes of smoke wafting hundreds of feet into the sky in a blaze that caused over \$500,000 in damage at 55 East Old Country Road. The flames collapsed the roof and back wall of the 300-foot long, one story building and spread to a freight car. The warehouse stored garden products and lawn fertilizer. The building was leased by Troiano Express.

Rounding out the fire activity was a fire at the Long Island Swimming Pool Supply Company at 270 Old Country Road that stocked chemicals and was thoroughly gutted by flames.

It was shortly after eight o'clock when the firemen arrived at the Sutter Building. The eight-year-old two-story building at Jerusalem Avenue and Newbridge Road, was gutted by flames in November of 1964. The building was damaged twice before by fire, but the third time really did it in. Damage was expected to be estimated at \$150,000. Four occupied stores on the ground level were a total wreck. Some fourteen offices on the second floor were burned out and flames roared through the ceiling in several places.

Four volunteer firemen were hospitalized with injuries during a roaring fire in the Carnegie Lithographers, a printing plant at 12 Midland Avenue. The plant was described as a total loss. About 20 men labored throughout the day with a payloader and bulldozer to extinguish the mounds of burning paper. Firefighters were sent to Twinlawns Avenue to protect homes on the block.

John helped formed the Hicksville Fire Department Rescue Squad in 1956 and served as first captain of the Squad. John, an Emergency Medical Technician, served as Vice-Chairman of the Nassau County Emergency Medical Service Committee and was Chairman of the Fire Service sub-committee of Medical Services.

While Chief, John instituted many programs that are still followed, including a training committee where the Chief plans special training aids, drills, slides, etc. The training requires every probationary fireman to complete a Basic First Aid course developed by Rescue Squad EMT and AMT's.

John was the Secretary of the 9th Battalion Fire Chiefs Council and had served as Vice Chairman of the 9th Battalion Fire District until his appointment to the Fire Marshal's Staff in 1972. In 1972, John was elected President of the Nassau County Fire Chiefs Council after serving on many committees with that organization, and served on the Executive Council of

Firematic Associations, and as Treasurer of the Nassau County Fire Chief's Seminar Committee.

In 1993 while the Department was celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, they also hosted the Annual Southern New York Volunteer Firemen's Association and John served as Co-Chairman with ex-Chief Cliff Davis.

During his term as Chief of the Department he was saddened with the passing of Ex Chief's Charles Schaefer; Henry Luhmann and George Neder. Also, the former Commissioner Henry Clay Simons.

John was a member of Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville, and he served as President in 1977 - 1978.

Chief Specht passed away on January 2, 1997, and is interred at the Cemetery of the St. Margaret's in Plainview, New York.





*Chief Specht shown at the Nassau County Fire Service Academy in Old Bethpage*



*Chief Specht (left), is shown with Assistant Chief Davis and Voorhies investigating a basement fire*

*Ex Chief Specht (left) is with Assistant Chief Davis at a command post*



***Served 2 Years***

Gus Cotsonas was born January 19, 1913, in Manhasset and was the son of George and Margaret (Luckert) Cotsonas. He married Edna Fogel in August of 1937 and spent 14 Years (1936 – 1949) with the Manhasset Lakeville Fire Department prior to moving to Hicksville.

Gus was a Veteran of World War II, and he enlisted in April of 1944 and served through December of 1945, in the United States Navy as a Signalman.

Gus and Edna moved to 14 Gables Road, in Hicksville. He was employed as a Salesman for a Baking Company. Gus joined Protection Hook and

Ladder Co. 1 on March 13, 1951, and was given badge 646. He was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in 1956, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 1957 and went onto serve as their Captain in 1958 and 1959. Gus was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1959 – 1961, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief 1962 – 1964, and 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief 1964 – 1966 before rising to rank as the 43<sup>rd</sup> Fire Chief in 1966 through 1968. His Assistant Chiefs were Cliff Davis (1<sup>st</sup>), Mel Voorhies (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Louis “Red” Mertz (3<sup>rd</sup>).

Tragedy struck the Department right after the new year in 1966, when a fire of unknown origin destroyed the first-floor home at 10 Lowell Place, taking the life of 9-year-old Ann Marie Baker. She was the younger sister of Company 5’s Edwin Baker. She apparently was cut off from her mother and father who had been sleeping in another first-floor bedroom when the fire swept their home. The child’s mother and father escaped through a bedroom window after intense heat prevented them from entering and reaching the child, who was found lying in a bathroom by firemen. Three neighbors, Raymond Malfatti, Thomas Theiss and Thomas Jr. smashed a window of the Baker house to try and rescue the girl. Her brother Edwin was serving overseas in the Navy on leave from the fire department, when this tragedy occurred.

During his term as Chief in August of 1966, there was a fire that occurred in a vacant store on 75 Broadway owned by Mary Braun and formerly occupied by United Auto Stores next door to the bingo hall.



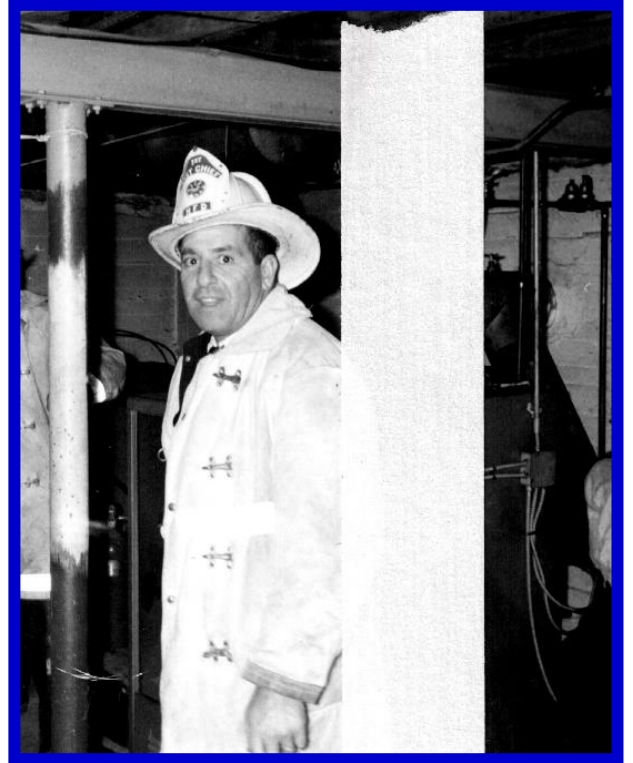
Because of the increased duties that came with the Department's floodlight truck, the department organized a deputy squad and asked for volunteers from other Companies to assist. Eventually, several members stayed on to become charter members of the newly organized Floodlight Company 8 on September 29, 1966. Captain Joseph Graham, along with Lieutenants Cono "Nick" Brigandi and James Nastasi were sworn in by Chairman Harold Hawuxhurst, and Chief Gus Cotsonas.

Firefighters battled a stubborn fire at the McKeon's Lumber Company Warehouse on Old Country Road, near the LIRR crossing. The alarm was sounded at 11:57 AM and the firemen were at the scene for a long, hard fight. The McKeon Warehouse was a big frame wooden structure and years ago was known as the Hicksville Lumber Company. Flames roared through the 300-foot corrugated structure which contained garden products and fertilizer. The Law Office that occupied the front of the building was also destroyed. The flames collapsed the roof and rear wall before it was brought under control after several hours.

In April, five teenagers died in a tragic car and train collision at the New South Road grade crossing shortly before midnight. The impact of the collision scattered parts of the car along 200 feet of track and four of the victims were tossed out of the vehicle. Firemen arrived shortly after the crash but could not save a single life.

Three young males were arrested in connection with a fire in the Hicksville School District Administration School. The district central warehouse was vandalized when a fire was discovered early in the morning of July. The damage was described as "considerable" and could run into tens of thousands of dollars. The fire was reported by an automatic smoke detector system and seventy-two men responded. Their prompt and efficient action was credited with curtailing damage. The vast first floor of the Administration building was damaged by intense heat and smoke filled the second story administration office area.

Gus was honored as the Honorary Grand Marshal at the Annual Labor Day Parade & Drill. Chief Cotsonas passed away on April 2, 1995, and is interred at the Brookville Cemetery.



*Chief Cotsonas is shown on this page at a few of his fires under his command*



***Served 2 Years***

Clifford Davis was born June 11, 1924, in Hicksville and was the son of Fred and Mary (Keller) Davis and he lived on East John Street. He married Mildred Knausman in 1946 and worked for his dad at Fred Davis Plumbing and Heating.

Cliff was a Veteran of World War II, serving in the United States Navy with the "Seabees". Success in World War II hinged on the ability of the military to quickly complete ambitious construction projects under dangerous conditions, so the U.S. Navy established the military's first Naval Construction Battalions under the direction of officers from the Navy's Civil Engineer Corps. Cliff stepped up with his experience in construction.

Cliff joined the department in September of 1948 as a member of Volunteer Hose Company 4 and in just three short years he was elected as 2nd Lieutenant of Company 4. He was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in 1951 - 1952 and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 1953 - 1954. In 1955 and 1956, Cliff was elected as the 47<sup>th</sup> Captain of Volunteer Hose Company 4.

After his departure in 1956, Cliff's duties weren't yet to be fulfilled as the newly chartered Engine Company 7 was organized in April of 1957 and Cliff was appointed to serve as their interim Captain to get things going. Cliff served this position well until he turned over the reins to the newly elected Captain in August of the same year; however, Cliff remained as an Honorary and Charter member of Engine Company 7.

Cliff would announce his candidacy for the position of 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in early 1962 and would be elected to that position. Cliff moved through the ranks serving as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1964 and 1966 and as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1966-1968, before being elected as the 44<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief of Department in 1968 through 1970. During his term, Cliff had the honor of serving the department during its observance of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the creation of fire protection to the Hicksville Community, in 1968.

During his term as Chief, on November 30<sup>th</sup> a fire broke out on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Parkway Office Building located at 550 Old Country Road. The fire was discovered by a passing patrolman and seemed to have been smoldering for a while. Damage was estimated at \$150,000.

A Fire at the Holy Family Church on July 24 damaged the entrance and organ loft of the Church. The department was able to confine the blaze to the area involved with smoke damage throughout.

A serious fire was controlled by the department on October 9<sup>th</sup> when a burning fuel oil truck was discovered in the garage of Bob-Ken Ford on Bethpage Road. Prompt action kept the fire confined to the area adjacent to the truck itself and one mechanic was burned.

On February 28, 1969, a new 85-foot aerial tower with 1,000 GPM pump was built and delivered by Sutphen Corp of Ohio. It replaced the fourteen-year-old Seagrave ladder truck. It is the 2nd of its kind on the East Coast, and it supplies its own electric power and can carry three men in its bucket on the end of the ladder. The bucket was equipped with breathing air for the men plus two. It had a five hundred per gallon a minute nozzle direct from the pump. It had several hundred feet of portable ladders mounted on its sides for lower work and for roof ventilation.

On October 27, 1969, the department responded to a fire at the Gustave Fielitz Body Shop on East Barclay Street. Some damage occurred when the fire swept across the ceiling of the shop.

It would be the first time that Company Equipment Numbers were issued to each member to ensure turnout gear is individually assigned and tracked. Bocceball came to the department in October of 1969, when the new court was completed behind the Strong Street fire station, known as "Pollina Park", named after Ex-Captain Joe Pollina, Company 3.

Cliff had an interest in the "Hicks" Drill Team right away and was a member of the amazing racing team of the late forties and early fifties. Cliff was a member of the "Hicks" when they captured 49 trophies in 1949 and won the Southern New York Drill in the same year.

Cliff was a member of the Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville. He served as a Company 4 Trustee for many years and served as their President in 1962 and 1963.

Cliff continued his illustrious career as he bid for the position of Fire Commissioner of the Hicksville Fire District in 1972 and began what would be a great tenure, not to be duplicated to date. Cliff served a very distinguished career spanning over 25 years until his retirement from the Board in 1997. During that time Cliff served as Chairman of the Board on six separate occasions in 1976, 1980, 1981, 1986, 1991 and 1996.

Cliff also served as a representative to many outside firematic organizations, such as Southern New York Volunteer Firemen's Association, of which he served as its President. He was a member of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY), and the South Shore Firemen's Association, which he also held a term as President. Cliff served as a 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Delegate and was Chairman of the Nassau County Fire Commission. Cliff was also a very active member for the New York City Burn Center. He served on the Nassau County Executive Council as Second Vice President and represented that Council as a Director from Nassau County on the New York Firefighters Burn Center Foundation, which was set up to provide better care for burn victims.

In 1993 while the Department was celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, they also hosted the Annual Southern New York Volunteer Firemen's Association and Cliff served as Co-Chairman with ex-Chief John Specht.

In June of 1996, Cliff was again recognized, this time by his fellow peers on the Board of Fire Commissioners, when they dedicated the newly renovated Fire District Maintenance Facility, which bears his name the "Clifford G. Davis" Maintenance Facility, located on Strong Street.

Throughout Davis's career he was often cited for his tireless dedication and efforts. In 1971 he was selected by his peers as "Fireman of the Year." Davis was named the Honorary Grand Marshal for the 1979 Labor Day Parade and Drill and almost 20 years later was an Honorary Grand Marshal for the Hicksville Community's 350th Anniversary parade and celebration.

Cliff has served on many committees of the Department, including the Welfare Committee, where he has served since the early fifties. He also was the Department's Delegate to the Ninth Battalion where he rose to the position of Chairman. He served on the Board of the Nassau County Fire Commission and Chairman of that Commission from 1977-1978.

In January of 1969, Chief Davis was saddened to learn of the passing of Ex-Chief and Ex-Commissioner William Braun of Volunteer Hose Company 4. Only 10 months later in October, William's son Vincent Braun passed away. Vincent was also a Fire Chief and Fire Commissioner over his tenure in the department. A few weeks earlier, Ex-Chief George Kunz passed away on September 3.

Chief Davis passed away June 25, 1999, and is interred at Plain Lawn Cemetery.





*Chief Davis is seen at two fires above. He is also seen talking with Lieutenant Dick Ritter from Company 2 at a house fire*





***Served 2 Years***

Melvin "Mel" Voorhies was born on July 28, 1925, in College Point and raised in College Point, Queens. He was the son of Charles and Edith (Keller) Voorhies. He married Kathleen McGunnigle in July of 1955, and they moved to 179 West Marie Street, Hicksville. Mel was employed at Republic Aviation and would retire from the United States Postal Service after 30 years as a Letter Carrier.

Mel was a veteran of World War II, serving in the United States Navy from March 1944 through June of 1946 where he was stationed in the Pacific.

Mel joined Hook and Ladder Company 6 on March 13, 1956, and was given badge 586 before he transferred to Engine Company 7, where he was a Charter Member.

In 1959 he became Second Lieutenant of his company and in 1962 - 1964 had worked his way up to the office of Captain. Mel was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1964 – 1966, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief 1966 – 1968, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief 1968 – 1970 and took the oath of office as the 45<sup>th</sup> Chief in 1970. It was during his term that his 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief, Marty Donlon resigned due to health concerns. Lou "Red" Mertz was moved to 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant, Mario Misturini was elevated to 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and Roy Schaaf was elected 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief. Mel would go onto serve less than a two-year term since this would be the year that the Department revised their by-laws to vote in December for a calendar year term.

During his term as Chief, Mel was in charge of a general alarm fire believed to have started in a storeroom gutting the offices of H. Pollack Fertilizer Co. on Charlotte Avenue on January 27. Temperatures of 9 degrees and winds gusting to 40 miles per hour hampered firemen. The thousands of gallons of water used to control the blaze quickly turned to ice. Hoselines froze to the ground, nozzles froze up, and one pumper was knocked out of service when pump gauges froze up and its throttle became stuck. The fire was stopped before it damaged the Doyno Truck Tire Service. Only the 2-story office complex was destroyed. Firemen were severely hampered by rocks in the hydrant system on Charlotte Avenue and eight

hoselines had to be shut down to remove stones from the nozzles. Damage was estimated at \$100,000.

In 1971, there was a fire in the Heads and Threads Store located on South Oyster Bay Road that caused over \$70,000 in damage. Just three days later a fire which burned unnoticed for an estimated two hours before being reported by a passerby, heavily damaged the building occupied by Hicksville Rambler Inc. and the AMX Auto Body Shop at 40 Newbridge Road near West Marie Street. The blaze which caused an estimated damage of \$50,000, had heavy smoke condition that closed traffic on Newbridge Road. The fire was brought under control within ninety minutes caused considerable damage, including five cars in the building were damaged. Three firemen were hospitalized for smoke inhalation.

In March of 1971, the department created the "Explorer Post No. 778". The group was established with over 50 youths between 14 and 20 participating. The Post was guided by President Jeff Larkin. The Post was trained for the purpose of introducing new prospects for the fire service. The young adults are overseen by advisors.

In February of 1971, six firemen recently completed a 30-hour State Health Department Rescue-Emergency Care course. The men received instruction in the latest methods of First Aid, Rescue and Coronary care. In addition, six firemen were graduates of this new EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) course to better serve the emergency rescue needs of Hicksville.

Mel was the Department's Sergeant-At-Arms from 1972 through 1983 and was on the Annual Fund Drive Committee, serving as Chairman 1973 through 1977. Mel was bestowed the honor of Honorary Grand Marshal at the 1981 Annual Labor Day Parade & Drill, and he was the "Shaefer's Fireman of the Year", a most prestigious and respected tribute.

Chief Voorhies son, Charles, was a member of Hook and Ladder Company 6. His son-in-law is ex-Chief Robert Lang of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1. His grandson, Michael, is a former Captain of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1.

Chief Voorhies passed away on July 14, 1985, and is interred at the Cemetery of the Holy Rood in Westbury.





*Chief Voorhies is shown at a few of his many fires during his term*



***Served 2 Years***

Louis Mertz or "Red" as he was known because of his strikingly red hair was born on December 12, 1926, in Manhasset and the son of Frank and Anna (Rapp) Mertz. He married Viola "Jerry" Beyer in July of 1949. They lived in Manhasset where he was a volunteer firefighter from 1945 through 1954. That year, they moved to Hicksville, and they lived at 15 Briggs Street. Red was employed as a sheet metal worker.

Red was a Veteran of World War II, serving in the United States Army beginning in April of 1945.

Red joined Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 on May 19, 1957, before transferring to Independent Engine and Hose Company 2. Red was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup>

Lieutenant, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant and subsequently as their Captain in 1963 – 1964. He was elected Assistant Chief in 1968 and after serving 4 years as an Assistant Chief, Red became the 46<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief of the Department in 1972. His Assistant Chiefs were Mario Misturini (1<sup>st</sup>), Roy Schaaf (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Bill Ferber (3<sup>rd</sup>).

During his term as Chief, Red responded on April 8, 1972, to a fast-spreading fire that gutted four stores and heavily damaged a fifth store at the Mid Island Plaza Shopping Center on North Broadway. The first alarm was sounded at 11:35 AM, with mutual aid requested from Jericho and Westbury. The fire spread quickly to the cockloft above the stores where it was difficult to combat. Firemen were hampered by heavy smoke that built up in the mall when automatic opening windows failed to open. Firemen were forced to break many of the windows.

On December 15, an alarm was sounded for a fire at the Mid Island Plaza. The alarm was sounded at 7:21 a.m. for a fire of undetermined origin which heavily damaged the glass blowers' shop. The owner suffered burns on the arm and hand. Firemen were hampered when the entire area was filled with smoke as the automatic opening windows failed to open.

A stubborn fire burned out of control on July 23 in the warehouse of the Meadowbrook Paper Company on South Broadway near Fourth Street. The alarm was turned in from two

alarm boxes at 2:24 PM. Over thirty-five firemen were injured, four of which were sent to the hospital and later released. Injuries sustained were heat exhaustion, cuts, blisters, minor eye injuries, and smoke inhalation. Eight firemen narrowly missed serious injury when one of the buildings walls collapsed.

On September 10, firemen responded to a general alarm fire in a warehouse on 98 Tec Street off Old Country Road. On arrival firemen found flames coming from the windows of the Limmco Inc, a distributor of musical instruments. The firemen from four departments combined forces to bring the blaze under control. Due to heavy smoke, iron bars over windows, doors and overhead garage doors, a metal roof and fallen walls, the fire was not under control until after midnight. Despite fallen and buckling walls and caved in roofing, firemen entered the building and kept the flames in check. Six firemen were injured fighting the fire and suffered smoke inhalation. Owners estimated the damage at approximately \$500,000. Several factors contributed to such a high loss; the building is on a dead-end street away from most traffic, the building did not have automatic sprinklers or fire alarms, and the doors and windows were blocked by bars.

A spectacular general alarm fire struck the McKeon Lumber Yard on Old Country Road on October 22. Upon arrival flames were 100 feet in the air. The blistering heat injured 6 firemen, destroyed a portion of the lumber yard, and damaged a house next to the yard. It was reported that an automatic fire detector failed, and the fire burned undetected for an undetermined period. Destroyed were two storage sheds loaded with lumber, tar and sheet rock. The intense heat ignited piles of lumber 60 feet away. Firemen using tower ladders and water deluge guns knocked the fire down fast, so firemen using handlines could advance. Several other fires were ignited by sparks and were quickly extinguished. Fire was confined to one corner of the yard and prevented a house on Hanover Street from being destroyed. The house, which was slightly damaged by the heat, was right next to the lumber storage shed.

For the second time a fire of suspicious origin struck in a Lumber yard. A blaze was reported on November 4 and when firemen arrived, flames were 100 feet in the air, in the Schildknect Lumber yard on South Broadway near Mineola Avenue. Upon arrival firemen launched a two-prong attack on the fire and hose lines were set up to protect many dwellings on Mineola Avenue which were 50 feet from stacks of lumber. Due to the number of hose lines needed to protect these homes, several firemen suffered from exhaustion getting the hose lines in operation. Damage was estimated at \$400,000 and destroyed a large lumber storage shed and many stacks of plywood and lumber.



February 1, 1973, forty firemen, assisted by units from the Plainview and Westbury departments battled a stubborn blaze in a shopping center on Old Country Road at Lee Place for hours before bringing it under control. A second and third alarm were subsequently sent for additional help. The main part of the fire was in the open space between the roof and ceiling. Heavy smoke hampered efforts as they fought the blaze. The fire was believed to have originated in a plastic trash can at the rear of a beauty salon and spread upwards. Air vents at the east end of the center apparently caused the fire to spread in that direction. Three stores were heavily damaged, House Chow Restaurant 350 Old Country Road: All County Appliance Inc. and Elegant Hair Fashions. There was additional smoke and water damage in the Pizza Shop and the A&W Delicatessen. Although a fire wall existed between buildings, the improper construction of it allowed flames to get passed, but firemen anticipated it and removed part of the ceilings and prevented the spread of fire to the rest of the shopping center.

On February 14<sup>th</sup> fire swept through the Midway Delicatessen at 399 Jerusalem Avenue. As fire units arrived flames were shooting out the back of the store. As firemen were entering the building the floor collapsed into the basement, and one fireman fell through the floor, but other firemen held on to the hose line and pulled him to safety by his feet. The blaze gutted the store, and units were on the scene for over 4 hours in bone chilling wind and rain.

On February 16<sup>th</sup> a fire caused heavy damage to the Adam Trent Clothing Store in the Mall Area of the sprawling Mid Island Shopping Plaza. Firemen were hampered by heavy smoke and the fire apparently started under a platform in the rear of the store and gained considerable headway before it set off an automatic sprinkler. The basement of Newberry's Department store was flooded by water and the Adam Trent Store, which is directly over a portion of Newberry's basement sales area sustained damage.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, fire struck the large barn on the Jones Institute property on Charlotte Avenue and West John Street. Firemen had the first line on the fire and it was confined with minor damage. However, just days later June 9<sup>th</sup>, firemen found upon arrival a serious fire in progress. And again, on Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup> a third fire struck the barn and this blaze all but destroyed the structure.

In April of 1972, the Department finalized a complete overhaul of the current by-laws and had new by-Law books printed in loose-leaf format for each member. The new format

enabled future revisions to be inserted without incurring complete reprinting. They were distributed to all members at the May Company meeting.

At the 1973 Labor Day events, Chief Mertz oversaw the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual events that were chaired by Ex-Captain William R. Stahley, Jr., with the Honorary Grand Marshal Ex-Captain Carl Eisemann, who was honored for 50 years of service to the department. For the first time, the parade was held on Sunday night, at 6:00 P.M. at the Mid Island Plaza. In addition, the Department hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion old fashioned tournament.

Red was a long-time racing team member and was Captain of “Hicks” Drill Team. He was on the Labor Day Parade & Tournament Committee for many years, chairing the event in 1965. Red played Softball for the department and was an avid bowler playing for the Department for several years.

Red would serve as Company 2 Trustee and as President of Volunteer and Exempts Firemen’s Benevolent Association of Hicksville 1967 – 1968 and he was a Charter member and Captain of the Fire Police when it was started in 1993.

Red served as a 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Delegate, was a member in the NY State Chief’s Association, Nassau County Chief’s Association, and 9th Battalion Chief’s Council of Nassau County.

Chief Mertz’ grandson, John Mohrmann, joined Company 2 in 2004. Chief Mertz passed away on August 14, 2005, and he is interred at Pinelawn Memorial Park in Farmingdale.



*Chief Mertz is shown above with Assistant Chief Ferber and below with Lieutenant Donald Hudson Sr at fires during his term*



***Served 2 Years***

Mario Misturini was born November 4, 1921, in Astoria, Queens and was the son of Luigi and Brice (Palladini) Misturini. He first married Francis Heppell in 1946. They lived at 57 Edward Avenue. Francis passed away at an early age in 1969. Mario would then marry Lillian Bernaudo. Mario retired from the New York Daily Newspaper as a photo engraver. While at the Daily News he was the inventor of the Fran Dee Color Process, which is a color separating process method used for many years.

Mario was a Veteran of World War II and served in the United States Navy from September of 1942 through February of 1944. During World War II he was one of the survivors who served on the destroyer,

USS Strong, a fighting ship that was torpedoed and sunk in the pacific battle of Kila Gulf.

Mario joined Chemical Engine Company 3 in May 1954, and he served as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant and as their Captain from 1967 – 1969. He was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief 1970 – 1971, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief 1972 – 1973, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief 1972 – 1973 and sworn in as the 47<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief in 1974 through 1975. His Assistant Chiefs were Roy Schaaf, William Ferber and James Huttie.

During his tenure as Chief, Mario responded to an explosion on April 8, when a blast and fire destroyed the Stericola building at 38 West Cherry Street. A tank of extremely flammable gas ethylene oxide was leaking and was set off by a spark. The gas is used to sterilize medical instruments. The explosion injured nine people and five were taken to the County Burn Center and other local hospitals for treatment. Two of the victims were in serious condition from the blast which lifted the roof up and caved in the block walls. Debris from the blast crushed swings in an adjacent playground and damaged a home next door. It was a miracle no one was killed. The explosion prompted a brave rescue of the workers by Ex-Chief Walter Werthessen and Firefighter Robert Rose from Company 3. They risked their own lives to be able to rescue several workers from the blaze.

Just two weeks had passed since a fire was reported at 173 Levittown Parkway when firemen responded again to a general alarm blaze at the Sherwood Forest Tavern on Levittown Parkway on July 13<sup>th</sup>. The alarm was reported at 4:58AM and the fire had been burning for some time before it was discovered.

On July 3, a smoke bomb device was set off in the boy's bathroom at Holy Trinity High School, sending seven people to local hospitals and forced an evacuation of 2,000 students. It was a store purchased smoke bomb made of Sulphur and phosphorous that was similar to the ingredients in road flares.

A extraordinary blaze on July 24 gutted a 2<sup>nd</sup> story house which was converted into a store. The fire, at 169 Old Country Rd., injured eight firemen. All injured firefighters were treated at local hospitals and released. The repairman from the Bronx was in the store and received serious burns. He was listed in poor condition at the County Medical Center. Before being reported, the fire gained considerable headway. By the time the Hicksville fire dispatcher was called the building was totally involved in fire. 75 firefighters, 10 pieces of apparatus responded. The building contained the mini mart, a combination fruit stand and dairy barn.

A fire caused moderate damage to the roof of the Royal Diner located on Old Country Road near South Oyster Bay Road. The alarm was received on March 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:50 AM and the first arriving units on the scene found a deep-seated fire in the cockloft, the space between the ceiling and the roof. Firemen battled the fire for over an hour and confined it to one wall and a section of roof in the rear of the building. Efforts were hampered by double walls and a double metal re-enforced roof.

An early morning fire caused heavy damage to the Bisque Box and the Ceramic Shop at 12 West Marie Street. The fire was discovered by a Plainview fireman who was passing by on June 19 and the fire apparently started in Johns Tavern next door to the Ceramic Shop. The building, which was very old, had metal walls and ceilings. The fire was believed to have been burning for hours within the walls and ceiling before being spotted.

On January 27, six firemen graduated as Advanced Medical Technicians (AMT's) following an intensive 5 ½ month training program conducted through the Nassau County Firemen's Training Center in conjunction with Nassau County Medical Center. The firemen were awarded their diplomas by Nassau County Executive Ralph G. Caso in a graduation ceremony. The graduates received their instruction from Deputy Chief Arthur Gladstone, Dr. Costas

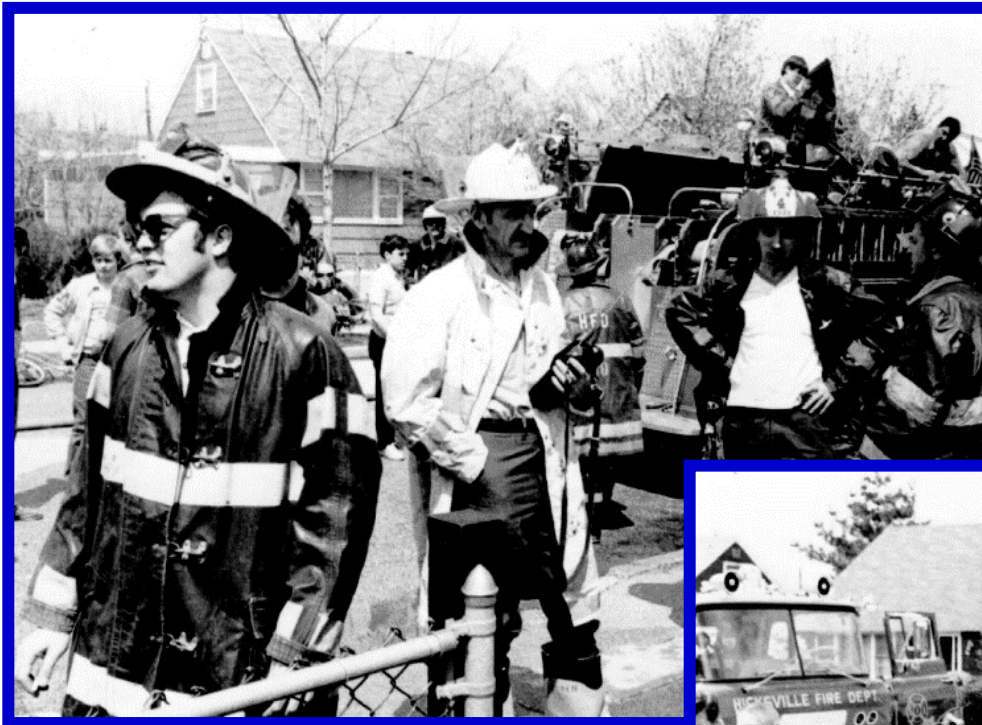
Lambrew - Chief of Medicine at the Nassau County Medical Center and Dr. Harry Malasky, Hicksville Fire Department Surgeon. The members learned and practiced their skills while riding on Nassau County Police ambulances during assigned tours of duty where they applied their classroom skills during actual emergencies in the field. In addition, they were assigned observation time in the Coronary Intensive Care units of local hospitals and in the Psychiatric Emergency areas. Although the training was painful at times to the AMT's, they developed a deeper appreciation of this special skill. The introduction of the AMT program also brought the necessary telemetry equipment and drug supplies to apply this program to Hicksville residents.

In March of 1975 there were two local graduates, all of whom had previously completed the 180-hour emergency medical technician course, the first on Long Island to be certified by the New York State Department of Health as paramedics. Their training included such techniques as: defibrillating victims of cardiac arrest, stabilizing heart patients at the scene of heart attacks, and they will be in constant communication through Nassau County's Emergency Service System with cardiologists and emergency personnel at the hospital of destination.

Mario was a member of the Rescue Squad where he served as their Secretary and Treasurer. He worked tirelessly as the Department Chief Fire Inspector for 8 years and was Chairman of Annual Fire Prevention Open House. He would also find time to play on the department's Bowling Team.

Chief Misturini retired to Boynton Beach, Florida where he passed away on December 10, 2002, and he is interred at the Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale, New York.





*Chief Misturini is shown at a house fire on Ronald Avenue*



*Chief Misturini is shown accepting the delivery of a new ambulance from Fire Commissioner Manaskie and Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor John Burke. This was the first "all white" ambulance and it was later used at Station 2.*

***Served 2 Years***

Roy Schaaf was born on January 31, 1932, and is the son of Phillip and Katherine (Jung) Schaaf. He married Gwendolyn McCue in 1954, and they lived at 21 Elmira Street. Roy was a carpenter his entire life, first as a custom builder in the family firm, Philip Schaaf and Sons, then he oversaw maintenance at Nassau Downs OTB.

Roy was a Veteran of the Korea War, serving in the United States Air Force.

Roy joined Engine Company 7 on July 30, 1957, and was given badge 553. He worked very hard for his company serving on many committees on both Company and Department levels, and his hard work

and leadership ability soon led him up the ladder of offices to the position of Captain of Company 7 in 1966 - 1968.

In December of 1970 Roy was elected 3rd Assistant Chief. He ascended to serve as the 48<sup>th</sup> Chief in 1976 and his Assistant Chiefs were Bill Ferber, James Huttie and John Keyer.

On March 26 the Department received a report of an explosion and fire at the Texaco Gas Station on North Broadway and Bethpage Road. Upon arrival firemen found several cars damage, a huge hole in the ground and several shaken gas station employees. Firemen searched the wreckage and miraculously there were no injured. Eyewitnesses stated that when the explosion went off there was a huge fire ball and when the dust and debris settled the fire was out, snuffed out by the explosion itself. Leaking gasoline seeped into the storm drain in front of the bay doors and somehow an explosion was triggered. Firemen doused the area with pyronox chemical to prevent any further explosions.

The Department was called out early May 18<sup>th</sup> when a series of garage fires occurred, all within several hours of each other. The fires were deliberately set by unknown persons. The first alarm came at 12:39 AM for a garage fire at 19 Winding Road. When firemen arrived, the fire was moving swiftly through an attached garage. Firemen confronted heavy smoke

conditions upon arrival and the occupants were alerted and evacuated. Less than a minute later a garage fire was reported around the corner at 9 Plover Lane and found to be fully involved upon arrival. At 1:00 AM a fire in a garage was reported at 194 Tenth Street and brought under control in a few minutes but not before significant damage was done. While returning from the 10<sup>th</sup> Street fire, firemen found a garage on fire at Jerusalem Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Street that had just been set and firemen were able to keep damages to a minimum. Finally, the next day, a general alarm was sounded for another garage fire, this time at 12 Winding Road and damage was kept to a minimum. No one was ever arrested.

June 1<sup>st</sup> started out quiet but dark skies around 5 p.m. signaled an approaching thunderstorm, accompanied by strong winds approaching tornado strength. In 6 hours, firemen responded to over 24 alarms. The tornado touched down in Westbury, then struck Hicksville, south of Old Country Road, proceeded southeast and destroyed many buildings in its path. Responding apparatus reported very bad road conditions and blinding rains. Trees were torn from the ground and strewn about the street. Tool sheds and swimming pools were gone, and many homes were damaged. The most significant damage occurred at the Allied Shopping Center on Jerusalem Avenue. The twister touched down there and tore the roof off the Carvel Stand and severely damaged the Minuteman Cleaners and a Doctor's office nearby.

Firemen were kept busy on August 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> when Hurricane Belle blew into town. Over 50 men stood by during the storm from 10 PM through 3 AM. The firemen responded to 33 storm emergencies and several rescue calls. Most of the fire calls were downed power lines or wires burning in the trees.

On February 15 a disastrous fire at the Sunny Shay Kennels 302 West John Street took the lives of 26 Prize Show Dogs, many of which were Afghans. The dogs, valued at \$500 each, were to have been transported to a kennel shop later that day. Only the unselfish efforts of Hicksville firemen kept the toll at 26, as another 20 dogs were saved from their cages. Upon arrival, flames were coming from the basement entrance, the only one. Mostly the dead dogs were trapped in their cages in the cellar. Many firemen were visibly upset carrying out the dead and injured animals. Attempts were made to revive all the dogs with oxygen, some dogs survived with the treatment but for others it was too late.

A spectacular midafternoon blaze in March destroyed three attached stores at 545 South Broadway. The fire was reported at 2:45 PM at City Line Business Machines. Firemen were on the scene in minutes and the flames were coming out the roof. Other stores destroyed

were Tom Farrell's Lounge and an antique store. The fire started in the rear of the City Line Store where cleaning solvents were used, and the fire spread rapidly.

Hicksville firemen spent over 114 hours on the job, when a tractor trailer tank truck loaded with over 8,000 gallons of gasoline was in collision with a car at Newbridge and Old Country Roads. The truck overturned and started leaking gas. Firemen arrived on the scene in minutes and started to cover the area with foam. The Grumman Company sent a crash truck, and the Republic Airport sent in foam supplies. Speedy action by firemen prevented a fire which would have been difficult to fight in that the area as it was wide open, surrounded by gas stations and overhead power lines. The Newbridge shopping center was closed as a precaution and traffic was closed off a mile in each direction.

Seven firefighters were injured as they battled a general alarm fire on July 31 at 123 Brittle Lane. The fire was situated on the second floor, and one firefighter was injured as he attempted to gain access via the interior stairway. He was stalled for several minutes by locked doors at the head of the stairway.

A fire in a 2-story office building at 82 North Broadway caused considerable damage. The fire was reported on August 31<sup>st</sup> and started in an office on the 2nd floor of the Guardian Life Insurance Building. The first arriving engine company found a fast-moving fire. The fire was up above the ceiling and firemen worked feverishly to expose and extinguish the fire. The skylight above the fire broke from the heat and this helped firemen move in fast at the point of origin. Four offices suffered damage, and 10 others sustained water and smoke damage.

A flash fire in a building at 32 Barclay Street caused considerable damage to the structure and destroyed a vehicle and heavily damaged two others. The fire on December 27<sup>th</sup> was occupied by the Rapid Auto Radiator Inc. whose employees were working when the fire started. Employees had used fire extinguishers to make good their escape from the building. First engine Company, 932, had several firefighters overcome by acid fumes and heavy smoke.

The department purchased a new 1500 gpm Class A pumper, manufactured by Sutphen, Inc. of Ohio. The cost of this apparatus was \$83,000. It is the first diesel in the Hicksville Fire Dept. and the second such on Long Island. Equipment included 3 pre-connects and front / rear suction and booster tank that holds 500 gallons of water for relatively small fires. The truck carried 1500 feet of 3" hose and 1200 feet of 2 1/2" feet of hose. It is also

equipped with a 1,000 gpm and deck gun. It would be assigned to Volunteer Hose Company 4 (934).

The Department mourned the passing of two influential firemen, Ex-Chief Henry Gebhardt, who was a member of just about every fire service organization in the area. Ex-Chief Gebhardt served for over 66 years. They also mourned the loss of Harold "Hauwxie" Hawxhurst, a 49-year veteran of the Department. Hauwxie, was one of the most colorful members of this department. Like Ex-Chief Gebhardt, Hauwxie too, could be counted on when the chips were down or when your back was against the wall. He would always come to your aid.

Chief Schaaf led the members in Hicksville's Bicentennial celebration parade. With a sunny blessing and a brisk breeze to fly the many flags, the procession marched off almost on time, following the fire house horn signal to begin the day. Thousands of marchers and viewers along Old Country Road and Broadway took part in the community latest tribute to the Nation's two hundred years of independence. The Department was there in all its glory, with its Color Guard, fire trucks and of course the fetchingly garbed Ladies Auxiliary and the Junior Firemen all reflected much credit on Hicksville.

For the 1<sup>st</sup> time, an annual tradition was started on Thanksgiving eve when the members of the Hicksville and Jericho Fire Department's held their annual hockey game. The game held at Cantiague Park drew a good size crowd and observed Hicksville go down in defeat 7-2. The Hicksville team was led by coach Vic Nawrocki. Roy was a member of the Hick's Drill Team from 1957 to 1962.

In 1985, Roy was elected to serve as Fire Commissioner, and during his term, he served as Chairman in 1988.

Roy was a 62-year member of Trinity Lutheran Evangelical Church in Hicksville and a 12-year member with St. Michael Lutheran Church in Fort Meyers, Florida. After retiring to Florida, he would continue his community service and serve as President of the Herons Glen Men's Golf Association.

Chief Schaaf passed away on October 17, 2006, and is interred at the Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale, New York.





*Chief Schaaf is shown in command at a Nevada Street House Fire (above left), At a fire prevention Mid Island Plaza storefront display with TOB Supervisor Colby (top right) and below left commanding a fire at John's Tavern fire on West Marie Street*





***Served 2 Years***

William Ferber was born April 5, 1920, in Brooklyn and was the son of Louis and Anna (Klingel) Ferber. They moved to Hicksville in time for Bill to attend High School here. He married Jeanette Vilim in June of 1944.

Bill was a veteran of World War II serving from January 1942 through September of 1945.

Bill joined the department as a member of Independent Engine & Hose Company 2 on June 13, 1961, and was given badge 687.

Bill worked very hard for his Company, serving on many Committees on both the Company and Department levels, which gave him the insight to leadership knowledge. This proved to be a very important background for he served his Company through all line officer positions and was served as their Captain in 1966 and 1967 before he was elected 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1972.

He has served the Department well in each of the Assistant Chiefs positions and was elected as the 49<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief in 1978 and 1979. Bill worked for the Town of Oyster Bay in the Central Vehicle Maintenance Department as a welding engineer.

When Bill was elected Chief, there was a shake up in the Assistant Chiefs office. James Huttler and John Keyer had competition and were replaced by Richard Kershow, William Donlon and the new 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief was Owen Magee.

During Chief Ferber's term there were several events that were notable.

In 1978 workers from MD Cesspool Company were finishing up a new cesspool adjacent to the old one. One worker was down inside the new cesspool when the walls of the old pool collapsed flooding the new one. Firefighters went down to help his co-worker. One firefighter Thomas Sullivan, at great risk to his own life, entered the cesspool attached a lifeline on one of the victims and with the help of other fast arriving firefighters removed him from the

pool. Both workers suffered from inhalation of methane gas. Sullivan wore no protective breathing apparatus because it wouldn't fit in the hole.

Twelve firefighters were injured, six of them seriously, when a two-gallon can of gasoline exploded as they were battling what seemed to be a routine car fire at a home located at 5 Waters Avenue. The explosion was forceful enough to knock many of the responders off their feet. Injured were firemen, Les Snediker, Mike Palmer, Bobby Johnson, Dominick D'Antuono, Robert Chiz, Joe Giardina and Captain William Schuckmann.

Four firemen were injured seriously while two others suffered non-life-threatening injuries when the wall of a burning vacant barn collapsed on them at 20 Field Avenue. The fire was called shortly after 6AM on January 21, 1978. As firemen were beginning to enter the burning structure, the main beam of the building collapsed causing the wall to give way. Firefighter Nick Caruso, Engine 7 broke his back and was trapped, and Lieutenant Gil Cusick suffered a puncture lung and broken wrist. Firefighter John Hanifan Jr. and Lieutenant Krummenacker suffered broken ankles.

A general alarm was transmitted early February 22 when a passerby noticed smoke pouring from the Doyno's Tire Service Building at 544 Old Country Road. Firefighters were hampered by thick smoke when they entered the building and found a pick-up truck inside, fully involved in flames. They quickly moved to cut off the fire from the main tire storage area. After the roof was vented, firefighters moved in and doused the blaze.

A fire at the Newmark and Lewis store on South Broadway, on July 2, caused an estimated \$25,000 damage. The fire started outside the rear of the store in rubbish and spread to wooden skids. The fire extended inside through windows to the stockroom. The sprinkler system was set off and a fire on the roof was found and extinguished. An electric transformer was destroyed in the blaze and accounted for half of the damage total.

A fire, whose origin was termed suspicious, caused an estimated \$175,000 in damage. The fire was reported by a passerby on March 30<sup>th</sup> located at 380 South Broadway. The address housed the law firm of Kantor, Blodnic, Vogel, Haber, and Wolf. Also located in the building was a Chiropractor, a Council Service "Cope" and a Plumbing and Electrical Contractor. Chief Ferber credited a fast and efficient attack by firefighters in keeping the damage confined. The damage consisted of smoke and water damage, forced doors and broken windows. The law firm suffered a total loss including its Law Library.

A general alarm blaze at the Pax Surface Chemical Co. was transmitted on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The firm, located at 24 Max Avenue, off Woodbury Road, had several types of chemicals stored. The building was unoccupied upon arrival and firefighters unaware of the dangerous chemicals inside, entered to fight the blaze. The building had no posted warning signs and firefighters used SCBA, but the men were still affected. It was estimated most of those injured were the first ones to enter the building. Firefighters could not get at the fire because it was blocked by drums of chemicals and a small truck. Shortly after the blaze, many firefighters started to get sick and were transported to the County Medical Center. The chemicals involved were caustic soda, chromic acid, succinic acid sodium cyanide, sodium sulfide, phosphoric acid, and copper cyanide. Damage to the building was estimated at \$10 million dollars.

There were three separate fires at the Empire Diner located at the intersection of West John Street and Jerusalem Avenue. The first working fire was on June 25<sup>th</sup> and reported by the diner owner. The first attempts to fight the fire were by diner employees using a garden hose. The fire spread throughout the duct system and the automatic extinguishing system failed to operate. Firefighters vented the roof, removed most of the duct work, and had the fire under control in about 90 minutes. Damage was estimated at \$50,000.

Less than two weeks later a second fire caused an estimated \$15,000 damage when the fire started in almost the same area as the first fire. Firefighters once again kept the fire confined to the kitchen area. Several months later a fire broke out on December 8<sup>th</sup>, the third such fire in six months. This fire, as were the past fires, was in the kitchen area. A seriously delayed alarm, while employees again fought the fire with a garden hose and numerous pots and pans, the fire caused moderate damage to the kitchen and rest room area. The department was alerted to the blaze by a passing security guard. Fire officials felt that if the employees had reported the blaze when first discovered, damage would have been much less.

An early morning blaze at the General Instrument Corp, 600 West John Street caused an estimated \$6.5 million dollars damage. The alarm on August 9<sup>th</sup> started in a machine in the Lab. The machine was used to make silicon micro-computer chips. The automatic sprinkler activated but could not contain the blaze. The fire extended to the roof area above the Lab and firefighters were hampered by high voltage electric bus bars which shorted out in the ceiling. They had to contend with containers of acid in the fire area. A decontamination station had to be set up as a precaution so firefighters working inside could wash. The roof had numerous

ducts and vents that did not make for easy access to the fire area. Six firefighters were taken to the County Medical Center for treatment of smoke inhalation and released.

The snow and ice storm of 1978 became the home away from home during the heavy snowfall that stranded motorists and commuters. The stranded were picked up by fire units who patrolled the Hicksville area and remained on stand-by duty for over 48 hours.

During Chief Ferber's term, he found himself guiding the members in sad times. For the first time since World War II, the Department did not participate in the Memorial Day Parade. A fire took the lives of firefighters from Bethpage. Firefighters withdrew from the community's Memorial Day parade to attend the burial services and to provide fire protection, for the Bethpage Fire Department. Two Bethpage Firefighters, Captain Joseph Dunn, 28 and Robert Hassett, 21, both died in a fire at the Brothers 3 Pool Supply store on Hempstead Turnpike, May 25th. The cause of death was listed as chlorine poisoning. A former employee was charged, after he admitted setting the blaze after being fired from his job at the pool supply outlet.

It was not that soon after when the tragic news of the death of six New York City Firemen occurred in a fire at Waldbaum's in Brooklyn. Among the dead are Harold Hastings, a Hicksville resident. Mr. Hastings, who had served in the FDNY was on the roof that collapsed beneath him, plunging him into the inferno below. Firefighters from all over came to Long Island to honor the fallen comrade. Firefighter Hastings was buried at Pinelawn National Cemetery with honors and Hicksville firefighters assisted other firefighters carrying him to his final resting place.

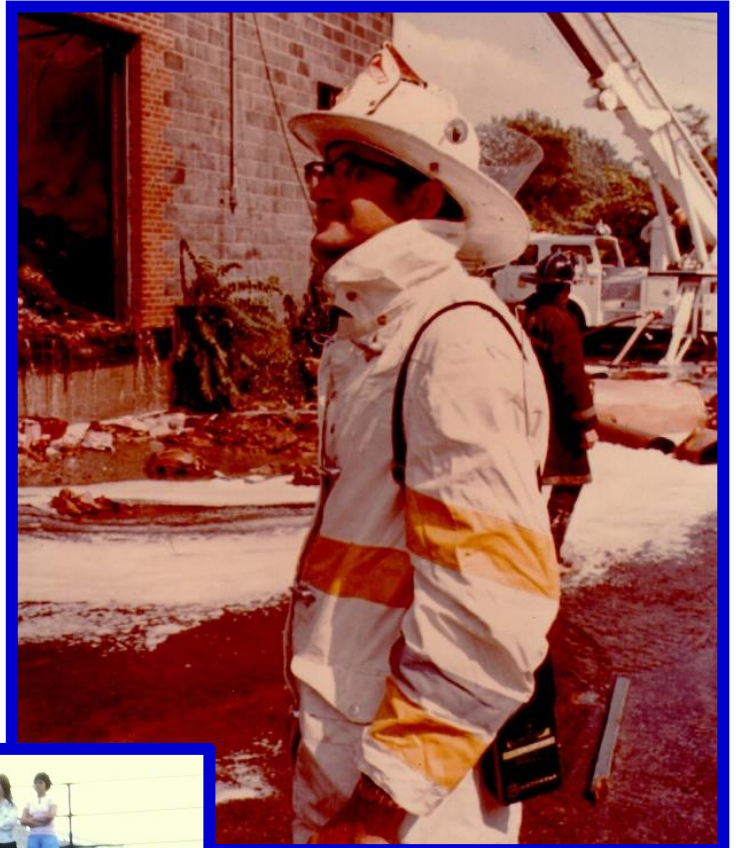
During his term two new cardiac "thumper" CPR machines were placed into service. These new machines perform the life-saving Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation automatically assuring uninterrupted CPR while the patient is prepared for transportation in stairways, (where manual CPR is almost impossible), or while administering life.

In July of 1979, the department received its newest addition. This new 100-foot aerial tower was assigned to Protection Hook & Ladder Company One and was placed in service in August. The truck replaced the 1969 Sutphen 85-foot aerial tower.

It was during this year that the Chiefs created a newly adopted percentage program for all members. Due to the increasing number of EMS alarms that were being handled by the members, the Chiefs Office set up a Group 1 and Group 2 program. Group 1 was Companies

1, 3, 5, and 7 and Group 2 was the even number Companies. Each group was charged with EMS alarms during the Assigned Group which were the odd months in Group one.

Chief Ferber passed away on October 10, 1991, and he is interred at the Cemetery of Holy Rood in Westbury.



*Chief Ferber is shown with Chief Mertz (above left), at a building fire (above right) and leading the department at a Labor Day Parade with Assistant Chiefs Kershow, Donlon and Magee.*





***Served 2 Years***

Richard Kershow was born on April 18, 1940, in Hicksville and is the son of Richard and Estelle (Odwazny) Kershow. He attended St. Ignatius Grammar School and Hicksville High School. He married Gail Philipp in May of 1962. They lived at 43 Harding Avenue. He was employed by the Town of Oyster Bay as a Mechanic.

Rich joined the Department in October 1968 and was given badge 203. His father Richard Sr. and his brother James were also members of the fire department. He served as Captain in 1976 – 1977 and his activity within his Company and the Department had proven him a dedicated and respected leader. In 1978, just after completing his

term as Captain, Richard decided to run against the incumbent candidate James Huttie from Company 2 and was elected 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1978 and 1979. Huttie had already served as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief, and he just completed his term as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief when he lost to Richard Kershow. In 1980, Richard was elected as the 50<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief of the Department and his Assistant Chiefs were William Donlon, Owen Magee, and William Schuckmann.

The Department observed an increased fire load, particularly around Old Country Road and Newbridge Road. It would later become affectionately known as “Kershow’s Corner”, named after Richard Kershow, who served as Chief during the activity.

On May 26 in 1981, the Sunday before Memorial Day, seven businesses were destroyed, and 23 firefighters were injured in a nine-hour fire. The blaze, which was fought by more than 100 firemen from 21 volunteer companies believed to have started in a basement storeroom of Color Mart Paint Store in the King Kullen shopping center at Newbridge and Old Country Road. All but six of the injured firefighters were treated for minor burns and smoke and toxic-fume inhalation. A passerby discovered the fire on Sunday and immediately pulled an alarm at a nearby fire box. The fire, fueled by flammable liquids, quickly spread to adjoining structures. The shopping center section involved consists of a group of attached, two-story buildings with retail outlets on the first floor and private offices on the second. Among the



stores and offices destroyed, in addition to the paint store, were: G.L. Hoffman Dental Office, Ice Cream Plus, School for Self Defense and the Wolfson Law Office. Efforts of the 165 firefighters and 10 mutual aid departments prevented the flammable liquid fed fire from spreading to ten other attached stores and the Stock's Funeral Home. The fire was believed to have started in the basement of the Colormart Paint Store, and it apparently burned undetected for a period before a passerby saw smoke and turned in the alarm. Numerous explosions in the basement and a blocked basement stairway, kept firefighters from entering. Holes were cut in the floor above and hi-expansion foam units dumped foam to douse the inferno in the basement, but fire spread through air spaces and utility shaft ways to the roof area. Paint thinners, and lacquers burned furiously. Much of southeast Hicksville was under a cloud of acrid smoke for about 4 hours. Smoke at the scene was so thick it blocked vision of the building, personnel, and apparatus. Twenty-three firefighters were injured. Firefighters had to cancel plans to take part in Memorial Day Services.

Over a two-week period, arson caused fires has accounted for most of Hicksville's serious fires. A 50-foot-high structure behind the grandstand at the Hicksville High School was torched and the structure was almost destroyed. That was the same structure which was destroyed almost a year ago. Less than two weeks later on October 13<sup>th</sup>, unknown persons threw a firebomb at the old Hicksville School District Administration Building on Newbridge Road behind the Sr. High School. Quick action by firefighters to confine the blaze to the point of origin and thorough overhauling of the fire in the walls and basement ceiling was credited for holding down the damage.

Then on a December 6<sup>th</sup> the Hicksville School District's former Administration Building at 265 Newbridge Road was destroyed by fire caused by an apparent arsonist. The general fire alarm rang at Fire Headquarters and upon arrival the entire basement had fire pushing out windows. Repeated attempts to enter the inferno failed to aggressively combat the blaze. Firefighters then applied high expansion foam, but flames spread up through the open wall spaces and ignited the roof. High winds provided wind chill in the single digits. Nine men were treated at the scene for smoke inhalation and chemicals from school labs, stored in the building, gave off toxic fumes and blue flame.

The year 1981 rounded out with a fire, burning out of control at the New York Diagnostic Center at 247 Old Country Road, destroying the facility. A passing LILCO employee reported the fire which was already blowing out the windows. The December 20<sup>th</sup> alarm had first arrived

units immediately using the 5" large diameter hose system to battle the blaze. The brick and frame building measuring 200 ft. x 75 ft. served as a preventative medicine center.

In December of 1981 the new apparatus of Independent Engine & Hose Company 2 was on full display at its annual Open House. The apparatus was originally ordered by the Boston, Massachusetts Fire Department but a bond issue failed and Hicksville Fire Commissioners, informed of the availability, moved to purchase the apparatus with a few changes made by Co. #2 Truck Committee. The purchase represents a considerable saving for Hicksville taxpayers.

The department was saddened by the passing of Ex-Chief Henry Schnepf who was Chief between 1918 and 1921.

Rich served on the Hicksville FD Labor Day Parade & Tournament Committee and was Chairman in 1983. Even with his demanding schedule as Chief, Rich somehow found time to be a Cub Scout leader.

Richard Kershow was elected Fire Commissioner for a 5 Year term and served as Chairman. In 1985 he would retire from the Town of Oyster Bay. He would then marry Patricia, and move to Rio Rancho, New Mexico. He would go back to work after retirement working as a mechanic for the Rio Rancho Country Club.

Chief Kershow passed away on September 4, 2008, and is interred at Vista Verde Memorial Park, New Mexico.



***Served 2 Years***

William Donlon was born October 9, 1939, and is the son of William Sr. and Edna (Waterbury) Donlon and he is a life-long 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Hicksville resident. He graduated from Hicksville High School in 1956. He married Martha Canham in October of 1958. William owned and operated Consumer Oil and lived on 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Hicksville.

Bill was a Veteran of the United States Navy, where he served 2 years active duty and continued in the active reserves for over 20 years. He retired from the Naval Reserves as a first-class radioman.

Being a lifelong resident of Hicksville, Bill was aware of the community's needs, so he joined the department and Volunteer Hose Company 4 in 1967. Bill served Company 4 as 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Lieutenant, and Captain. In 1978, Bill decided to run against the incumbent candidate John Keyer from Company 6. Keyer had just completed his term as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief when he lost to Captain Bill Donlon. Bill served as 2nd Assistant Chief and 1st Assistant Chief. Bill earned the respect and admiration of everyone he had been in contact with by his cool demeanor and fairness to all. He assumed the position as the 51<sup>st</sup> Chief in 1982 - 1983. All the experience has made Bill a well-rounded and experienced leader.

During his term, in 1983, a Chemical Tanker overturned on West John Street spilling over 7,000 gallons of MEK onto the ground and into storm drains. It took the support of Grumman and Republic Airports to help with foaming operations.

There was a fire at the Eastern Tile Warehouse on Bethpage Road that caused over \$125,000 in damage.

A fast-moving fire broke out on April 30<sup>th</sup> in the rear portion of the building, in an alley behind Bill's Bar located at 17-19 Herzog Place. There were numerous patrons in the bar at the time of the fire, and they ignored plea of firefighters and the bartender to leave. Firefighters

had to forcibly remove some of the patrons. Efforts were hampered by a tin ceiling to manage the fire, but they were able to confine the fire to the bar.

Firefighters battled the blaze at Country Carpet located at the Railroad tracks and Raymond Street. Upon arrival of the one-story block building, fire was seen through the roof. Several small hydrants in the neighborhood made it necessary to call for mutual aid assistance. Early in the fire, the walls began to twist, and the steel beams gave way. Firefighters found themselves fighting the fire from the outside. The mutual aid engines relayed water from blocks away to units at the scene. Nearby buildings were protected from damage as was the portion of the warehouse containing paint and chemicals.

Under his term, firefighters pulled extra duty by serving on the Hazardous Material Response Team and trained in an 8-hour seminar at Hicksville High School. The seminar conducted by Safety System of Jacksonville, Florida, covered problems in dealing with hazardous material leaks, spill, and fire control. Over 200 firefighters from Long Island attended the lecture and field evolutions.

Ex-Chief Donlon was elected Fire Commissioner in 1984 to a five term and served as its chairman in 1987. Chief Donlon passed away at the age of 49 from cancer on September 15, 1988, and he is interred at Pinelawn Memorial Cemetery in Farmingdale, New York.



*Chief Donlon is shown in command working with the Nassau County Police and below at the Hicksville High School Administration Building Fire*



***Served 2 Years***

Owen Magee was born on November 9, 1938, in Hempstead and is the son of Owen and Doris (Bishop) Magee. He is a graduate of Hicksville Sr. High. Owen graduated Hicksville High School in 1958, and he married Rene on May 12, 1974. Owen was employed by the Village of Hempstead in the Fire Alarm Traffic Signal and Street Lighting Department. He would later become the Superintendent with the Hicksville Fire District, where he retired in 2016. After retirement, he stayed in Hicksville part-time as a Fire Inspector and Pre-Planner. Additionally, he has been serving in the same capacity sharing his expertise with the Levittown Fire District since 2004. Owen was also

employed as a Public Fire Safety Education Specialist for Nassau County. Owen and Rene live on Acre Lane in Hicksville.

Owen served in the United States Navy in Patrol Squadron 16 located in Jacksonville, Florida from 1962 - 1964, and in the Reserves as an Aviation Electrician's Mate.

Owen Magee is a third-generation fire fighter. His father and grandfather served in the Hempstead, N.Y. Fire Department. He was a charter member of Engine Company #7 in 1957 and was given badge 603. Owen served as a member of the Rescue Squad and was elected to the position of Lieutenant and served as captain in 1967 through 1969. He was in the group of the first Department EMTs in 1971. Owen also served as department corresponding secretary in 1968 and 1969. He then went onto serve as 2nd and 1st Lieutenant in Engine Company 7 and was elected to the 11<sup>th</sup> Captain in 1972 and 1973.

Owen Magee took office as 3rd Assistant Chief in 1978 and rose through the ranks to Chief of Department. Chief Owen W. Magee was elected to the highest office of the Department as the 52<sup>nd</sup> Chief in January of 1984. His Assistant Chiefs were William Schuckmann (1<sup>st</sup>), Gerard O'Brien (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Terrence Farrell (3<sup>rd</sup>).



In March of 1985, a fire at the General Instrument Co. Plant, at 600 West John St., Hicksville caused damage that originated in a plating machine, used in the maintenance of printed circuit boards. A security guard making his rounds discovered the fire in the P.C. Laboratory and notified the Fire Department. The fire, believed to be electrical in origin, enveloped the machine containing several 74-gallon containers of acids and plating materials. An automatic fire sprinkler activated but did not send out an automatic fire signal to the Fire Department as designed. 25 workers were evacuated as a precaution and the Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Response Team made the area safe and the State Environmental Dept. and Health Department managed the toxic smoke, water, and water runoff.

The Historic Gregory Museum on Heitz Place sustained medium damage early on the morning of June 31<sup>st</sup>. A fast-moving severe electrical storm moving through the Mid Island area is believed to have been the cause of the fire. Fire officials believe lightning struck power lines and a surge shorted out the main electrical pan and swept upward to the first floor. A neighbor was credited with saving the landmark building by sounding the alarm from a nearby alarm box. None of the valuable displays were harmed and damage was confined to the north wall and interior walls.

Agway Garden Supply Center at 411 West John Street was hit by fire on May 11<sup>th</sup>. An employee sharpening a lawn mower blade on a grinder generated sparks which ignited nearby gasoline. Employees attempted to extinguish the fire, but it spread rapidly and when firefighters arrived first 1<sup>st</sup> due at 4:16 PM, they encountered a large volume of fire and heavy smoke. Firefighters fearing pesticides and fertilizers took precautions to avoid the toxic smoke. The East Meadow Hazmat Team assisted in identifying possible hazardous materials and the operation did not contaminate the local water supply, and the fire was under control at 5:45 PM. Damage was estimated at over quarter million dollars to contents.

Firefighters battled a smoky fire for hours at the DePew Chemical Factory located at Duffy Avenue and Charlotte Avenue on April 5<sup>th</sup>. While no large quantities of chemicals were involved, the smoke was toxic and self-contained air masks were used all throughout the firefighting efforts. For a time, it was feared some chemicals might cause problems as the fire was believed to have originated in a trash can and spread to the roof.

In February a propane tank slipped out of the hands of its operator at the Wasserman Bag Company located at 70 Commerce Place sparking a blaze that caused \$750,000 in

damage with 9 mutual aid companies. The forklift operator was changing the bottle when the valve struck the ground, snapping off, creating a spark and the operator suffered burns to his hands and face and was treated at a local hospital.

Thousands of pre-yule shoppers were driven from the Mid-Island Shopping Plaza about noon when spilled sewer- cleaning solvent set off a chemical reaction that sent noxious fumes billowing through the crowded mall and about 100 shops. Upon arrival Chief Magee was informed by workers that the chemical, sodium hydroxide, reacted with other substances in a trash dumpster in the truck tunnel under the mall. The workers applied water, thinking it was a fire. A large reaction resulted in a huge cloud of toxic vapors. Haz Mat team members removed the drum from the dumpster and packed it in a recovery drum. The burning material in the dumpster was covered with Speedy-Dry and then sand provided by the Town of Oyster Bay was put on top. The Nassau County Fire Marshals Office, County Health Department, N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation also on the scene. They made provisions to have the chemical transported to a waste disposal site, all areas affected were cleaned up.

Hicksville firefighters closed out 1984 with a store fire which caused \$50,000 damage to store and contents injuring two firefighters. The fire was reported via alarm box by a passerby at 2:49 AM on December 31<sup>st</sup>. The fire was at Antonio's Deli at 113 Broadway, Hicksville which is located in the center of the block of stores. Firefighters fearing the heavily involved fire would spread to other stores sounded a second alarm for additional manpower and mounted an aggressive attack. They were able to confine the fire to the deli. The fire is believed to have started in the rear of the store.

As Hurricane Gloria headed our way, the Department mobilized its forces and braced for a very busy day when the first call came in at 7:21 AM. From that time on the phone never stopped. A mini storm center was set up and a call came in reporting downed trees and wires. The most serious being wind-blown propane tanks at a tank farm and a falling tree striking a passing vehicle injuring 3 occupants slightly.

In July of 1985, Chief Magee made possible the first female firefighter, Dawn Rosner to join Engine Company 7.

Chief Magee has been active in all areas of the Department serving on the Labor Day Publicity and Public Relations Committee, the Reserve Engine and Department Training

Committees. As Department and Company historian, he was solely responsible for documenting the fire department activities through the 1970's and 80's.

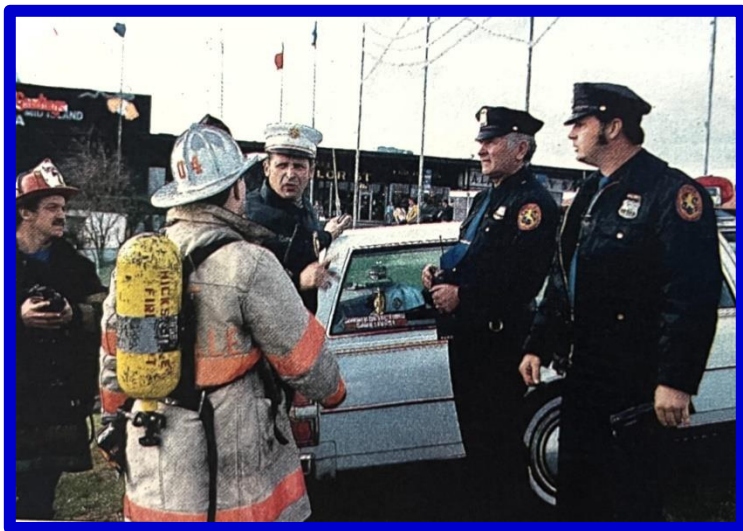
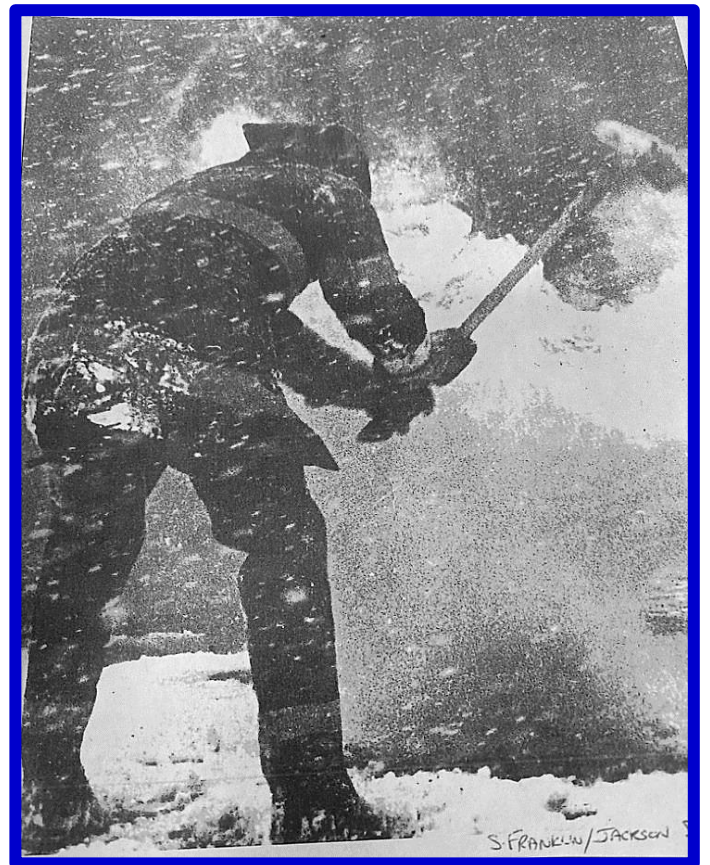
During the year of 1990, eleven members of the Fire Prevention and Fire Education Committee, including Ex-Chief Owen Magee had arranged, coordinated, and performed 57 presentations to various groups in the community. Some of these groups included preschool, nursery, kindergarten and elementary grade students, PTA's, Civic Associations, and Senior Citizen groups. Many of these presentations consisted of tours, lectures, and designed programs to meet a particular subject. Through the hard and continuing efforts of these members, Hicksville's residents, young and old, are becoming more aware of the dangers of fire, and learning how to prevent fire and how to survive it.

Ex-Chief Magee was awarded a Unit Citation for his work on Friday August 21, 1998, when the Hicksville Fire Department was called to assist the Jericho fire Department for an overturned gasoline truck on the Long Island Expressway. Upon arrival at the scene, it was unknown how much product was in the tanker since its driver sustained injuries and was transported to the hospital. A Hazardous Material Command post was established, and a review of the load and delivery tickets concluded that the truck was carrying approximately 10,000 gallons of gasoline. Various operations were being conducted which included the stabilization of the truck, monitoring of storm drains, the evacuation of residents and the cutting of six 4" holes into the side of the tanker and offloading its contents into a second truck while foam was being applied. Periodic meetings at the command post, among the various agencies involved, allowed for good communication during this large-scale incident that lasted approximately ten hours and started on a hot and sunny day.

In 2006, Ex-Chief Magee received a Certificate of Merit for his actions at 54 Boulevard Drive House Fire. Ex-Chief Magee assisted Ex-Chief Scanlon who was exiting the fire floor, after he located a victim and pulled him from the room. Upon their arrival, Ex-Chief Owen Magee was directed by his officers to assist Ex-Chief Scanlon in the rescue of the victim. Ex-Chiefs Magee and Scanlon removed the victim to the front lawn and began Basic Life Support procedures on the victim. Upon arrival of EMS, they assisted in the treatment and in the packaging of the patient. The victim, an 83-year-old male, was transported to Nassau University Medical Center in unstable condition with respiratory distress and airway compromise due to obvious burns to the upper airway structures. At the submission of this report several days later, the patient was still alive.

Owen was one of the original founders and charter members of the of the Department's Hazardous Materials Response Team where he is a long-time team member, serving as its Team Leader from 1998 through 2000. He was a member of the department's training committee. Owen has served for many years as the public information officer and was a fire inspector for the department. Owen is also currently serving on the Hazardous Material Committee of the New York State Fire Chiefs Association. He was a member of the of the NFPA, International Association of Fire Chiefs, Nassau County Fire Chiefs Council, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Chiefs Council, and Nassau County Firemen's Association. Owen was a member of the "Hicks" Drill Team from 1957 through 1959. He achieved his 50 years of active service in 2007 and his 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2017. His mentors through the years were Ex-Chiefs Gebhardt, Ofenloch, Saurer, Werthessen, Cotsonas, Davis and Specht.

Aside from Owen's father and grandfather serving with the Hempstead Fire Department, his brother Richard was a Captain of Engine Company 7 and a retired Fire Marshal for Nassau County. Owen's son Brian was a member of Volunteer Hose Company 4 before becoming a federal firefighter in West Point. Owen's Brother-In-Law Gerard O'Brien was a Captain of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 and ex-chief of the Hicksville Fire Department. His sister Diane O'Brien is a retired Treasurer of the Hicksville Fire District. Owen's granddaughter, Lauren Chapin now carries on her grandfather's legacy and joined Engine Company 7 in May of 2024.





***Served 2 Years***

William Schuckmann (Bill) is the Great-grandson of Hicksville natives, Gottlieb and Emma (Riner) Schuckmann. William was born in December of 1855 and like many of Hicksville's early settlers, Bill's family emigrated from Germany, set up residence in Queens, before settling in Hicksville. Gottlieb was a Gold Beater and Silversmith living on John Street. Just seven years after the Hicksville Fire Department was organized, Bill Sr. joined as a volunteer firefighter with Independent Engine and Hose Company 2. Chief Schuckmann's father, William followed in the footsteps of his father, joining as a member of the Hicksville Volunteer Fire Department at age 21, in 1950. He was first a member of Independent Engine Company 2 before transferring to Emergency Company Five.

William Schuckmann (Bill) was born September 29, 1952, to William and Dorothy (Law). He attended and graduated from Hicksville High School in 1970. Bill has a younger brother George. Bill's spouse is Barbara Von Grerichten.

Bill would become a 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation volunteer firefighter on November 9, 1971, when he was just 21 years old. At the same time, he went to work as a laborer with the Hicksville Water District in 1971. Bill knew he had time to devote to his community and fire department, so he submitted his application to Floodlight Company 8.

Bill was employed by the Hicksville Water District from 1971 through 2010. He worked his way up the ladder, starting as laborer, then foreman and eventually superintendent of the Hicksville Water District.

Bill was very active and continued to move on up through the ranks as an officer in Company 8. He was elected and served as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 1974 and 1975 and was subsequently elected as their 7<sup>th</sup> Captain in 1976, a position he held until 1979. His Lieutenants were Dominick D'Antuono serving as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant along with Robert Becker as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.



When Bill left as Captain, he was elected at the age of 28 as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief. He would serve as 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief until he was elected the 53<sup>rd</sup> Chief to serve the Hicksville Fire Department. In early December, Bill took over for Owen Magee as the Chief of Department who went onto work in the district.

A raging fire at a local office building at 82 Broadway caused close to one million dollars in damage when the pre-dawn fire gutted the second floor and roof of the three-story structure. The fire on the second floor was above the ceiling when firefighters arrived at 4AM, encountering heavy fire throughout the second floor. Firefighters were ordered out of the structure after the walls began to crack from the intense heat and began to break away. Efforts to contain and extinguish the flames were made from outside and above via tower ladders. The fire's origin was considered suspicious since the front door was found open when firefighters arrived. The building, which is owned by BL Associates of Huntington, has a parking garage on the first floor.

In just a few short months later, a delicatessen on Old Country Road was destroyed and five other stores at the Centerview Shopping Centre suffered smoke and water damage, which had been termed suspicious. The 2AM blaze at the New Country Deli, 26 Old Country Road which was completely gutted.

There was an intense gas fired oven at the DePew Company located at 359 Duffy Avenue. The main body of the fire was over the oven area. Three employees were treated at local hospitals for smoke inhalation. Firefighters pulled a LILCO worker from a resin leaching pond outside the building after he fell into it.

A fire at McDaniel Ford, on February 7<sup>th</sup> at 217 Bethpage Road, caused considerable damage to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and smoke and water damage to the main floor, before being extinguished. The fire began in a second-floor storage room prior to the alarm and the fire departments responded.

Chemical Plant fire interrupted Thanksgiving's dinner for a lot of firefighters when fire struck the Rucco plant on New South Road. The fire started in an isolated building involving a heat process unit. The smoky blaze, involving burning oil was extinguished in ninety minutes. No injuries were reported although some firefighting equipment had to be discarded due to oil contamination.

Ten New York Telephone workers were treated for dizziness, nausea and chest pains after carbon-monoxide fumes spread through their office building at 25 West Barclay Street.

In March of 1975 Bill was one of the local graduates that had previously completed a 180-hour emergency medical technician course. He was one of the first on Long Island to be certified by the New York State Department of Health as a paramedic. His training included such techniques as: defibrillating victims of cardiac arrest, stabilizing heart patients at the scene of heart attacks, and will be in constant communication through Nassau County's Emergency Service System with cardiologists and emergency personnel at the hospital of destination. He learned and practiced their skills while riding on Nassau County Police ambulances during assigned tours of duty where they applied their classroom skills during actual emergencies in the field. In addition, they were assigned observation time in the Coronary Intensive Care units of local hospitals and in the Psychiatric Emergency areas. Although the training was painful at times to the AMT's, they developed a deeper appreciation of this special skill. The introduction of the AMT program also brought the necessary telemetry equipment and drug supplies to apply this program to Hicksville residents.

The Department's Hazardous Material Response Team hosted a seminar for firefighters from the tri-state area. The training session was given by Haz-Mat Training Specialist from Safety Systems of Jacksonville, Florida. The training focused on handling hazardous material leaks, spills, and fires. Control of hazardous materials spill and leaks, many under pressure, required the development of special skills. Most fire departments in recent years have been faced with an increase in hazardous materials accidents. The Safety System Team has provided valuable assistance for a small fee to firefighters, and they provided hands-on training plus classroom discussion and theory to help team members sharpen their skills.

Bill would serve as Fire Commissioner of the Hicksville Fire District from 1989 – 2003 and serve as Chairman in 1992, 1996, 1997 and 2002.

In 2015 and 2016, Bill would serve a second term as Captain of Floodlight/Heavy Rescue Company 8. 45-year veteran, Bill Schuckmann was elected as the 27<sup>th</sup> Captain to serve Company 8. During his second term, Bill was elected to help the Company through its many challenges that confront the members.

He served on many Company and Department committees and was a member of the Exempts Benevolent Association. He would serve as the Labor Day Tournament and Parade Committee and served as their chairman in 1992 and as Honorary Grand Marshal in 1994.

Ex-Chief Schuckmann had the honor of being selected as one of the Co-Chairs along with Ex-Chief Wigdzinski and Assistant Chief Schweitzer to plan and organize the Department's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In February the department kicked off the year-long celebration by having the oldest Ex-Chiefs open the meeting. The meeting was moved to coincide with the actual charter date of 1893. Following the meeting the members made their way across the street to the old firehouse, now Peppercorns, for refreshments in the upstairs meeting hall.

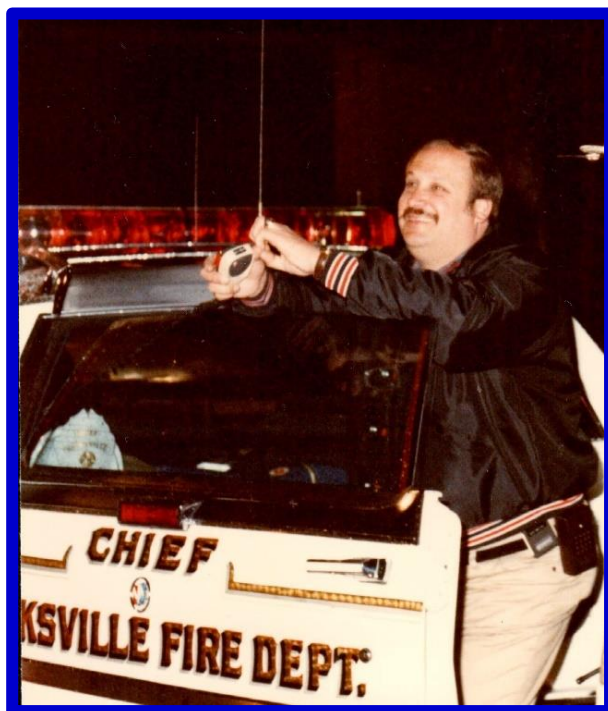
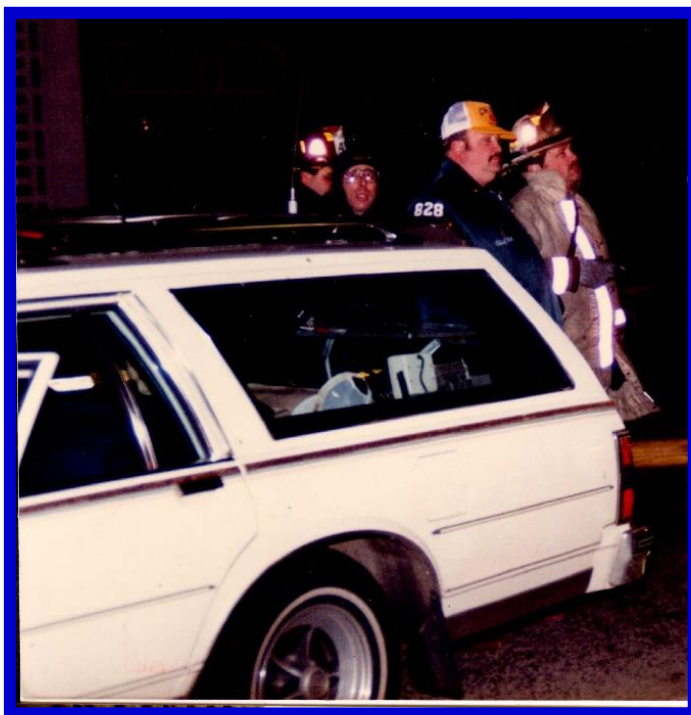
In June, after three years of planning, a grand parade kicked off at 6:15PM in a spectacular display of color, honor, precision and sound, as the department marked its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that surpassed any parade in Hicksville history. Sixty-three fire departments - two from as far away as Ohio and New Hampshire- marched in brilliant form through the streets of Hicksville. The parade was only one of many events that were held in honor of the fire department's centennial. A nightly carnival and a firemen's drill were among the other festivities. Thousands of people lined the two-mile parade route. The parade was preceded by a carnival held on East Marie Street for five days. Adjacent to the carnival was a food court staffed by local Hicksville organizations given an opportunity to raise funds for their groups. There was a fireworks extravaganza in the parking lot next to Station 1 and the famous Country Music group "Six-Gun" played for an evening under the stars.

The Department also played host to the 98th annual Southern New York State Volunteer Firefighters' Association Convention. The last time this was held in Hicksville was in 1902 and 1908. The convention included the racing tournament with entries from across Long Island and Westchester. The entire year was also highlighted with a 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary department picnic and installation dinner.

Bill has been a member of the Hicksville-Jericho Rotary Club since 1996. During his tenure, he has served as President on two separate occasions. Bill continues to serve as a member of the board of directors to this day. In February 2003, Bill received his first Paul Harris recognition in honor of his presidency. In June 2022, the club recognized him a second time for his continuing service to both the Hicksville- Jericho Rotary club and his community.

Bill Schuckmann joined the Hicksville Water District Board of Commissioners in September 2014. Commissioner Schuckmann has been an active member of the American Water Works Association (AWWA), Long Island Water Conference (LIWC) and New York State Water Conference throughout his tenure. In 2020 at a meeting held by Nassau Suffolk Water Commissioners' Association (NSWCA), Bill took over as President of the Association which consists of water commissioners representing 21 water districts across Nassau and Suffolk Counties and serves more than 625,000 Long Islanders.

He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Hicksville Chamber of Commerce. He is also on the Board of Directors of the Hicksville Rotary Club, for which he previously served as president in 2001 and 2006. In addition, for the past two years he has been a dedicated committee member for the Special Olympics held at Cantiague Park.





***Served 1 Year***

Gerard O'Brien was born May 20, 1946, and is the son of George and Loretta O'Brien. He graduated Hicksville High and married Diane Magee on May 25, 1968. Gerard was employed by the United States Postal Service for over 42 years starting as a Mail Carrier before taking on the role as a Sr. Safety Specialist. He would parlay his extensive emergency response experience and serve as a Manager in Homeland Security for the Postal Service. Jerry and Diane live on Mayflower Drive in Hicksville.

Jerry served in the U.S. Navy as a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Damage Control Technician.

Gerard joined Protection Hook and Ladder Company One in November 1964. Jerry was elected to serve as Treasurer from 1968 – 1969. In 1972, he was elected to serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. Jerry subsequently went onto serve as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant and was subsequently elected Captain in 1976 and again in 1977. Jerry was once again elected to the position of 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 1991 and again as Captain in 1993.

Gerard O'Brien was elected to the highest office of the Department in 1988, serving as the 54<sup>th</sup> Chief. His Assistant Chiefs were Terrence Farrell 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant, Anthony Wigdzinski 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and Patrick Scanlon 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant.

The department responded to a building fire at Universal Products, 495 West John Street on February 11. The first engine to arrive immediately stretched hose lines to the rear of the fire building helping to contain the fire to a production area and stopping what could have been extensive damage to this two-level structure. The fire, which was caused by a spillage of Cumar R-10 a product used in manufacturing plastics, was brought under control in 90 minutes. The damage was approximately \$75,000.

The department received an alarm on August 8 from the Hicksville High School Division Avenue facility of fumes coming from chemicals from the dock area. Responding to the scene



were the Haz Mat team and six units that found about 4 chemicals, removed from school labs, stored, and awaiting transfer. As Haz Mat personnel suited-up in self-contained apparatus a precautionary hose line was set up. Haz Mat team members were given a list of the chemicals on the loading dock, some of which included ammonium chloride. The team also found a small quantity of phosphorite had leaked from a container. Once it was mixed with air, a reaction occurred which gave off toxic fumes. The chemical was isolated first, then put in an overpack drum. When a small quantity of sodium was found, it was packed in kerosene to stabilize. At this point, all chemicals were in safe condition and the entry team exited the hazardous area and were de-contaminated. All unprotected chemicals were then stored in containers provided by the Fire Department. Although about six people were evacuated, students in a far wing of the school were in no danger.

A delicatessen on Old Country Road was destroyed and five other stores suffered smoke and water damage in an early morning blaze which has been termed "suspicious. More than 100 firefighters went to the New Country Deli, 26 Old Country Road, which was completely gutted.

A fire, which broke out in a building scheduled for demolition, took seven fire departments four hours to extinguish. The blaze was termed suspicious by the police arson squad and the fire marshal's office. The building, at 33 Old Country Road, the former General Contractors, was owned by developers of the pending Delco Plaza, a new shopping center. Fast work by the Department, contained the blaze from spreading to the other Delco Plaza stores. A security guard was on patrol in the area when suddenly a ball of fire came up from the structure. The building had been vacant for about two months and earlier that year, a work crew started demolition.

In September, more than 50 firefighters and nine pieces of equipment from Hicksville, battled a blaze at the Tropical Showcase Pet Store in the shopping center at Newbridge and Old Country Road. The fire killed most of the livestock in the store before arriving firemen had a chance to save them. The alarm was turned in at 11PM and was not declared under control for another 90 minutes. The fire apparently started in the basement and extended upward to the first floor. The first arriving units were met with a large volume of smoke, but no visible flames until they made entry.

In June of 1988, the Fire District reported that thirty to forty percent of all district fires and emergency calls occur around Levittown Parkway where the new Station 4 was proposed

to be built in 1988. Although the firehouse has been under consideration for nearly 30 years, it had become increasingly important in 1988 because of the large percentage of emergency calls in that area. The property for the fire station was purchased two years prior from the town for \$100,000. The proposed building design would be visually appealing and will complement the architectural styles of the neighborhood. Three fire engines and one emergency vehicle are housed in the station.

The Hicksville Fire Department and McDonalds Restaurant helped launch Fire Prevention Week for Nassau County, with a fire prevention expo, that was coordinated by Captain Schweitzer and held in the parking lot of McDonald's on Broadway. There were displays by Engine Company 5, Ladder Company 1, Heavy Rescue Company 8 and the Rescue Squad. The fire department displayed many tools and appliances. The children were taught to Stop, Drop and Roll. The children learn to use a fire extinguisher and the Department distributed fire prevention literature and gave blood pressure checks. One of the highlights of the day's events was the Nassau County Fire Education Trailer with audience participation and a special tour guided by Ronald McDonald.

In June of 1988, the Department adopted a new message phone to allow members to listen to messages if they could not hear the 9AM or 6PM test.

Chief O'Brien was saddened to learn of the passing of Ex-Chief/Ex-Commissioner Stanford (Sam) Weiss. Mr. Weiss joined Emergency Co. 5 in 1930 and served as a lieutenant and captain. He also served as assistant chief and was chief of the department from 1950-1952 and he served as a fire commissioner from 1959-1964. Mr. Weiss was also the Labor Day chairman for two years.

A few months later William F. Donlon, Jr., a fire commissioner and fire chief passed away of cancer. He was just 49 and a lifelong resident of Hicksville. Bill took an active part in his community, having joined the department in May of 1967. He started his way up through the ranks of the department and served as Lieutenant and Captain of Volunteer Hose Company 4. He went on to serve as Assistant Chief and Chief of the department in 1983 and 1984.

Ex-Chief O'Brien was awarded the Chiefs Award for his actions on April 2, 1991. The Hicksville Fire Department responded to a working house fire at 54 Fox Place. Ex-Chief O'Brien responding in his personal car was one of the first to arrive at the scene. With confirmed reports that the occupants of the house were trapped on the 2nd floor, Ex-Chief O'Brien attempted to

obtain a SCBA unit but was unable to do so and entered the structure wearing only his turnout gear for protection. As Ex-Chief O'Brien entered the structure, fire department units had not yet arrived at the scene and there were no handlines for protection. As Ex-Chief O'Brien approached the stairs to the 2nd floor, he was able to see the fire burning to his left on the 1st floor. Unable to proceed up on to the 2nd floor due to the heavy smoke and heat conditions, Ex-Chief O'Brien remained at the stairs monitoring the fire condition and members searching. While positioned here, Chief Wigdzinski appeared with the female occupant and passed her off to him. Ex-Chief O'Brien immediately carried the female occupant across the floor, down a set of stairs and to the outside where he set her down across the street. Ex-Chief O'Brien was then passed a resuscitator which he set up and was used to administer oxygen to her due to her difficulty in breathing. Ex-Chief O'Brien continued to remain with the occupant and assisted in getting her ready for the ambulance to transport her to the hospital. In the finest tradition of the fire service, Ex-Chief O'Brien's dedication and teamwork contributed to the successful outcome of this fire incident.

Ex-Chief O'Brien was awarded a Unit Citation for his work on Friday August 21, 1998, when the Hicksville Fire Department was called to assist the Jericho Fire Department for an overturned gasoline truck on the Long Island Expressway. Upon arrival at the scene, it was unknown how much product was in the tanker since its driver sustained injuries and was transported to the hospital. A Hazardous Material Command post was established, and a review of the load and delivery tickets concluded that the truck was carrying approximately 10,000 gallons of gasoline. Various operations were being conducted which included the stabilization of the truck, monitoring of storm drains, the evacuation of residents and the cutting of six 4" holes into the side of the tanker and offloading its contents into a second truck while foam was being applied. Periodic meetings at the command post, among the various agencies involved allowed for good communication during this large-scale incident that lasted approximately ten hours and started on a hot and sunny day.

On August 22, 2017, the Hicksville Fire Department was alerted for a signal 9 for a "laceration from glass" at the MET Foodtown Supermarket at 530 South Broadway. First arriving units, 9399 staffed by District Medic were met with an adult male who was unconscious and lying in a large pool of his own blood. The patient presented unconscious with heavy bleeding from multiple deep lacerations including a severed artery in his right arm. Complicating the situation, a torrential downpour of rain began spreading blood and making it difficult to properly treat the patient. The EMT-CC took one side of the patient and the District Medic took the other. Pressure and "quick clot" bandages were applied. Chief Diaz and

Assistant Chief Flahavan began to assist with patient care assessment of vital signs. Ambulance 9323 arrived and the EMT came to assist by applying a tourniquet to the patient's right arm which was now beginning to bleed through the bandages. An IV lifeline was established as the patient regained consciousness and became agitated. Medication was administered to calm the individual who was then transported to Nassau University Medical Center in serious condition. For his actions Ex-Chief O'Brien was awarded a Certificate of Merit.

Jerry was Captain of the Rescue Squad, a member of the "Hicks" Drill Team, and on the Hazardous Materials Team. Jerry was active on the Bowling Team and Softball Team. Jerry served for numerous years on the Labor Day Parade and Drill from the 70's through the 90's and he served as its chairman in 1975.

He joined the Fire Police and would serve as their Lieutenant and subsequently as their Captain in 2021 and 2022.

In 1988, Jerry was elected as a delegate to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Fire Districts. He rose through the ranks and was elected to the position of Chairman of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion in 2011, a position he held for 4 years. During this time Jerry sat as a member of the Nassau County Fire Commission and in 1996, he was elected to the position of Chairman and is only the 3<sup>rd</sup> member of the Hicksville Fire Department to hold this position.

In 2009, Jerry was elected to serve as Fire Commissioner of the Hicksville Fire District for a 5-Year term, serving as its Chair in 2012.







***Served 1 Year***

Terrence Farrell was born March 10, 1956, and was the fifth of seven sons born to Joseph and Ruth Farrell. He graduated from Hicksville High School in 1974. In July 1984 Terry became a member of the New York City Transit Police Department. Within 2 years he was assigned to the prestigious Emergency Services Unit.

He married Nora Hoffman in June 1985. They would have 2 children. Terrence Joseph (current 1st Assistant Chief, with the Dix Hills Fire Department) and Rebecca. Terry and Nora lived on Hope Lane before moving to Dix Hills.

Terry, as he was affectionately known joined Chemical Engine Company 3 in December of 1974 and was given badge 785. Terry was a very active member of the Company and was elected to serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in 1980, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 1981 and subsequently went onto serve as their 30<sup>th</sup> Captain in 1982 and again in 1983.

He became a member of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) in 1989. In October 1995 Terry was assigned to Rescue 4. Rescue 4 is just one of only five elite Rescue units that serve the entire FDNY system. Terry was committed to his profession by becoming a member of the New York City Fire Department's elite "Rescue 4", located in Maspeth, Queens.

During Terry's career he served as a member of the Hazardous Materials Response Team and a member of the Rescue Squad. Terry was an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT-D) from 1989 through 1991.

Following his departure as Captain, Terry was elected as an Assistant Chief in 1984 and went onto serve as the 55<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department in 1989. His Assistant Chiefs were Anthony Wigdzinski (1<sup>st</sup>), Patrick Scanlon (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Albert Merk (3<sup>rd</sup>).



During his term as Chief, OSHA mandated that firefighters no longer ride on the rear “tail” of apparatus. The Chiefs set new guidelines and members either rode up top or in jump seats. Future apparatus will be designed with crew cabs to accommodate the new change.

A home was completely destroyed when a natural gas leak caused the home to explode on March 16<sup>th</sup>. The two occupants of the home at 51 Myers Avenue heard a hissing sound and smelled gas. When they were almost out the front door the explosion occurred, causing back injuries to both residents. The day before the fire, a gas appliance was installed at the home and investigators pinpointed the origin of the blast to that appliance in the basement. House numbers 49 and 53 on each side of 51 Myers Avenue were also damaged along with three vehicles in the driveway of the damaged home.

A late-night fire which caused moderate damage to the Old Lighthouse Restaurant at 46 West Old Country Road, took firefighters over several hours to extinguish the flames. Firefighters were inhibited to get at the seat of the blaze in a narrow crawl space under the kitchen. Fire and water damage was confined to those areas. There was some damage to the second floor where the fire had spread to the space between the walls. The entire restaurant received smoke damage, and the kitchen floor collapsed into the crawl space. The fire was discovered when the owner opened the door to see why the burglar alarm had sounded. For many years, the establishment was known as “Frank’s Alibi”. The fire caused over \$150,000 in damage sending two firefighters to local hospitals.

When the Board of Fire Commissioners planned to move Hook and Ladder Company 6 from the Strong Street substation to the new Levittown Parkway substation, it received opposition from northwest residents, firemen and Chief Farrell who was not in favor of the move. At the Northwest Civic Association meeting on April 3, Northwest residents said they feared they would not have enough fire protection with only one truck. Firefighter and first vice president of the Northwest Civic Association, Bob Dwyer became Chief Farrell’s ally and felt that it was very important to have a second piece of fire apparatus at the Strong Street substation in case the first piece breaks down. Ladder 936 would not be transferred, and Ladder 931 was reassigned in its place.

In May of 1989, the Student Against Drunk Driving (SADD) chapter, the fire department and police carried out a message by staging a mock accident in which two prom students were hurt. The scene took place on the high school field and consisted of students, portrayed by firefighters Liz Flahavan and Tim Chase driving to the prom. They were then “hit” by a drunk

driver, played by 12th grade Chris Horvath, a member of SADD. The event was coordinated by Ex-Captain Schweitzer who worked with Assistant Chief Scanlon. Firefighters worked to extricate the students from the cars, while 8<sup>th</sup> precinct police officers performed a sobriety test to determine whether the driver was under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

In July two fires struck the Hicksville Motor Lodge at 429 Duffy Avenue, near Old Country Road. In both cases all guests were evacuated with no injuries but there was considerable damage to two rooms. At 3:42 a.m. the following morning firefighters were again called for a second-floor blaze, this one being two doors away from the first fire. All occupants were safely evacuated and there was about \$35,000 in damage.

In September of 1989, arson caused a blaze that gutted that swept through the Bottom Ups Pub located at 10 Jerusalem Avenue. Firefighters had to work quickly to contain the fire which had already spread through the interior walls to the second floor. The fire gutted the bar and group of stores known as the Sutter Building that were also destroyed in the 1960's.

A few days later a fire at Composite Hair Designs on 394 Woodbury Road caused over \$100,000 in damage. Gasoline was found at the scene and investigations believed that it was poured down two air vents on the roof. The fire apparently burned all night undetected. On Sunday morning, the owner opened the door and found the entire store destroyed.

Hard work was nothing strange for Terry, whereas he was recognized for his actions above and beyond the call of duty on several occasions. Terry received Awards from the Elks Club, the American Legion, and a Certificate of Merit from the Department along with the Department's Service Award. Terry was also a recipient of three Unit Citations for the Seaford-Oyster Bay Propane Tanker Incident, the All-Boro Propane Incident, and the Avianca Airline Crash.

On January 1, 1983, after being assured by hospital authorities that a 50-year-old male patient was in no distress, Hicksville Unit 939 staffed by Captain Terry Farrell, Lieutenant Jack Huttie, Firefighter Castiglia, and Lieutenant Seeley. While in route to the hospital, the victim went into cardiac arrest. CPR was started, after a few minutes of CPR the victim was revived. Before arrival at the hospital, the victim suffered 2 more cardiac arrests and was revived. Only through the dedication and persistence of the EMS Personnel did the patient survive that night.

Terry was a Life Member of the Exempts Benevolent Association and was active on the

Ice Hockey Team, which he played the position as our starting Goalie, a position he shared with George Howard. Terry was also a member of the “Hicks” Drill Team for many years and a member of the Labor Day Committee.

After 16 years Terry left Hicksville in 1991 and moved his family to their new home in South Huntington. Terry immediately became a member of the Dix Hills Fire Department, where he served as an Assistant Chief. Terry always kept Hicksville in his heart, as he would return each Labor Day to march proudly in our annual parade by leading a division.

On September 11, 2001, Chief Farrell paid the ultimate sacrifice and was killed during the World Trade Center Terrorist Attacks. His son TJ carries on his legacy and is a member and Chief of the Dix Hills Volunteer Fire Department. Chief Farrell was laid to rest at St Patrick’s Cemetery, Huntington, New York.

*Chief Farrell (right) is shown dealing with administrative issues in his office.*



*Below left and lower right rear, Chief Farrell is shown at the Jersey Street house explosion and at the command post of a building fire.*



*Chief Farrell (below) in 1993, Terry donated his bone marrow to a little girl he had never met. His selfless act saved the child's life. Terry gave Chantyl Peterson life when she suffered from T-cell lymphoma. Terry was on the national donor list, and when he learned he was a perfect match, he gladly gave his marrow.*





***Served 2 Years***

Anthony Wigdzinski was born July 28, 1959, and is the son of John and Lucille and is a graduate of Hicksville High School. He married Susan Curley in June 1982. Tony is employed by Rallye Motors of Roslyn working as a Services, Parts and Facilities Director. He and Sue live on Cortland Avenue, in Hicksville.

Tony first joined the Hicksville Fire Department as a Junior Fireman in 1973. He then became a member of Floodlight Heavy Rescue Company Eight in January 1978. Tony served as Secretary, 2nd Lieutenant in 1982 and 1983, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 1984 – 1985 and was subsequently elected as their Captain in 1986 – 1987. Additionally, Tony has served as their Treasurer

of Floodlight Heavy Rescue Company Eight from 1996 through 2013.

Tony was elected First Assistant Chief in 1988 and subsequently to the highest office of our department, the 56th Chief, in 1990 and 1991. His Assistant Chiefs were Patrick Scanlon (1<sup>st</sup>), Albert Merk (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Karl Schweitzer (3<sup>rd</sup>).

During his term as Chief, Tony had an active term.

A recently fired employee was arrested and charged with arson after he broke into the Municipal Testing Laboratory at 102 New South Road, Hicksville. The incident occurred on August 7<sup>th</sup> and on arrival, fire was coming out of the windows and the roof. The disgruntled employee poured a flammable liquid in the building after he removed many expensive testing devices, and he and another person ignited the liquid. They then attempted to leave the scene but were blocked in by the first arriving fire units. Damage was estimated at \$300,000. Five firefighters, including Assistant Chief Schweitzer, Commissioner Dwyer, and Firefighter Kevin Brevogel were treated for injuries at local hospitals.

Fire broke out during the early morning hours at the Fork Lane Elementary School damaging two classrooms, before racking up over \$100,000 in damage.

A law firm located on Newbridge Road was damaged in a late-night fire with \$75,000 in damages. Someone firebombed the United States Army Recruitment Center on North Broadway—no one was hurt but the damage was extensive.

An early morning blaze at Tony's Bumpers at 82A Woodbury Road caused an estimated \$1.6 million in damage to structures and inventories in the building and two neighboring businesses. Upon arrival, firefighters found flames already through the roof in the rear portion of Tony's Bumpers which is situated behind but connected to the Concord Auto Supply Store at 82 Woodbury Road. The fire burned for six hours before it was brought under control by more than 200 firefighters. The origin of the fire was believed to be in the office area of the bumper company and evidently burned unnoticed until smoke billowed up.

On January 25, 1990, as Chief Wigdzinski was holding his first Officers meeting of the year at Station 3, word came through about a plane crash in Oyster Bay. As information trickled in, it was apparent that a Boeing 707, Flight 52 Avianca, enroute to JF Kennedy Airport ran out of fuel after a failed attempt to land and crashed onto a hillside in the small village of Cove Neck, on the north shore of Long Island. Eight of the nine crew members and 65 of the 149 passengers on board were killed. Firefighters were stunned by the sight they saw in the woods where the Colombian Jet crashed. Hicksville firefighters were requested at 10:05 p.m. for their chemical foam supply truck, an ambulance, and a heavy rescue truck. Many responding units could get no closer than three miles and had to walk uphill to the site on Tennis Court Road. Firefighters from dozens of departments in the area massed together with police and EMS workers and began the task of removing victims from the twisted wreckage. Hicksville firemen were assigned to the forward cabin area and were able to free several adults, a child and the flight engineer. They also removed several dead bodies. Operations continued until 3:30a.m. Fifty Hicksville firefighters and seven units responded, under Chief Wigdzinski. There was no fire or explosion because most of the fuel was gone when the plane went down. The thick wooded area hampered rescue efforts, as well as the fact that there was only one road in and out of the area. Officials said that if the plane stayed airborne three or four minutes longer it would have gone down in the heavily populated areas of Williston Park or Franklin Square.

At 2:19 p.m. on January 29, the fire alarm at Fork Lane Elementary School sounded, and it was no drill. A fire had broken out in a coat closet in the rear of the fourth-grade class. The teacher was in the front of her classroom when a student said he smelled smoke. Upon further investigation, flames were observed coming from the rear of the classroom. The fire



alarm was pulled, and the school emptied. The fire destroyed the classroom, but damage to other parts of the building was limited.

On November 11, 1990, a fire had been labeled suspicious, and heavily damaged a group of stores, Steve's Place Luncheonette, West John Street Delicatessen, a hair salon and the West End Pub on West John Street. The fire was reported by a passing Nassau County Police Officer who transmitted the alarm at 12:47 a.m.. Arriving firefighters found the front of the stores completely engulfed in flames.

A fire that swept through the Levittown Parkway pool filtration and storage building at about 6 a.m. on September 6 caused an estimated \$45,000 in damage. In addition, the fire threatened to ignite the chlorine filtration units and storage tanks. Had that happened, many homes and businesses in the area would have had to be evacuated. Firefighters were able to hose down those tanks so they would not ignite. Because the fire was trapped in small pockets in the roof, firefighters had to peel back the roof like a "sardine can" to extinguish the flames. This took about an hour and the Westbury Fire Department was called in for aid as many Hicksville firemen were "exhausted" from ripping off the roof.

During 1990 the department witnessed a lot of progress. Tony oversaw the start of the Length of Service Awards Program. This program was set up to benefit the members for their time spent in the department.

In May of 1990, Chief Wigdzinski opened a new firehouse expanding fire protection to the community with Station 4 on Levittown Parkway. The opening of this house has helped improve the department response. Company 1, 4 and 7 moved to the new house.

The Hicksville Fire Department Rescue Squad celebrated its 35th anniversary in the fall of 1990. The rescue squad was formed through the efforts of Chief Lawrence Huttie and Assistant Chief Medard Ofenloch in 1955. The rescue squad consisted of more than 30 members. These members were trained in various procedures of emergency medical care. Most are either Emergency Medical Technicians, or Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians. Members undergo more than 150 hours of schooling to become certified by the New York State. In 1989, the Hicksville Fire Department responded to 545 ambulance calls and the number is expected to be larger for 1990.

Chief Wigdzinski kicked off the first leg to the Triple Crown when he led over 100 members of his department and Ladies' Auxiliary to an overall best appearing Fire Department

victory in the Annual 9th Battalion Parade. Hicksville's second phase of their journey to the crown was when the "Hicks" Drill Team won a close victory over the Carle Place "Frogs" for the Ninth Battalion Drill. Hicksville for the third year in a row has sent Carle Place home with only a second-place trophy as Hicksville has dominated the Drill Circuit, winning 7 of the last 10 years running. The Hicksville Fire Department had become the 1990 Triple Crown Winners, continuing to make them the Pride of the Ninth Battalion.

The Hicks drill team continued to make progress and became a contender. Aside from winning trophies in almost every tournament, they placed fourth in the county drill and second in the 9th battalion drill. The highlight of 1990 was the setting of a new efficiency state record at the battalion drill.

Operation Desert Storm takes the headlines in January 1991, while Hicksville sends many servicemen overseas, and Department firefighter Jackie Huttie, Jr. (Company 4) re-enlisted and was sent to the West Coast for assignment. Chief Wigdzinski assisted Mrs. Paul Jurgenson in April to prepare for a homecoming celebration for our troops overseas. The Community turnout was overwhelming, and Hicksville hadn't seen this much patriotism since World War II.

In 1991 Chief Wigdzinski felt challenged to improve upon the EMS service in the department. Signal 32's and a shortage of EMT's was evident. The proposal put forward by his committee was to transition to an EMS Company. The current Rescue Squad Officers were asked to stay on as advisors and Officers until the Chiefs Office could determine that the Squad could operate efficiently on their own. The transition period in which the old and the new could be merged and brought together as one would be by year end of 1993. The present squad would weed out all the necessary members not making requirements and assign their personnel. At the completion of the transition the current firefighters would be given the option to become an EMS member or stay on as firefighter, there will be no dual role as before. All alarms (rescue and fire) will be sounded as general alarms, there would no longer be group one and group two calls as of January 1, 1991. EMS personnel would be held responsible for EMS alarms for their annual percentage and firefighters will be responsible for all other alarms. The Committee put together rules and procedures. For budget reasons, the EMS Company would receive funding by increasing the amount each year, until they reach a full complement of department funding in three years. Ultimately, Chief Wigdzinski's progressive idea was too much, too fast and the department wanted other ideas. Even today in 2023, the problems still exist, and other Chiefs have tried again to push similar ideas with no success.

Highlighting 1991, the Fire Department received notice that Chris Cole, a child from the local elementary school that entered our Annual Poster Contest, won Second Place in the National Contest (NFPA).

Chief Wigdzinski was recognized by both the Hicksville Fire Department and Nassau County Fire Commission for actions that he took to save other people's lives. In 1991, he received the County's highest award, the Gold Medal of Valor, along with Ex-Chief Scanlon and Lieutenant Doucette. They rescued a husband and wife that were trapped on the second floor of a house fire. It was April 2, 1991, when the department responded to a fully engulfed house fire at 54 Fox Place. Chief Wigdzinski and Scanlon were the first to arrive at the scene. With confirmed reports that the occupants of the house were trapped on the 2nd floor, both Chief Wigdzinski and Scanlon approached the stairs to the 2nd floor, where they were able to see the fire burning to the left on the 1st floor. As they proceeded up the stairs, they encountered heavy smoke and a high heat condition. Chief Wigdzinski and Scanlon continued their search down the hall. Chief Wigdzinski located the woman as he was moving through the hallway. Chief Scanlon continued his search, while Chief Wigdzinski moved the female occupant back towards the stairs. Lieutenant's Doucette and O'Brien had entered the house and were moving past the heat and smoke towards the stairs, where they were met by Chief Wigdzinski. The woman was passed off to Doucette and O'Brien to bring the woman to safety outside the home. Chief Wigdzinski rejoined Assistant Chief Scanlon and there was limited visibility, and the heat conditions were now keeping them to the floor, Assistant Chief Scanlon located the male occupant and was assisted by Wigdzinski to move the male victim down 2 flights of stairs and then outside for medical aid. Both occupants were transported to the hospital for smoke inhalation, where the male occupant was admitted in serious condition and did recover from the effects of the fire. If not for Chief Wigdzinski's disregard for his own personal safety, determination and teamwork, the outcome of this fire incident would have had a fatal end to it.

Tony was part of a Unit Citation on Monday, August 10, 1987. The Hicksville Fire Department received a report of an auto accident with aided at Broadway and Old Country Road. The first unit to arrive notified the dispatcher that there was a three-car accident. When 938 arrived at the scene the crew was told that there were people trapped in one of the cars. This car was on the center divider and into a light pole. The light pole was hit so hard that it was just hanging over the car. While the AEMT started to stabilize the two victims, the rest of the crew went to work in stabilizing the car and getting the extrication tool ready to work. While

removing the first passenger from the side of the car, the extrication spreader was used to remove the driver's door to get to the second aided, whose vital signs at this time were deteriorating. The crew was now pressed for time. Not only because of the passenger's condition but also because the light pole might fall on the car and them. After the door was removed, the aided was still trapped in the car by the steering wheel. At this time the extrication chains and spreader were used to pull the steering wheel from the aided and then the driver's seat had to be pushed back with the extrication rams to free the aided. The aided was then removed from the auto and transported to the hospital. The quick reaction of 938's crew and their expertise in the use of the extrication tool resulted in a quick and smooth operation without further injury to the aided.

On Wednesday, June 20, 2001, the department received a special call for mutual aid assistance for Engine 932, from the Huntington Manor Fire Department. Ex-Chief Wigdzinski responded as part of the crew. Upon arrival at the scene, it was observed that there was a large lumberyard fire, inclusive of three structures fully engulfed with fire. Orders were given to secure a water supply and report to the front of the fire building. The crew was able to locate a water supply (hydrant) while two mutual-aid Engine Companies were able to perform change-over operations and assisted in supplying an adequate water supply through 1,400 feet of 5" hose. An additional water supply approximately 1,000 feet from Engine 932, which was also used to feed Engine 932, enabling the engine to utilize a deck-gun operation. While 932 was in operation, the crew was utilized in the rear of the building working with a 2 1/2" hose line to protect exposures, search for additional fire and protect property. Some 10 hours later, the crew was relieved and released late in the afternoon on Sunday. For their actions, Tony and the crew went above and beyond what is expected under normal conditions, used their skills and strength to assist this mutual aid department in their time of need and were awarded a Unit Citation for their work.

After his tenure as Chief, Tony was elected as Department Corresponding Secretary in 1992 through 1996. He has participated in numerous Department and Company Committees and teams. He was as Chairman of the Labor Day Parade and Drill in 1986, Department Training Committee, Hazardous Material Response Team, Hockey Team, and the Hicks and Hazzbeens Drill teams, to name a few.

Ex-Chief Wigdzinski had the honor of being selected as one of the Co-Chairs along with Ex-Chief Schuckmann and Assistant Chief Schweitzer to plan and organize the Department's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In February the department kicked off the year-long celebration by having

the oldest Ex-Chiefs open the meeting. The meeting was moved to coincide with the actual charter date of 1893. Following the meeting the members made their way across the street to the old firehouse, now Peppercorns, for refreshments in the upstairs meeting hall.

In June, after three years of planning, a grand parade kicked off at 6:15PM in a spectacular display of color, honor, precision and sound, as the department marked its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that surpassed any parade in Hicksville history. Sixty-three fire departments, two from as far away as Ohio and New Hampshire, marched in brilliant form through the streets of Hicksville. The parade was only one of many events that were held in honor of the fire department's centennial. A nightly carnival and a firemen's drill were among the other festivities. Thousands of people lined the two-mile parade route. The parade was preceded by a carnival held on East Marie Street for five days. Adjacent to the carnival was a food court staffed by local Hicksville organizations given an opportunity to raise funds for their groups. There was a fireworks extravaganza in the parking lot next to Station 1 and the famous Country Music group "Six-Gun" played for an evening under the stars.

The Department also played host to the 98th annual Southern New York State Volunteer Firefighters' Association Convention. The last time this was held in Hicksville was in 1902 and 1908. The convention included the racing tournament with entries from across Long Island and Westchester. The entire year was also highlighted with a 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary department picnic and installation dinner.

Chief Wigdzinski has served as Chairman of the Annual Fire Prevention Poster Contest and Annual Installation Dinner Committee since he left office over 30 years ago. He also finds time to participate and share his time with the Special Olympics Committee each year.

In 1997, Tony was elected to serve as Fire Commissioner of the Hicksville Fire District through 2006, serving as its chair in 2000 and 2005. After a brief hiatus he would serve as Fire Commissioner once again for a 5-Year term from 2014 through 2018, serving as Chairman in 2017.



*Chief Wigdzinski (above left) is shown operating command at the Tony's Bumper fire.*



*Chief Wigdzinski surveying damage at a building fire.*



*Chief Wigdzinski is shown operating command of an overturned auto accident.*



*Chief Wigdzinski above with Assistant Chief Scanlon at the 1996 Avianca plane crash in Oyster Bay Cove.*



***Served 2 Years***

Patrick Scanlon was born February 24, 1953, and is a life-long resident of Hicksville. He graduated Hicksville High School in 1971. He is the son of Edward and Marion Scanlon. He married Eileen Trenkle on September 13, 1975. Patrick was employed by the Town of Oyster Bay working as a supervisor of Sanitation and he lived on Murray Road and West Avenue in Hicksville.

Patrick joined the department as an original charter member of Junior Firefighting Group (Explorer Post 930) in 1970. He would become a member of Hook & Ladder Company Six on March 21, 1972. He was assigned badge 851. Patrick served as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant 1978 – 1979, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant 1980 - 1981

and subsequently elected as Captain of Company Six in 1982 and 1983.

Patrick was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1986 and 1987. Then as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1988 and 1989, then as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1990 and 1991, before being elected as the 57<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department in 1992 - 1993.

At the corner of Woodbury Road and South Oyster Bay Road stood the “Plaza Diner” for many years. In a matter of a few hours, the fire damage left the diner in ruins. A spectacular fire destroyed the Plaza Diner at 406 South Oyster Bay Road on February 1. A thick black smoke covered the area and rose hundreds of feet into the air attracting many spectators. Hicksville firefighters responded under Chief Patrick Scanlon and on arrival reported heavy fire conditions in those spaces above the ceiling. This building was, at one time, a Howard Johnson restaurant and a new shell was built over the top of the original construction. The building had 2 ceilings and 2 roofs which made it tough for firefighters to get at the fire inside from underneath. Attempts were made to cut holes to allow the fire to go up, so firefighters could attack it from inside, but conditions on the roof were too dangerous and members were told to evacuate.

The Carvel Store on South Broadway suffered a fire which caused a long-standing business to come to an end. The fire caused over \$100,000 in damage and the store did not reopen.

On December 11, 1992, a 100-year no-name nor'easter hit the Northshore of Long Island, the worst to hit Long Island in the 20th century. Tides spurred by heavy rain and gale-force winds swamped the North and South Shores, flooded highways, and shut down train service. The storm claimed at least one life, interrupted electric power for 448,000 customers and washed dozens of beachfront homes into the sea. The Department responded to the Bayville Fire Department with a group of Hicksville firefighters that would staff the Incident Command Mobile Unit for several days.

Chief Scanlon had the honor of being the Chief of Department for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It was in February that the department kicked off the year-long celebration by having the oldest Ex-Chiefs open the meeting. The meeting was moved to coincide with the actual charter date of 1893. Following the meeting the members made their way across the street to the old firehouse, now Peppercorns, for refreshments in the upstairs meeting hall.

Following three years of planning, Chief Scanlon stepped off the parade at 6:15PM in a spectacular display of color, honor, precision and sound, the department marked its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that surpassed any parade in Hicksville history. Sixty-three fire departments, two from as far away as Ohio and New Hampshire, marched in brilliant form through the streets of Hicksville. The parade was only one of many events that were held in honor of the fire department's centennial. A nightly carnival and a firemen's drill were among the other festivities. Thousands of people lined the two-mile parade route. For spectators from across Long Island the parade was a joy to behold. The bands were in tune, the marchers were on point, and the streets were aglow in gleaming crimson, silver and yellow as the still brilliant late afternoon sunshine shone off the vehicles. It was a beautiful day for a parade. The skies were clear, and the temperature was in the low 80s.

In addition to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary parade, the department played host to the 98th annual Southern New York State Volunteer Firefighters' Association Convention. The last time this was held in Hicksville was in 1902 and 1908. The convention included the racing tournament with entries from across Long Island and Westchester. Tournaments are competitions to determine skill, accuracy, and speed. Another aspect of the Hicksville Fire Department's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was the carnival held on East Marie Street for five

days. Rides of all types gave many a thrill as shouts of terror and delight filled the air. Adjacent to the carnival was a food court staffed by local Hicksville organizations given an opportunity to raise funds for their groups. There was a fireworks extravaganza in the parking lot next to Station 1 and the famous Country Music group “Six-Gun” played for an evening under the stars. The entire year was also highlighted with a 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary department picnic and installation dinner.

In 1976, Captain Scanlon was awarded the Firefighter of the year because his exemplary service was a perfect example of the spirit of Volunteer Fire Service. He is a qualified chauffeur on four trucks plus the Rescue Rig and the Ambulance and he was an inspector for the department. He has been on the Labor Day Tournament Committee as Chairman of Purchasing for 2 years, and this year was Co-chairman of the Committee.

Chief Scanlon was recognized by both the Hicksville Fire Department and Nassau County Fire Commission for actions that he took to save other people’s lives. In 1991, he received the County's highest award, the Gold Medal of Valor, along with Ex-Chief Wigdzinski and Lieutenant Doucette. They rescued a husband and wife that were trapped on the second floor of a house fire. It was April 2, 1991, when the department responded to a fully engulfed house fire at 54 Fox Place. Assistant Chief Scanlon and Chief Wigdzinski were the first to arrive at the scene. With confirmed reports that the occupants of the house were trapped on the 2nd floor, both Assistant Chief Scanlon and Wigdzinski approached the stairs to the 2nd floor, where they were able to see the fire burning to the left on the 1st floor. As they proceeded up the stairs, they encountered heavy smoke and a high heat condition. Assistant Chief Scanlon and Wigdzinski continued their search down the hall. Chief Wigdzinski located the woman as he was moving through the hallway. Assistant Chief Scanlon continued moving along with his search, while Chief Wigdzinski moved the female occupant back towards the stairs. Lieutenant’s Doucette and O’Brien had entered the house and were moving past the heat and smoke towards the stairs, where they were met by Chief Wigdzinski. The woman was passed off to Doucette and O’Brien to bring the woman to safety outside the home. Chief Wigdzinski rejoined Chief Scanlon and there was limited visibility, and the heat conditions were now keeping him them to the floor. Assistant Chief Scanlon located the male occupant, and he was assisted by Chief Wigdzinski to move the male victim down two flights of stairs, and then outside for medical aid. Both occupants were transported to the hospital for smoke inhalation, where the male occupant was admitted in serious condition and did recover from the effects of the fire. If not for Chief Scanlon’s disregard for his own personal safety, determination and teamwork, the outcome of this fire incident would have had a fatal end to it.

In 2006, Ex-Chief Scanlon received the Gebhardt Award for his actions at 54 Boulevard Drive House Fire. When Ex-Chief Scanlon arrived on location, he was met by two residents at the front door of the house, who informed him that there was an occupant trapped in an upstairs bedroom. Ex-Chief Scanlon proceeded to the fire floor, while calling for the occupant. Due to the extreme heat and heavy smoke condition, he was forced to his hands and knees. At the end of the hallway, he entered the bedroom and after hearing gurgling sounds, found the victim and pulled him out of the room. He proceeded down the hallway to the head of the staircase. At this point, he and an adult male civilian carried the victim from the fire floor to the entry on the floor below. While Ex-Chief Scanlon was performing the rescue, the crew from Engine 934 responded to the scene. Upon their arrival, Ex-Chief Owen Magee was directed by his officers to assist Ex-Chief Scanlon in the rescue of the victim. Ex-Chiefs Magee and Scanlon removed the victim to the front lawn and began Basic Life Support procedures on the victim. Upon arrival of EMS, they assisted in the treatment and packaging of the patient. The victim, an 83-year-old male, was transported to Nassau University Medical Center in unstable condition with respiratory distress and airway compromised due to obvious burns to the upper airway structures. At the submission of this report several days later, the patient was still alive.

In 1988, Assistant Chief Scanlon was a founding member and instrumental in the organization of the Fire Police Squad. As a responder during the World Trade Center tragic events on September 11, 2001, Ex-Chief Scanlon spent 2 days standing by at a Queens Fire House so the members of the FDNY could search for their missing comrades. Always committed to the fire service, Patrick knew he had to step up even though it was on his 26<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

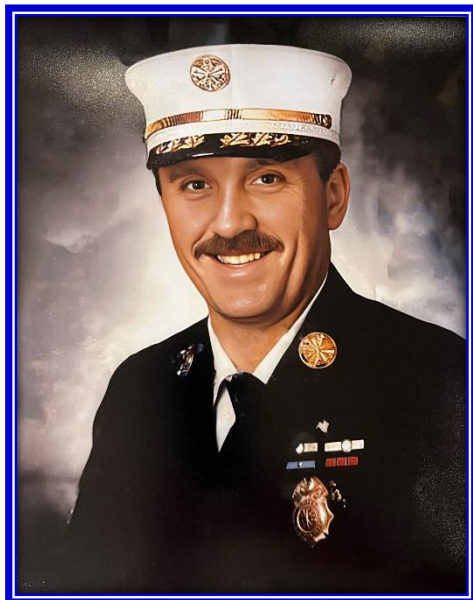
Chief Scanlon has participated on numerous department and company committees such as Chairman of the Labor Day Parade and Drill in 1978. Chief Scanlon was an early member of the Hazardous Materials Response Team. He was on the Ice Hockey Team.

After leaving the Chiefs Office, Ex-Chief Scanlon was elected by the residents of Hicksville to a Five-Year term as Fire Commissioner in 2007, Serving as its Chair in 2010.

Ex-Chief Scanlon noted that the three most important things that have changed the most since he served and since joining the fire service were the improvements in firefighters' equipment, communications and firefighter accountability while performing their duty at a fire.





***Served 2 Years***

Albert Merk was born in Queens and moved to Hicksville where he graduated from Hicksville High School in 1972. He was born August 24, 1954, and is the son of Albert and Evelyn Merk. He married Andrea Mauriello in May of 1998. Albert was employed as a firefighter by the New York City Fire Department, assigned to Engine Co. 308, in Ozone Park, Queens. He has since retired, and he and Andrea live on Cliff Drive in Hicksville.

Albert Merk joined Chemical Co. 3 on February 18, 1975, known today as Citizen Engine Co. #3. He was given badge 854. He served as 2nd Lieutenant in 1981 and 1982, 1st Lieutenant in 1984 and 1985 before subsequently being elected to serve as Captain of Company 3 in 1986 and 1987.

Albert was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1988 and 1989, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1990 and 1991 and 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1992 and 1993. He was elected as the 58<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department in 1994 and again in 1995. His Assistant Chiefs were Karl Schweitzer, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant, Philip LaNasa, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and Spike Thunell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant.

On November 28, 1988, at 0918 hours, the department responded to a report of a woman down at 25 Glenbrook Rd. First members at the scene report the patient was in full cardiac arrest. Chief Al Merk and Lieutenant William McKee entered the home and went to work on the victim. Vitals were checked and C.P.R. was started by Lieutenant McKee while Chief Merk administered oxygen to the victim's stoma (the patient had a history involving open heart surgery and tracheotomy operation). These two members sustained the victim until the arrival of the department ambulance and additional specialized equipment. Standard lifesaving operations were started, and the victim was transported to the hospital. Following the incident the patient was back at home resting. In the finest tradition of the Fire Service, the quick actions of Chief Merk and Lieutenant McKee sustained the life of the elderly resident.

In October of 1995, the Hicksville Fire Department was deeply saddened by the Line of Duty Death of Ex-Captain Steve "The Baker" Sulzinski of Hook and Ladder Company Six. Ex-



Captain Sulzinski died at the age of 66 during his attendance at the New York State Firematic Legislature Conference in Albany of a massive heart attack.

Chief Merk set in motion an initiative to recruit new members by re-inventing the Junior Firefighting group, Explorer Post 930. The post was reactivated, and seven charter members were sworn into the group. This organization, until its hiatus, goes back to the 1970's and lasted until 1988 and produced two members that later in their volunteer career became Chiefs of the Hicksville Department (Tony Wigdzinski 1990-1991 and Pat Scanlon 1992 – 1993).

Chief Merk was an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) from 1976 to 1988 and a member of the Rescue Squad. Albert is a charter member of the Fire Police Squad. He participated on the Hicksville "Hicks" Motorized Drill Team from 1975 through 1983. He went on to participate on the “Hazzbeens” Old Fashioned Drill Team from 1986 through 1990, where he served as a Co-Captain. Albert was a member of the Departments Hazardous Materials Team and Chairman of the new recruits Physical Agility Committee.

Chief Merk was Chairman of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Chiefs Council from 2003 through 2005 and a member of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Delegates from 2004 and 2005. He went on to serve as a President of the Exempts Benevolent Association 2015 – 2017.

In 2019, Al was elected to serve as Fire Commissioner of the Hicksville Fire District for a 5-Year term, serving as its Chair in 2022.



***Served 2 Years***

Karl Schweitzer was born August 19, 1963, and is the son of Martin and Adeline (Brigandi) Schweitzer. He lives on Myers Avenue in Hicksville and married Lynn Scully in July of 1983. Karl was employed by the Long Island Lighting Company which later became National Grid. He then worked for Consolidated Edison and retired after 22 Years. He was a manager of Environment, Health, and Safety for Electric Operations, covering Brooklyn and Queens. He has a daughter Jennifer, son-in-law, Jon III and two grandchildren, Alexa and Jon IV.

Karl joined Emergency Company 5 in September of 1981 and was given badge 956. He has deep family connections in the Department. His grandfather, Michael Brigandi was a member of Company 1. His father was a 49-year member of the Woodmere Fire Department and Karl has had members of his extended family serving in all eight Companies since the 1920's.

In 1986, Karl would be elected 2nd Lieutenant and served as 1st Lieutenant before becoming the 44<sup>th</sup> Captain in 1987 and 1988. He was elected a second time as the 54<sup>th</sup> Captain. This would be his second separate term as Captain in 2006-2007. Prior to being elected as Captain he served as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 2004-2005 and 2nd Lieutenant in 2002 – 2003. He also served as the Company Secretary in 2001. Once again in 2020, 38-year veteran, Karl Schweitzer was elected as the 61<sup>st</sup> Captain to serve Company 5. This was Karl's 3rd time serving as Captain. Karl was elected to help the Company through its many challenges that confront the members.

In December of 1989, Karl was elected 3rd Assistant Chief over his challengers Ex-Captain's Robert Hammond Jr. and Robert Chiz. Schweitzer was sworn in as the youngest member to serve as Assistant Chief at the age of 26 and for Company 5, it ended a thirty-year drought in the Chiefs office, since Walter Werthessen served in 1961.

During his term as Assistant Chief, he was appointed to serve as Co-Chair and Chiefs Office Liaison for the Departments 100th Anniversary Committee. Along with Co-Chairs Ex-Chief



Wigdzinski and Ex-Chief Schuckmann, the committee planned and organized the Department's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In February the department kicked off the year-long celebration by having the oldest Ex-Chiefs open the meeting. The meeting was moved to coincide with the actual charter date of 1893. Following the meeting the members made their way across the street to the old firehouse, now Peppercorns, for refreshments in the upstairs meeting hall.

In June, after three years of planning, a grand parade kicked off at 6:15PM in a spectacular display of color, honor, precision and sound, as the department marked its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that surpassed any parade in Hicksville history. Sixty-three fire departments, two from as far away as Ohio and New Hampshire, marched in brilliant form through the streets of Hicksville. The parade was only one of many events that were held in honor of the fire department's centennial. A nightly carnival and a firemen's drill were among the other festivities. Thousands of people lined the two-mile parade route. The parade was preceded by a carnival held on East Marie Street for five days. Adjacent to the carnival was a food court staffed by local Hicksville organizations given an opportunity to raise funds for their groups. There was a fireworks extravaganza in the parking lot next to Station 1 and the famous Country Music group "Six-Gun" played for an evening under the stars.

The Department also played host to the 98th annual Southern New York State Volunteer Firefighters' Association Convention. The last time this was held in Hicksville was in 1902 and 1908. The convention included the racing tournament with entries from across Long Island and Westchester. The entire year was also highlighted with a 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary department picnic and installation dinner.

As part of the celebration, Karl took the lead conducting the necessary research of historical accounts. He was joined by Firefighter (later Chief) Edward Korona pouring through newspapers, visiting local libraries, and traveling hundreds of miles visiting museums and speaking with former members. The result was the publication of a hardcover edition of the Hicksville Fire Department. He and Ed would be recognized in 1994 with a Department Service Award for their efforts.

In 1997, Karl was elected the 59th Chief of the Department. His Assistant Chiefs were Philip LaNasa as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant, William "Spike" Thunell 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and Patrick "Paddy" McGeough as his Third Assistant Chief.

During his term the Department responded to over 1,700 alarms each year. The

increase was mainly due to the EMS workload and automatic alarms due to Carbon Monoxide incidents. The members spent countless hours on standby as a blizzard hit Long Island, the worst since 1947, and there were two tropical storms, Bertha and Edouard.

He was responsible for the creation of a Zone Response for Mutual Aids, firefighter accountability program that included Riding Positions, Firefighter Assist and Rescue (FAST) program, revamping the EMS program including placing a 4th ambulance in service at Station 3 and his foresight with new OSHA Confined Space Regulations, Karl created a Technical Rescue Team. His commitment to training was paramount and he created a “Back to Basics Continuing Education Training Program”, a revised Probationary Training Program, Hands-on Department Inter/Intra Company Drills.

Schweitzer, while Assistant Chief, was assigned by Chief Merk to look at ways to recruit new firefighters. One of the initiatives Schweitzer started was to re-invent the Junior Firefighting group, Explorer Post 930. The post was reactivated, and seven charter members were sworn into the group. The ceremonies took place on Sunday, April 2 with an official swearing in led by Fire District Commissioner Robert Dwyer. Their first meeting took place at fire headquarters under the leadership of Head Advisor, Firefighter Dennis Mitchell and Assistant Advisor, Ex-Captain Michael Azzue. The newly installed members were Leonard Buccellato, Jimmy Flynn, Sean Flynn, Carl Johnson, John O'Connor, Dennis Pettas and Robert Price Jr.. The advisors volunteering for this extra duty are Lieutenant Chris Fox, Ex-Captain Frank Lombardi, Firefighter Don Hudson, Lieutenant Jack Huttle, Firefighter Ray Granville, Lieutenant Steven DeStefano, Lieutenant Bill Dammes and Ex-Captain Bill Efinger. This organization, until its hiatus, goes back to the 1970's and lasted until 1988 and produced two members who later in their volunteer career became Chiefs of the Hicksville Department (Tony Wigdzinski 1990-1991 and Pat Scanlon 1992 – 1993).

His efforts to increase communications established the Department Newsletter, monthly meetings with Captains, and roundtable meetings with Companies on relevant topics facing the fire service. A final Department Policy and Procedure Manual was issued that brought together all the existing documents into a single resource.

To increase public relations and keep the public informed through transparency, Chief Schweitzer created a monthly column that was published in the Hicksville Illustrated News. The 12 topics covered fire department news, safety tips and other announcements benefitting the residents of Hicksville. As part of his outreach, Schweitzer instituted a customer satisfaction

survey program where surveys were sent to homes following an event for their feedback. The results of the program expectations were fully met in all areas, and the results were favorable. The department had received many more surveys than originally anticipated, with a return rate of 49.5 percent against the anticipated average of 20 - 25%, normally seen in survey work. The program was designed to raise awareness and the educational process to improve the fire service.

In 1996, it was reminiscent of the great volunteer community effort of yesteryear, when the abandoned, vandalized, Hicksville Courthouse was rejuvenated and transformed into the home of The Gregory Museum. More than 30 volunteers, most of them Hicksville Firefighters and their families spent very productive days working on the latest restoration. Thanks to their help, and equipment loaned by the Water District, the enormous task of sandblasting and painting the rusted rear fire escape was completed. Using Tower Ladder 931 volunteers stripped the flagpole, while others worked on removing the massive overgrown shrubs to make way for the scaffold. Several other members primed and painted the clapboard laid out on the grass.

For years, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and Operation Life Safety (OLS) had been recognizing its member fire departments and their chief fire officers for having had outstanding fire safety statistics within a calendar year and for their proactive measures. In 1996, the Hicksville Fire Department was recognized as one of only 207 fire departments representing 42 States, one country and the District of Columbia that have successfully responded to and extinguished fire without the loss of a single life in the calendar year.

The Department paid tribute to Ex-Chief/Commissioner Cliff Davis with a dedication of the Maintenance Facility. Clifford G. Davis had served the community of Hicksville as a volunteer firefighter since 1948 and in 1996 the fire department has recognized his efforts. In a touching ceremony, the Board of Fire Commissioners, dedicated the renovated Hicksville Fire District Maintenance Facility on Strong Street to him for all his dedicated years of service. The dedication of the maintenance building was a significant event in that it is the first and only building in the fire district which proudly bears the name of any one person.

Chief Schweitzer was saddened by the news of the passing of 46-year member and Ex-Chief John Specht in January of 1997. Chief Specht was a retired Nassau County Fire Marshal and widely known and respected throughout the fire service.



The Officers of Emergency Company 5 and Hook and Ladder Company 6 held a grand opening celebration and dedication of the newly completed Station 3. Through the hard work of the department's Legislative Committee, Bill Foley and Mike Krummenacker, the Department was able to secure a tax-free exemption for firefighter LOSAP benefits.

The "Hicks" Drill Team placed 5th overall at the Annual Labor Day Drill in 1996 and took top honors at the annual 9th Battalion Drill that included a new State record by Firefighter Richie Schmidt in the "Dummy" competition. It was during this parade season that the Department, Ladies Auxiliary and Explorer Post also took top honors.

Karl was also a member of the Department's softball team that took top honors at the 9th Battalion weekend, capturing the "Triple Crown", a feat that was never done again. Hicksville started their first leg to the Triple Crown when Chief Wigdzinski led over 100 members of his department and Ladies' Auxiliary to an overall best appearing Fire Department victory in the Annual 9th Battalion Parade. Hicksville's second phase of their journey to the crown was when the "Hicks" Drill Team won a close victory over the Carle Place "Frogs" for the Ninth Battalion Drill. Hicksville for the third year in a row has sent Carle Place home with only a second-place trophy as Hicksville has dominated the Drill Circuit, winning 7 of the last 10 years running. The Hicksville Fire Department has become the 1990 Triple Crown Winners, continuing to make them the Pride of the Ninth Battalion.

In 1990 the softball team also took the Division Six Title of the Town of Hempstead Fire Department Softball League defeating the Island Park Fire Department 16-3 and 6-1 in a twin bill securing the division title. Hicksville had to beat top-seeded teams Lawrence/Cedarhurst, Garden City, West Hempstead, Franklin Square and Long Beach to capture the crown.

The competitive spirit was brought back to increase morale by restarting the annual Bocce Ball Tournament and the Inter-Company events that were discontinued several years earlier. A Chiefs Award for the top Company that puts the most members in the line of march during the season was started as it was discontinued several years earlier. Company 5 took top honors in both years of Schweitzer's term. Additionally, he held a "Breakfast with Santa" for the Department and in conjunction with the Rotary Club, they resurrected the Annual Community Christmas Tree Lighting. For many years, at Christmas time, the Rotary Club of Hicksville-Jericho has decorated the evergreen tree situated in Kennedy Park which is located between Broadway (Route 107) and Jerusalem Avenue in the center of Hicksville. That year, together with the Hicksville Fire Department, the Rotary Club held a festive "Tree Lighting

Ceremony". Live Christmas trees were donated by IKEA and Agway. The various service clubs, councils, chambers, and veterans' organizations decorated one of the donated trees.

After a long trip from the Sutphen factory in Ohio where it was built, the newest edition to the Hicksville Fire Department, a 100-foot Hook and Ladder 931 was christened in a formal Wet Down ceremony at Station 4 on Levittown Parkway. Joining in to help welcome the new truck into service were the members of Oyster Bay and the Point Lookout-Lido Fire Department, who along with the engines from Hicksville deluged the new truck with colored water. The new truck is named "South of the Border".

The fire load was significant during his two years.

In 1996, 13 people, including two children, were left homeless when a fire destroyed part of their basement apartment in a West John Street home. The fire, which started around noon in an unoccupied bedroom, appeared accidental, and the fire appeared to have been sparked by something smoldering, such as electrical appliances or careless smoking. No one was injured. The 13 lived in the basement of the one-story and the occupants were outside by the time firefighters arrived. The main floor of the house was not damaged.

Hicksville firefighters responded to the West Village Green shopping center on September 3, 1996, after a truck lost control of its brakes and drove into the rear of the Carvel building, destroying the gas meter in the process. Firefighters evacuated the shopping area and employees stood outside for nearly three hours as LILCO worked to shut off the gas supply. By using hose lines, they were able to disperse the fumes. Firefighters immediately began alerting the people in homes nearby to evacuate. There were no injuries reported in the incident but damage to the building from the impact was substantial and the town building inspector responded.

Hicksville firefighters responded on March 17, 1997, located at 17 East Old Country Road. A vacant car dealership building was apparently torched. The alarm was received at 2:05 p.m. On arrival fire was heavily involved throughout the structure. Hicksville fire units were assisted by units from Jericho and Syosset at the scene and Levittown and Westbury covered the district for any additional alarms. When this alarm was received, Hicksville firefighters were working in Plainview at a hazardous materials incident involving a chemical reaction and fire. Rescue units from Hicksville were also working at the scene of a call at 320 Dawson Lane, a worker fell off the roof of a two-story apartment building and suffered leg and back injuries.

A roaring fire erupted from the second story windows of Samson Pest Control on East John Street in Hicksville on April 6. Firefighters arrived to discover the wood-framed structure engulfed in flames and two unwary occupants in the rear part of the building on the first floor. The fire was reported by a resident from across the street and there was a small supply of pesticides in the basement of the building that were removed by firefighters before they were damaged by the fire. As a precaution, Schweitzer ordered a supply line from another hydrant. Fire departments from Bethpage and East Meadow provided mutual aid. Three Hicksville firefighters were treated for minor burns at Nassau County Medical Center and released.

The Hicksville Fire Department Memorial Day Services were personal and hard hit to its members. The Department honored comrades lost at war as well as the firefighters who answered their last alarm. Sadly, on this day, the Hicksville Fire Department also mourned the tragic and untimely death of a fellow firefighter who had moved to Merrick and transferred to the Merrick Fire Department. Albert Hassan, 33, was killed in an accident caused by a drunk driver. His wife, Marianne, 31, also in the car, was in critical condition in the intensive-care unit. The couple was on their way to Marianne's parents' house to pick up their three-week-old son, Kevin Michael Hassan. Albert served as lieutenant for Heavy Rescue Company 8 after joining the Hicksville Fire Department in 1988. The firefighter transferred to the Merrick Fire Department after getting married to Marianne in 1994.

An early morning fire on April 16 at the Cerco Corporation could have destroyed the entire complex but an automatic fire sprinkler confined the blaze to the point of origin, again demonstrating the advantages and proficiency of using the safety devices. The complex, located north of the Northern State Parkway on Cantiague Rock Road, is protected by the automatic system which transmitted the alarm to the Hicksville Fire Department at 3:22 a.m.. Upon arrival, firefighters encountered heavy black smoke. After a quick search the fire was discovered in the center of the warehouse. The fire originated in a construction trailer inside the warehouse and was confined to that area. The entire complex sustained extensive smoke and water damage. Ten units responded with three neighboring departments who supplied one unit each to stand by at Hicksville headquarters.

Just one day before departing office on December 30, 1997, Chief Schweitzer responded to the Reptile Museum for a report of an employee being bitten by a poisonous snake. The employee was bitten by one of the world's most venomous vipers, an African Gaboon, while cleaning the snake's cage. Realizing the extent of the bite and its poisonous

nature, Chief Schweitzer called in for an airlift to Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx. The Jacobi medical center is the regional center for snake bites due to its proximity to the Bronx Zoo. The handler reached treatment in a matter of minutes before it would have been fatal. He underwent emergency surgery to relieve swelling in his hand. The snake was 4 feet long with a strike range between 18 to 24 inches. The snakes' fangs reach about 2 inches and can inject a large dose of poisons venom in a single bite.

In 1987, Karl was recognized as part of a Unit Citation for his role in an EMS Incident for a non-breathing resident on Glenbrook Road. In the early afternoon on February 10, 1987, the Hicksville Fire Department received a call for a woman passed out. As part of the crew on 935 responded to 42 Glenbrook Road they encountered a woman in her early to mid-70's in full cardiac arrest. On the scene administering C.P.R. was Lieutenant William McKee and another civilian. The crew from 935 relieved the two men to continue C.P.R. as the officer on 935 requested a second alarm for an AMT and an ambulance. The entire crew continued their first aid efforts until they received vital signs. As the AMT arrived with the bus, they in turn transported to NCMC.

In 1988 he was awarded the Department's Service Award for his role in Fire Prevention and Education. In any Volunteer Fire Department, there are more than enough jobs to go around. The Eighties have been hard on the Volunteer Fire Service. As a result, fire departments find it hard to staff worthwhile programs such as Fire Safety Education. As in the past, the department has been fortunate that an individual has the interest to volunteer EXTRA time for an important program. In the department, that person was Ex-Captain Karl Schweitzer. Karl, like many others serves on various committees, but has been singled out for his work as coordinator for the Annual Fire Prevention Expo held in conjunction with McDonald's Restaurant, coordinator of the Annual Holiday Open House, a popular Hicksville event; Fire Prevention-Fire Safety speaker for the district; coordinating speakers for school tours and local organizations. It was for those extra efforts that Karl was chosen for recognition.

During the year of 1990, eleven members of the Fire Prevention and Fire Education Committee, including 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief Karl Schweitzer had arranged, coordinated, and performed 57 presentations to various groups in the community. Some of these groups included preschool, nursery, kindergarten and elementary grade students, PTA's, Civic Associations, and Senior Citizen groups. Many of these presentations consisted of tours, lectures, and designed programs to meet a particular subject. Through the hard and continuing

efforts of these members, Hicksville's residents, young and old, are becoming more aware of the dangers of fire, and learning how to prevent fire and how to survive it.

In 1990, Karl along with Firefighter Tim Chase were recognized with a Certificate of Merit and FASNY Award for their actions in removing a woman from a smoke condition at a house fire. On August 24, 1991, at 3:13 A.M, the Hicksville Fire Department responded to a reported house fire at 331 West John Street. The first arriving members Assistant Chief Schweitzer and Firefighter Chase observed a smoke condition coming from the house and were advised that an occupant was still in the house. Assistant Chief Schweitzer and Firefighter Chase entered the structure in search of the occupant before any fire department equipment had arrived. During their search they came upon a fire burning in the living room. As the heat and smoke conditions continued to increase, they continued their search and came upon a bedroom where a semiconscious woman laid in bed. Assistant Chief Schweitzer removed the occupant from her bed and Firefighter Chase assisted in carrying her by guiding Assistant Chief Schweitzer to the outside. Thanks to the quick actions and dedication of these two members the occupant was located and removed from the structure before receiving any injuries.

In 1994, Assistant Chief Schweitzer was presented with a Department Service Award for his research and authoring of the 100th Anniversary History Book. He along with Captain Edward Korona formulated and compiled information for the writing of the Hicksville Fire Department's 100th Anniversary Historical Journal. This historical journal would turn out to become the most comprehensive and concise history ever produced on the history of the Hicksville Fire Department. The task of putting this document together required Assistant Chief Schweitzer to spend many hundreds of hours researching information, meeting with local historians, visiting local libraries and having to travel hundreds of miles upstate to visit museums and to speak with past Hicksville residents. All this time did not come easy and required Assistant Chief Schweitzer to take personal time off from his place of employment. After many hours reviewing slides, photographs and over 10,000 photocopies of news clippings from 9 different publications dating from 1890 through 1992, Assistant Chief Schweitzer's task was now to layout and edit this historical journal. In December 1993, after 4 years of research, typing text, editing and re-editing, the finished version of the Hicksville Fire Department's - First One Hundred Years, an historical journal, which consists of over 300 pages was finally completed and put to print.

In 1994 Karl was awarded an EMS Award, for his role in a team that resuscitated a resident in cardiac arrest. On September 17, 1994, at 21:08 hours the Hicksville Fire



Department responded to 194 9th Street for an unconscious and unresponsive resident. As one of the first on scene Karl Schweitzer encountered the resident in cardiac arrest and immediately began CPR with the assistance of Assistant Chief LaNasa. With the arrival of the ambulance a couple of minutes later, Lieutenant Drayer and Firefighter Huttler entered, assisted, and continued doing CPR while Ex-Captain Brevogel set up the advance life support equipment in the ambulance. The patient was moved out to the ambulance and CPR was continued. While transporting the patient to Central General Hospital, several attempts were made to establish an IV, but these attempts failed. The patient was now showing a very slow heart rate, and medications were ordered from medical control. Because of the lack of an IV, medications were administered down the endotracheal tube which had been inserted earlier. Upon their arrival at hospital, the patient was stable. Because of Assistant Chief Schweitzer, and the team applying their basic and advanced EMS skills and teamwork, the patient was resuscitated and survived the life-threatening ordeal.

In late August of 1995, a series of major brush fires swept through the pine barrens region. The first major fire incident occurred in Rocky Point when a larger, more catastrophic fire erupted in the Westhampton area just shortly after the Rocky Point blaze was ended. The Department responded to these fires and Karl was part of the response as an Assistant Chief. The fire, aided by high winds and dry conditions, quickly spread, threatening area homes and businesses. The fire was nicknamed the "Sunrise Wildfire", as it engulfed both sides of Sunrise Highway, the major highway connecting the Hamptons region with the rest of Long Island. The fires closed down the highway and stopped railroad service, effectively cutting the Hamptons off from the rest of the island for days, as firefighters from all over Long Island worked around the clock to battle the blaze.

Following his departure as Chief, he attained his life active status and was elected as a LOSAP Director from 1998 to 2000 and Company Secretary from 2000 – 2001. He was a member of the Hicks and Hazzbeens Drill Teams, serving as Captain for the Hazzbeens Old Fashioned Team. He was part of the Annual Labor Parade and Drill activities serving on the Journal, Public Relations, and Member Refreshments Committee. He is a member of the Volunteer and Exempts Firemen's Benevolent Association of Hicksville.

Karl is the unofficial historian for Emergency Company 5 and the Department. He has written several historical pieces related to the fire service, including 50-Year biographies for Ex-Chief Werthessen, Ex-Captain DiStefano, Ex-Captain Nolan and Firefighter Dwyer. Additionally, he has authored 75 Years of Labor Day events in 2005 and continues to organize

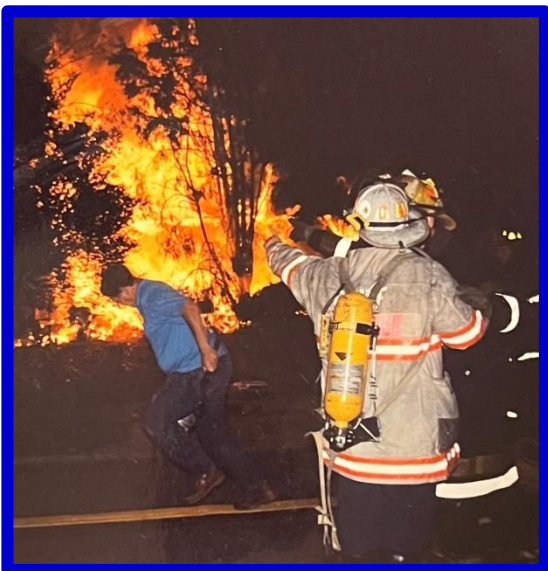
the Department's historical files. His current project is to digitize as much as he can and have it made available on the Department website for future generations.

Karl also served as the Chairman of the Department's Welfare Committee for several years and in 1989, he served as the Chairman of the Department's Annual Fund Drive Committee. In the aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks in 2001, Ex-Chief Schweitzer stepped up and chaired the Annual 9/11 Memorial Committee. For twenty years he organized the annual event to pay tribute and never forget the sacrifices of his friends Chief Terry Farrell and Ex-Captain George Howard. He would turn over the committee to his good friend Mike Kretz in 2021 to carry on the tribute and remembrance. He remains a close advisor to the Committee.

Additionally, he has served on many Company Committees. In 1991 with OSHA's implementation of the Confined Space standard, Karl would organize and lead the Technical Rescue Team and served as its Leader from 1998 - 1999. With his professional work background Karl would become a member of the Hazardous Materials Response Team from 1987 - 2005 and was a petroleum specialist.

According to Schweitzer, there is one regret that remains unresolved. During his time in the Department, Chief Schweitzer served on two Committees that have never made it through to completion. The need to address the EMS service for the community has eluded his grasp. In 1956 the department started providing EMS service to its residents, and over the last 60 plus years, the service is well beyond the capabilities of its membership. Ex-Chief Schweitzer was part of the 1991 EMS Company Committee and the 2015 Committee to reinvent the squad that would transition into a Company, both never made it to fruition. Additionally, as a Chief in 1996, he expanded and reorganized the role for the EMS Squad but that also did not last more than a few years after he left office.

Ex-Chief Schweitzer remains an active member today and enjoys his family and grandchildren but still finds time to make history his passion.





***Served 2 Years***

Philip LaNasa was born April 29, 1952, in the Bronx and moved to Hicksville at an early age. He is the son of Anthony and Josephine LaNasa. He married Eileen on October 21, 1984. They are the proud grandparents of eight grandchildren and one great granddaughter. Phil was employed with Nassau County as an Advanced Emergency Medical Technician and later the New York City Fire Department where he retired in 2005 with a combined 32 years of service. They lived on Acre Lane in Hicksville and have since moved to Montgomery, New York.

Phil graduated from Hicksville High School in 1971 and then attended Nassau Community College.

Phil joined the department as a member of Floodlight Company 8 (known today as Floodlight / Heavy Rescue Company 8) in November of 1976. Phil was elected as 2nd Lieutenant of Company 8 in 1986 and 1987 before being elected as their Captain in 1988 - 1989. Phil also served as their secretary and treasurer. He also served as Captain of the Rescue Squad in 1982 - 1983.

Phil was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1992 by a very close margin of 92 – 88 against his challenger, William “Spike” Thunell. He was also elected again in 1993. He was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1994 – 1995, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1996 – 1997 before being elected as the 60<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department in 1998 - 1999. His Assistant Chiefs were William “Spike” Thunell (1<sup>st</sup>), Patrick “Paddy” McGeough (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Steve Doucette (3<sup>rd</sup>).

A house fire on New Year's Day at 142 West John Street forced nine occupants out into the frigid weather. The fire started in the rear of the house, in the kitchen area, and spread unchecked up into the attic. When the firefighters arrived on the scene the fire was already in the attic and was presenting a heavy smoke condition. Under the command of newly installed Chief Phillip LaNasa, seventy-five firefighters from the Hicksville Fire Department responded to the call. All the occupants of the house had escaped from the house unharmed. It took over an

hour to expose the fire in the walls and the attic area. The house sustained heavy damage, and for a time threatened to spread to a neighboring home that was only six feet away from the burning house.

The department had a busy month in June responding to house fires. The fire on Bay Avenue on June 5, caused over \$150,000 in damage, was the most serious and dangerous incident. The firefighters battled another house fire at 52 Rover Lane on June 10. Seven units responded to a fire that was sparked from work that was being done in the garage. The fire spread up through the attic crawl space to the rear of the second floor. The damage was confined to a small area of the house, but smoke damage was heavy throughout the home.

On November 2, 1998, a fast-moving blaze broke out on Burns Avenue, near the Hicksville Post Office. The alarm was reported from a neighboring business shortly after 11 a.m.. The general alarm fire broke out in the Knit Works Company, a textile firm, and quickly gutted it. Heavy smoke, soot and some minor water damage affected four of its neighboring businesses. Two adjacent firms also suffered roof damage. Knitworks was in the center of a five-tenant light industrial complex, just off West John Street. Businesses on either side were saved from major damage by fast-working firefighters. Two hundred firefighters under Chief LaNasa fought the blaze for several hours before bringing it under control. Overhaul operations, such as checking for hot spots, lasted until midnight. The roof and front wall collapsed shortly after the arrival of Hicksville fire units.

On May 19, 1999, inauspicious winds and fire friendly conditions fed a fierce, early-morning blaze that nearly destroyed a four-story office building at 333 North Broadway, on the Jericho/Hicksville border. Frustrated, anxious employees of about 35 small businesses located within the building were not permitted to enter the building, which suffered severe damage to its southernmost side. Gustly winds blew from north to south, making matters worse as they pushed the flame and heat from the plastic container directly into the building. The only condition that was favorable, was the time. Fortunately, nobody was in the building. At the time, the fire was contacting the ceiling of the building's ground-floor parking garage, which is made of Styrofoam. The fire also did damage to the adjacent building, a Big & Tall clothing store located just south. The firefighting operation required manpower from six departments - Jericho, Syosset, Plainview, Carle Place and Westbury - and five more were kept on standby. There were 27 trucks and 100 men on the scene. The fire was brought under control in about three hours.



On November 26, 1999, a vacant building known as a hangout for local youths burned in the early morning. The one-story building located at 250 Old Country Road is located behind Antun's Catering hall.

Chief LaNasa has received several awards: Nassau County EMS Award in 1993, and Ex-Chiefs Award. Both awards were received for saving the life of a teenager that was stabbed. Phil also received Three Fire Unit Citations, Two EMS Unit Citations, Three Town of Oyster Bay Community Awards (Avianca airplane crash, Nor'easter in Bayville, and Suffolk County Wildfires), and two Town of Oyster Bay Merit Awards. A description of some of his actions are listed below.

Phil was part of a Unit Citation in January of 1984. The crew responded to a Rescue call on the platform of the Railroad Station. Upon arrival they found an elderly woman in cardiac arrest. Working as a team, they performed C.P.R. on the victim amidst the snow and ice. Their efforts proved successful, and the victim survived the attack. Many months later word was received that the victim passed away a month later, but the family expressed their gratitude for giving them a chance to say their goodbyes and to ease the pain of their mother.

Another Unit Citation that Phil was part of, was his actions he took on Monday, August 10, 1987. The Hicksville Fire Department received a report of an auto accident with aided at Broadway and Old Country Road. The first unit to arrive notified the dispatcher that there was a three-car accident. When 938 arrived at the scene the crew was told that there were people trapped in one of the cars. This car was on the center divider and into a light pole. The light pole was hit so hard that it was just hanging over the car. While the AEMT started to stabilize the two victims, the rest of the crew went to work in stabilizing the car and getting the extrication tool ready to work. While removing the first aided from the passenger side of the car, the extrication spreader was used to remove the driver's door to get to the second aided, whose vital signs at this time were deteriorating. The crew was now pressed for time. Not only because of the aided's condition but also because the light pole might fall on the car and them. After the door was removed the aided was still trapped in the car by the steering wheel. At this time the extrication chains and spreader were used to pull the steering wheel from the aided and then the driver's seat had to be pushed back with the extrication rams to free the aided. The aided was then removed from the auto and transported to the hospital. The quick reaction of 938's crew and their expertise in the use of the extrication tool resulted in a quick and smooth operation without further injury to the aided.

Phil received the Certificate of Merit for Medical Service Award for his actions on October 18, 1991. The Hicksville Fire Department responded to a Medical Emergency call for a possible overdose at 40 Salem Road. First arriving members Lieutenant Sokolski and Firefighter Sala found an unconscious male in respiratory arrest and began artificial ventilations. Ex-Capt. LaNasa had now arrived at the scene and inserted a simple airway and began a survey of the aided. During this time, it was discovered that the aided had injected himself with an unknown drug. At this point, the ambulance arrived at the scene with Lieutenant Johnson and Firefighter Efinger. The aided was packaged and removed to the ambulance and transported to NCMC. While in the ambulance, the members began performing advanced life support measures which included intubation and continued ventilations, suctioning, establishing an IV and administering the prescribed drugs as called for by Medical Control. As the members were in the process of transferring the aided over to the hospital, the patient began breathing on his own and regained consciousness thanks to the skills of these members.

Assistant Chief LaNasa received the Chiefs Award and the Nassau County Fire Department EMS award for his actions on June 11, 1993. Hicksville Fire Department was celebrating its 100th Anniversary when a violent attack on a 16-year-old male had taken place about a block away from the festivities. This violent attack resulted in the victim sustaining a near fatal stab wound to his neck. The assault had taken place less than an hour after a riotous crowd of youths that had been involved in a series of physical altercations in and about the general area was dispersed. Assistant Chief LaNasa was standing in front of Fire Headquarters when a bystander came up and advised him of a stabbing victim on the corner of Broadway and he proceeded to the scene by foot. Assistant Chief LaNasa, who was the first to reach the victim, had to push his way through an emotionally charged crowd. His initial size up revealed that the youth had sustained a serious stab wound to the neck and that the wound was actively spurting bright red blood which indicated that the wound had involved the major arteries of the neck. Assistant Chief LaNasa immediately applied direct pressure to the opened wound to control the bleeding. As Assistant Chief LaNasa struggled to control the bleeding and await assistance, he did so while there was an emotionally charged crowd all around him and continued to render aid not knowing if the person (s) responsible for committing this violent act were still present and a threat. In the finest traditions of the fire service, Assistant Chief LaNasa distinguished himself by providing critical aid to a victim who sustained a life-threatening injury from a violent act and did so not knowing if the person(s) responsible were still present in the emotionally charged crowd of youths all around him.

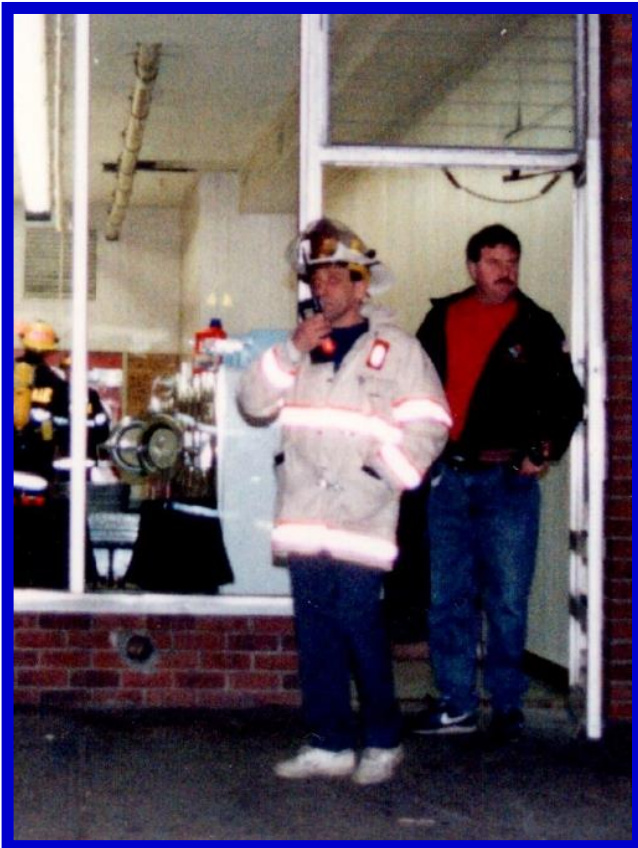
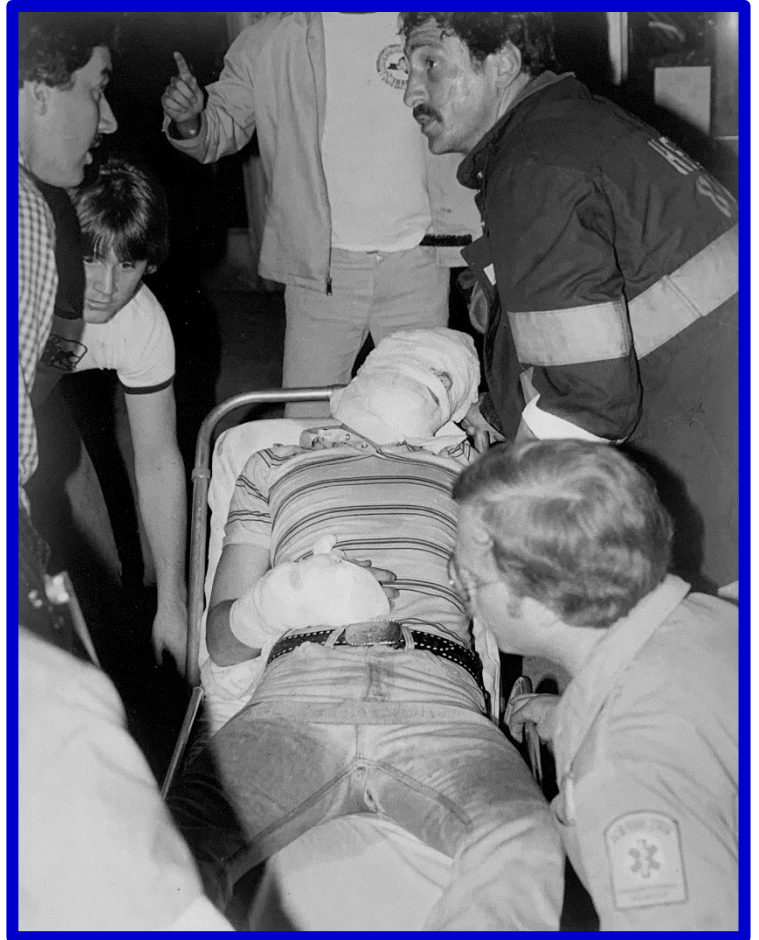
Phil received the Emergency Medical Service Award for his actions on April 4, 1994. The Hicksville Fire Department responded to the Department of Motor Vehicles building on South Broadway for an unconscious female. Upon Assistant Chief LaNasa's arrival, he found the person in cardiac arrest. Assistant Chief LaNasa started CPR with Ex-Captain Don Moore who had also just arrived at the scene. As CPR was being performed AEMT Donald Hudson arrived and took over ventilations while Chief La Nasa inserted an endotracheal tube. The team continued with CPR and after a couple of minutes from their arrival when the ambulance arrived, bringing in with them advance life support equipment, Paramedic John Evans set up the cardiac monitor and he defibrillated the patient. After administering some medications, the patient was shocked a second time and began to breathe slowly but again relapsed back into ventricular fibrillation. Medications were once again introduced, and the patient was shocked a 3rd time. The team now moved the patient to the Ambulance and prepared to transport her to the hospital. The patient was delivered in a stable condition to the hospital and a follow-up a week later revealed the patient was still alive and in the Intensive Care Ward.

In 1994 Phil was awarded an Emergency Medical Service Award, for his role in a team that resuscitated a resident in cardiac arrest. On September 17, 1994, at 21:08 hours the Hicksville Fire Department responded to 194 9th Street for an unconscious and unresponsive resident. Upon arriving on scene Assistant Chief LaNasa joined Chief Schweitzer who was in process of administering CPR. With the arrival of the ambulance a couple of minutes later, Lieutenant Drayer and Firefighter Huttler entered, assisted, and continued doing CPR while Ex-Captain Brevogel set up the advanced life support equipment in the ambulance. The patient was moved out to the ambulance and CPR was continued. While transporting the patient to Central General Hospital, several attempts were made to establish an IV, but these attempts failed. The patient was now showing a very slow heart rate, and medications were ordered from medical control. Because of the lack of an IV, medications were administered down the endotracheal tube which had been inserted earlier. Upon their arrival at hospital, the patient was stable. Because of AEMT LaNasa and the team applying their basic and advanced EMS skills and teamwork, the patient was resuscitated and survived the life-threatening ordeal.

Chief LaNasa was an Advanced Emergency Medical Technician, a member of the Department Softball Team, Hazardous Materials Team, Hockey team, and had served on the Labor Day Committee for 11 years.

Immediately following the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, Phil, as a member of the New York City Fire Department, spent countless hours, days, weeks,

and months at the site searching for his brothers. Ex-Chief LaNasa has since moved to Montgomery, New York with his family.







***Served 2 Years***

William Thunell was born January 1, 1947, in Queens and moved to Hicksville at the age of five and is the son of Herbert and Voilet. He married Lauretta on September 13, 1969. William was employed by the Long Island Lighting Company, which did business also as Brooklyn Union Gas, Keyspan, and National Grid, in the gas maintenance and service section for over thirty years. They have two children, Matthew and Jennifer. Matt is presently a fire captain at South Trail Fire/Rescue District in Cape Coral and Fort Meyers, Florida, while Jennifer works at Veterans Administration in Cape Coral.

"Spike," as he is known to all, graduated from Hicksville High School in 1964 and he attended Moore Head Community College in Kentucky for two years, and then Nassau Community College for a third year.

William joined the department as a member of Volunteer Hose Company 4 in April 1971 and he was elected as 2nd Lieutenant of Volunteer Hose Company 4 in 1976 and 1977, 1st Lieutenant in 1978 and 1979, and served as their 57th Captain in 1980 and 1981.

Spike was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1994 by a vote of 116 – 84 against his challenger, Gene Pietzak. He was also elected again in 1995. 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1996 – 1997, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 1998 – 1999 before being elected as the 61<sup>st</sup> Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department 2000 -2001. His Assistant Chiefs were Patrick "Paddy" McGeough (1<sup>st</sup>), Steve Doucette (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Robert Chiz (3<sup>rd</sup>).

While Chief of the department he was able to improve its ISO insurance rating to a Class 2. At that time, there was no fully staffed volunteer fire department that achieved a rating higher than Class 2. Additionally, in 2000, there were only three thousand Class 2 rated departments out of a possible 27,000.

The Department took first place honors in the Category 60-65 members in the line-of-march at the NY State Firemen's Association (FASNY) parade in Merrick.

The Williams Circle Cycle Store located at 83 Woodbury Road was ravaged by fire. The fire gutted the entire showroom area, and most, if not all of the bicycles were destroyed. The shop and office area were spared of fire but did sustain significant smoke damage. The fire, occurred in the early evening on April 26, 2000. Ten units, under the direction of Chief Thunell and over 90 firefighters responded to the call. One firefighter was treated for exhaustion.

In May of 2000, a 67-year-old man died when a fire swept through his basement apartment at 28 West Cherry St. Firefighters found the unconscious and badly burned man shortly after arriving at the noon time blaze. The fire began and was contained to the basement and had been burning undetected for a period before firefighters had arrived. Emergency crews from the police department and fire department tried to revive the man as he was transported to Nassau County Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead. The home showed signs of being overcrowded, and the Town of Oyster Bay Building Department was notified. Nassau County Police indicated that the building was issued numerous building code violations following the incident.

On July 23, 2000, in the early morning hours, fire consumed the entire home located at 137 West Cherry Street. A thirteen-year-old teenage girl was overcome with smoke while she was attempting to rescue her pets. Her sister jumped from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to safety and firefighters encountered heavy fire upon arrival. Firefighters went into deck gun operation while attempts to enter the rear of the structure were not successful.

In July of 2000, a fire ravaged the International House of Pancakes restaurant on Old Country Road and over 70 firefighters responded to the 1:30 a.m. call. The fire was brought under control in approximately 45 minutes, but not before the fire had burned through the roof of the establishment. The roof subsequently collapsed. The restaurant was closed at the time of the fire and there were no reported injuries. The Plainview and Bethpage fire departments aided the Hicksville department.

In October of 2000, the Department, with the help from Jericho, Levittown, and Westbury, responded to a fire that broke out at 319 Jerusalem Avenue at 3:30a.m. The one-story building, which housed the Food Express Deli and the Evangelica Foundation of Life Church, was destroyed. No injuries were reported, however, the five-person family living in the

basement of the building exited unharmed. Bringing 13 pieces of equipment to the scene, approximately 100 firefighters fought the blaze until 7 a.m.. The blaze crept up into the decorative overhang after blowing out the building's windows. It then traveled south and attacked the back of the building which housed the church.

On Saturday, December 2 at 1:22 a.m. firefighters responded to an alarm for an outside rubbish fire against a building located on Levittown Parkway. Upon arrival, the first units found the fire well advanced and spreading into the building, which housed Hicks Deli and four other stores. Firefighters used saws to break through the metal security door at the rear of the building to gain entry to the fire area. Quick action by firefighters confined damage to the deli's rear wall and kitchen area. Old Country Dry Cleaners, located next door, suffered minor smoke and structure damage. Six units with 60 firefighters responded.

Chief Thunell unfortunately was serving when the terrorist attacks took place on September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center was attacked, killing 3,000 civilians. The Hicksville Fire Department along with many other volunteer departments were requested by the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) for assistance, and many members were at ground zero by 11:30 that morning. Aside from the thousands murdered, the Hicksville Fire Department lost Ex-Chief Terrence Farrell of Rescue 4 (FDNY) and Ex-Captain George Howard of Port Authority Emergency Service on that horrible day, both of which were very close personal friends. Chief Thunell and many others will never forget that day.

A fire at 65 East John Street destroyed a two-story house and left 14 people homeless on February 10. The blaze started after a bedpost was placed on an electrical cord. When Chief Thunell arrived on scene, he reported seeing smoke. When the first truck arrived, the fire was already fully involved on the first floor. When it was brought under control by 11 p.m. The two-story home had a huge attic and housed five apartments. The two families, originally from El Salvador, lost everything but their lives in the fire, escaping uninjured. They were escorted to an area hotel for the evening. One firefighter suffered a knee injury and was carried to safety by fellow firefighters.

Assistant Chief Thunell was awarded a Unit Citation for his work on Friday, August 21, 1998 when the department was called to assist the Jericho Fire Department for an overturned gasoline truck on the Long Island Expressway. Upon arrival at the scene, it was unknown how much product was in the tanker since its driver sustained injuries and was transported to the hospital. A Hazardous Material Command post was established, and a

review of the load and delivery tickets concluded that the truck was carrying approximately 10,000 gallons of gasoline. Various operations were being conducted which included the stabilization of the truck, monitoring of storm drains, the evacuation of residents and the cutting of six 4" holes into the side of the tanker and offloading its contents into a second truck while foam was being applied. Periodic meetings at the command post, among the various agencies involved allowed for good communication during this large-scale incident that lasted approximately ten hours and started on a hot and sunny day.

On Wednesday, June 20, 2001, our department received a special call for mutual aid assistance for Engine 932, from the Huntington Manor Fire Department. Chief Thunell responded as part of the crew. Upon arrival at the scene, it was observed that there was a large lumberyard fire, inclusive of three structures fully engulfed with fire. Orders were given to secure a water supply and report to the front of the fire building. The crew was able to locate a water supply (hydrant) while two mutual-aid Engine Companies were able to perform change-over operations and assisted in supplying an adequate water supply through 1,400 feet of 5" hose. An additional water supply approximately 1,000 feet from Engine 932, which was also used to feed Engine 932, enabling the engine to utilize a deck-gun operation. While 932 was in operation, the crew was utilized in the rear of the building working with a 2 1/2" hose line to protect exposures, search for additional fire and protect property. Some 10 hours later, the crew was relieved and released late in the afternoon on Sunday. For their actions, the crew went above and beyond what is expected under normal conditions, used their skills and strength to assist this mutual aid department in their time of need and were awarded a Unit Citation for their work.

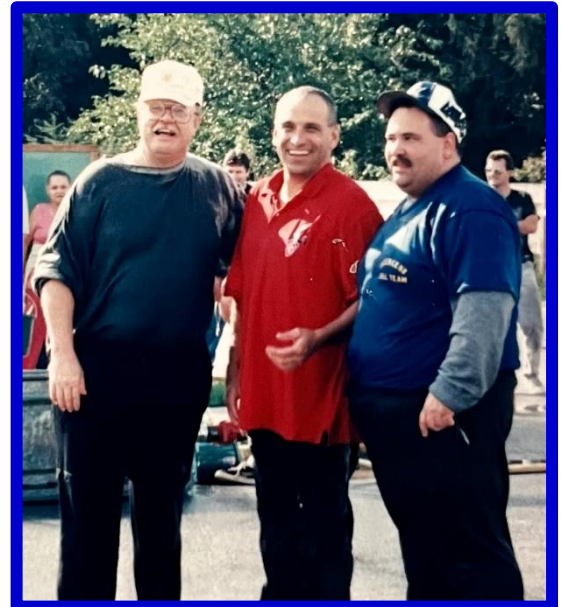
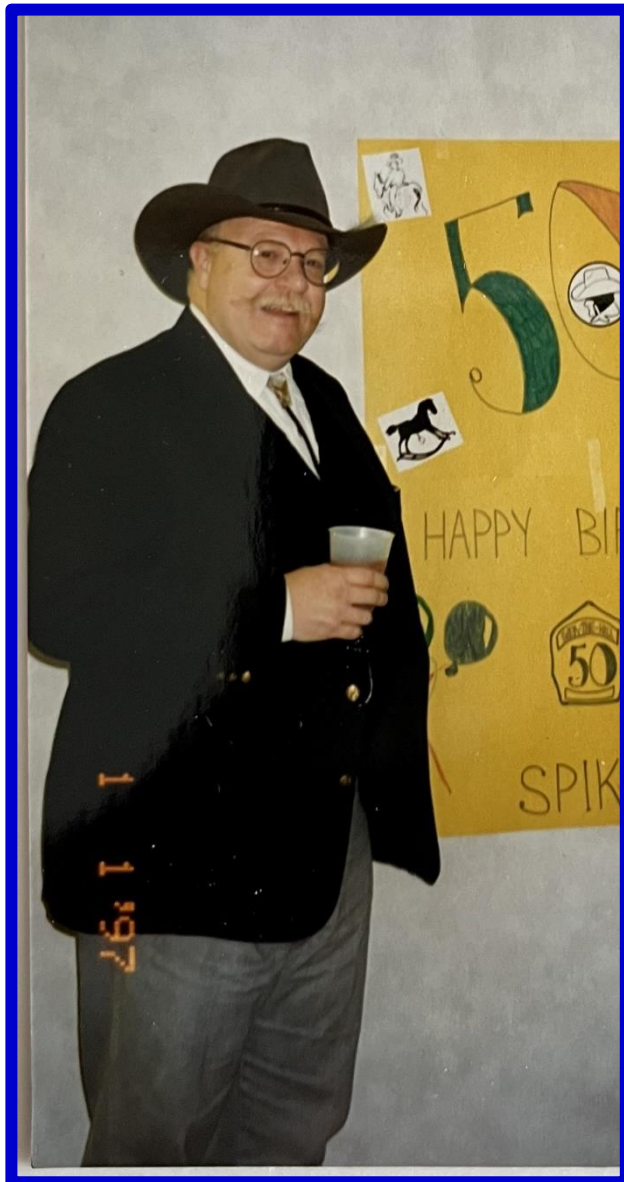
Chief Thunell was saddened to learn about the passing of Honorary Chief Edward Eisemann. He was a 53-year member of the department and the former branch manager of the Plainview Post Office. He lost his long fight against cancer. His father, Carl Eisemann, and uncle, Joe Eisemann, served the department for 64 years and 55 years, respectively.

"Spike" also served as Secretary of Company 4 prior to being elected a line officer. In 1973, he joined the Rescue Squad and became a New York State Certified Emergency Medical Technician and went onto become one of the Hicksville Fire Department's first six Advanced Medical Technicians in 1975.

He has been a Labor Day Committee member for over twenty-five years, and a Labor Day Chairman in 1977. "Spike" is most proud of being a training instructor in our department

for over twenty-five years and has been instrumental in formulating a great many of the department's standard operating procedures and policies.

Chief Thunell is also a long-standing member of our Haz-Mat team. In 2008, William was elected to serve as Fire Commissioner of the Hicksville Fire District for a 5-Year term, serving as its Chair in 2011. Ex-Chief Thunell has since moved to Florida to be close to his family.





***Served 2 Years***

Patrick "Paddy" McGeough was born on January 22, 1964, in the Highbridge section of the Bronx. Paddy is the son of Francis and Ellen McGeough. He married Pamela Simons in October of 2002. Paddy was employed by the New York City Police Department working as one of the City's Finest, a patrolman in the 43<sup>rd</sup> precinct in the Bronx before being promoted as a Detective in 1997, working in the Warrant Division, Joint Immigration Task Force and had been part of the U.S. Marshall Fugitive Task Force before he retired. Paddy and Pam live on Land Lane.

Paddy joined Independent Engine and Hose Company 2 in June of 1983 and immediately became interested in the "Hicks" Drill Team, joining the drill team in 1983. His passion for the racing team has led him to the position of Co-Captain of the Drill Team, devoting many hours. He remains interested and in contact with many friends from other drill teams.

Paddy was elected to serve Company Two as 2nd Lieutenant in 1992 and 1993, before progressing to 1st Lieutenant in 1994. He was subsequently elected as Captain in 1995. Paddy was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1996 by a margin of 129 – 75 against his challenger, Steve Doucette. He was also elected again in 1997. Paddy was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1998 – 1999, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 2000 – 2001 before being elected as the 62nd Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department 2002 -2003. His Assistant Chiefs were Steve Doucette (1<sup>st</sup>), Robert Chiz (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Robert Lang (3<sup>rd</sup>).

A fire broke out at Sal's Broadway Body Shop on January 30, 2003, at approximately 3:00 a.m. The building was fully involved in fire upon arrival. It took about half an hour to control the blaze, under the direction of Chief Paddy McGeough. Because of the nature of the business and the hazardous materials inside the building, it could have been much worse. Fortunately, no one was injured.

A Nelson Avenue home was destroyed on January 24, 2003, due to an explosion and fire caused by a natural gas leak in the street. Firefighters fought a gas-fed fire from outside while waiting for a gas crew from Port Jefferson to arrive. When the owners arrived home they noticed a strong odor of gas in front of their house. Upon entering the home, they found it smelled like gas too. After a quick investigation inside the home, the couple called Keyspan and decided to wait outside. This decision saved them from being seriously injured as an unknown source triggered an explosion and fire just as the couple stepped off their front porch. The force of the explosion knocked them both to the ground. They both suffered slight injuries and were treated at North Shore Hospital in Plainview and released.

Firefighters responded to a total of 48 alarms during the Blackout of 2003 on August 14-15. There were five fire calls, nine automatic fire alarms set off by the power failure, eight investigations resulting from problems arising from the blackout, eight rescue calls not caused by the blackout and five assistances to residents calls for various reasons. The department provided an ambulance and crew to assist the East Meadow Fire Department at a seven-car crash on Route 106 and Hempstead Turnpike. The Jericho Fire Department requested a ladder truck to assist them at an apartment fire on Brush Hollow Road. New York City Management requested a few dozen ambulances from Nassau and Westchester counties to assist them in handling a backlog of requests in the city. Hicksville provided one ambulance with a crew.

Paddy has been a member on the Labor Day Committee for many years, serving on the Parade Committee and most will remember his work on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee, bringing the Hicksville Community the largest parade ever in Hicksville. He also had the honor of being Labor Day Chairman in 1995.

Paddy received a Unit Citation on October 24, 1983, for his actions taken on a Rescue Alarm. The unit consisting of Captain Schieferstein, Ex-Captain Thomas Sullivan, Firefighter's James Cammarata, Richard Schmidt, and Patrick McGeough responded to a rescue call. Upon arrival they found a 24-year-old male in cardiac arrest. The father and sister were performing CPR. Firefighters Schmidt and McGeough took over CPR. CPR continued while the victim was moved to the ambulance. Advanced life support measures were instituted. After medication was administered the patient started to improve. After additional treatment the patient responded to light and sound stimuli. At the last check the patient was in serious but stable condition. The efficient efforts of the EMS Personnel saved a life.

One of Paddy's most honorable moments was pulling a woman out of a working house fire with then Captain Thomas Sullivan where he was recognized with the Nassau County Bronze Medal of Valor in 1990. The same year he accepted the Elks Club and American Legion Awards for his heroic actions. On July 21, 1989, the department responded to a working house fire at 116 Blueberry Lane. Firefighter Patrick McGeough responded first due and was advised that they had a working fire and the possibility of a trapped occupant. After assisting at the hydrant, Firefighter McGeough stretched the first handline to the front door and waited for water. Upon receiving water, Firefighter McGeough was met by Ex-Captain Sullivan, they advanced the line into the house. Firefighter McGeough had the line and was now using it to protect the search team from any extending fire. Firefighter McGeough moved forward and passed the fire area in the living room and assisted in the removal of the unconscious victim from the house. In the finest tradition of the fire service, Firefighter McGeough's teamwork in assisting in establishing a water supply, stretching the first line, providing back up on that line using it to protect his fellow firefighters and then assist in the removal of a fire victim contributed to the successful outcome of this call.

2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief McGeough was awarded a Unit Citation in 1998 for his response to an Ice Storm. The largest and most devastating ice storm to strike this state came unexpectedly during the early days of January 1998, in upstate New York near the Canadian border. Governor George Pataki declared a state of emergency. The Hicksville Fire Department was called upon, along with their neighboring departments, to aid with equipment and manpower to areas upstate. In many of these areas power had been cut-off for days, manpower exhausted and firefighter equipment began to fail. Assistant Chief McGeough led the members of Hicksville to the town of Redwood, just twenty-five miles from the Canadian border. Their assignment was to provide relief to the United States Army National Guard and local firefighters. These tasks included medical treatment, verifying gas was shut off in homes, pumping out water from basements along with other types of hazards. The crew was also summoned to a fully involved house fire showing evidence of collapsing walls, exposure fires to vehicles nearby and two large propane cylinders with flames impinging on the tanks and relief valves on the tank activated.

On Wednesday, June 20, 2001, our department received a special call for mutual aid assistance for Engine 932, from the Huntington Manor Fire Department. Chief McGeough responded as part of the crew. Upon arrival at the scene, it was observed that there was a large lumberyard fire, inclusive of three structures fully engulfed with fire. Orders were given to secure a water supply and report to the front of the fire building. The crew was able to locate a water supply (hydrant) while two mutual-aid Engine Companies were able to perform change-

over operations and assisted in supplying an adequate water supply through 1,400 feet of 5" hose. An additional water supply approximately 1,000 feet from Engine 932 was to utilize a deck-gun operation. While 932 was in operation, the crew was utilized in the rear of the building working with a 2 1/2" hose line to protect exposures, search for additional fire and protect property. Some 10 hours later, the crew was relieved and released late in the afternoon. For their actions, the crew went above and beyond what is expected under normal conditions, used their skills and strength to assist this mutual aid department in their time of need and were awarded a Unit Citation for their work.

Chief McGeough was awarded an EMS Award for his actions on July 2, 2003. The Hicksville Fire Department received a call for a man having trouble breathing at 34 Gables Road. Within minutes of the alarm, Chief McGeough arrived on the scene and requested forthwith response for a male, in a car, in cardiac arrest. The crew arrived and immediately removed the victim from the car and began C.P.R. He was then intubated, and I.V was started, and atropine was given. The patient was transported to the hospital and upon arrival he had a pulse rate of 60. Fortunately, due to the actions of the rescue crew on scene, the resident was alive and well in the hospital.

Paddy is also a member of the Hazardous Materials Team, a member of the Department's Hockey Team, and found time to contribute his efforts to the 100th Anniversary Historical Journal. Paddy has been a member of the Department Training Committee, where he has been its chair for many years. Paddy also has an interest in Civil War history, railroads and has been deeply involved in the Department and Company Two's history.









***Served 2 Years***

Steven Doucette was born October 5, 1967, and married Karen in June of 2000. Steven was employed by the Town of Oyster Bay before becoming an Advanced Emergency Medical Technician-Critical Care with the Nassau County Police Department.

Steve joined Floodlight/Heavy Rescue Company 8 on January 26, 1986, and served as 2nd Lieutenant in 1990 and 1991, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 1992 – 1993 and was subsequently elected as their Captain in 1994 – 1995.

Steve was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 1998 – 1999, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief 2000 – 2001 and 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 2002 – 2003. In 2004, he was elected to serve the highest position in the volunteer fire department, as

the 63<sup>rd</sup> Chief of Department. His Assistant Chiefs were Robert Chiz, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant, Robert Lang, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and Edward Korona, 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant.

On April 19, 2004, the department responded to a call for a fire in the vicinity of Newbridge Road and West John Street. The alarm was initially received as a building fire through Firecom. Upon arrival a signal 10 was issued. The fire began at McKing Deli and quickly spread to such neighboring stores as Checkmaster, Nail Galley and the eBay Store. The fire was particularly difficult to extinguish because the roof of the building was covered with a chain link fence which was used as a security device. Firefighters had to remove the McKing Deli sign to get behind it, but, because it was electrified, LIPA had to be called to turn off the power so that firefighters could safely battle the blaze.

In May of 2004, the Hicksville Fire Department responded to a call for a fire in the rear of 10 Bethpage Road between Midland and Twin Lawns Avenues. Upon arrival, firefighters found a large fire and heavy smoke in the rear of Edgian Press, Inc., a lithograph, and printing business. Units from Jericho, Bethpage and Syosset provided mutual aid. One Hicksville firefighter received a head laceration and was transported to an area hospital by a police ambulance.

Firefighters battled a raging fire in a two-story apartment house on West Cherry Street on December 23, 2004. The alarm was reported via 911 at 9:14 p.m. Firefighters encountered a fully involved structure with fire out every opening on both floors. Neighbors were screaming, glass was breaking, and power lines were starting to burn as the first engines arrived. A neighbor was credited with saving the lone occupant. Upon seeing the fire, the neighbor instructed his family to call 911 and ran to the house to see who he could help. He ran around back and saw his neighbor inside fall to the floor as he was trying to get out. The neighbor then ran into the burning home and dragged the victim outside where he was met by police officers who brought them out to the street for treatment. The victim was treated at the scene and rushed to Nassau University Medical Center for treatment of burns to his respiratory system.

On July 29, 2005, the department was alerted to a building fire at Durante Equipment Company at 60 Bethpage Road. The first units on the scene reported heavy smoke, prompting an alarm for a working building fire. Mutual aid was received from the Jericho, Bethpage and Plainview Fire Departments. The fire was brought under control in 30 minutes under the direction of Chief Steve Doucette.

February 20, 2005, a mechanic at McDaniel Ford was working on the plastic gas tank of a Ford Focus, which was on the lift. When some of the gasoline splashed on him, the mechanic backed up and knocked over his light, which ignited gas that had spilt on the floor. The fire then spread to the car, igniting the gas tank. The mechanic escaped injury, but the vehicle was damaged, the garage and other vehicles inside sustained smoke damage. Upon arrival, Hicksville firefighters encountered heavy smoke conditions. Due to delayed reporting of the fire, however, the blaze gained considerable headway on the firefighters.

In 2005, an assessment of fire protection services conducted by the Insurance Services Office's (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) Service once again ranked the Hicksville Fire Department as the highest on Long Island as well as among the top one percent in New York and throughout the United States. Of 69 departments in Nassau County, Hicksville is one of only six that has achieved a PPC of 2, the best given in the county. None of Suffolk County's 109 departments received Class 1 or Class 2 designations. In determining a department's ranking, ISO officials analyze data gathered from municipal officials and share it with insurance companies. Nearly 45,000 departments across the country and 2,442 in New York are assessed using the PPC formula. According to the ISO website, the rating gauges the "capacity of the local fire department to respond if flames engulf a property in which the fire company has a financial stake." The findings are a means of assessing fire protection in a community

and are used by insurance carriers in setting rates for insurance on residential and commercial properties. The classification of the department's ability to fight fires helps a community determine the effectiveness of its fire protection service and assists fire districts in planning and budgeting for facilities, equipment, and training. The standard, with which the departments are rated, is the same throughout the United States. Hicksville has maintained a Class 2 ISO ranking since 2001. Prior to that time, the department was ranked Class 3.

Steve, a N.Y.S. certified Hazardous Materials Technician, has worked with the Hazardous Material Team Leaders to provide the best training and equipment that the Department can offer. Steve was also an active member of the Department's Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Committee. He is a N.Y.S. certified Emergency Medical Technician in Critical Care. He strived to work closely with the EMS coordinators to provide the best rescue services for the community.

Steve was part of a Unit Citation on August 10, 1987. The Hicksville Fire Department received a report of an auto accident with aided at Broadway and Old Country Road. The first unit to arrive notified the dispatcher that there was a three-car accident. When 938 arrived at the scene the crew was told that there were people trapped in one of the cars. This car was on the center divider and into a light pole. The light pole was hit so hard that it was just hanging over the car. While the AEMT started to stabilize the two victims, the rest of the crew went to work in stabilizing the car and getting the extrication tool ready to work. While removing the first aided from the passenger side of the car, the extrication spreader was used to remove the driver's door to get to the second aided, whose vital signs at this time were deteriorating. The crew was now pressed for time. Not only because of the aided's condition but also because the light pole might fall on the car and them. After the door was removed the aided was still trapped in the car by the steering wheel. At this time the extrication chains and spreader was used to pull the steering wheel from the aided and then the driver's seat had to be pushed back with the extrication rams to free the aided. The aided was then removed from the auto and transported to the hospital. The quick reaction of 938's crew and their expertise in the use of the extrication tool resulted in a quick and smooth operation without further injury to the aided.

On January 25, 1990, Steve was part of a large group of members who responded to a commercial airline crash in Cove Neck. The Department was involved in rescue operations throughout the night.

Chief Doucette has been recognized by both the Hicksville Fire Department and Nassau County Fire Commission for actions that he took to save other people's lives. In 1990 Steve received the County's highest award, the Gold Medal of Valor, along with Ex-Chiefs Scanlon and Wigdzinski for rescuing a husband and wife who were trapped on the second floor of a house fire. On April 2, 1991, the Hicksville Fire Department responded to a working house fire at 54 Fox Place. Lieutenant Doucette, responding in his personal car arrived at the scene. With confirmed reports that the occupants of the house were trapped on the 2nd floor, and Chiefs Wigdzinski and Scanlon had entered the house. Lieutenant Doucette grabbed Assistant Chief Schweitzer's SCBA and entered the structure to join in the search. As Doucette entered the structure, fire department units had not yet arrived at the scene and there were no handlines for protection. As Lieutenant Doucette approached the stairs to the 2nd floor he encountered heavy smoke and extreme heat conditions. As Doucette began to search the hall, he was met by Chief Wigdzinski who passed a woman to him. Lieutenant Doucette proceeded down the hall and passed her off to Lieutenant O'Brien who had joined the search. The victim was removed to the outdoors for medical aid. Both occupants were transported to the hospital for smoke inhalation, where the male occupant was admitted in serious condition and did recover from the effects of the fire. If not for Lieutenant Doucette's disregard for his own personal safety, determination and teamwork, the outcome of this fire incident would have had a fatal end to it.

As a Lieutenant, Steven received an EMS Award for his actions taken on March 22, 1993. The Hicksville Fire Department responded to a reported cardiac at 136 First Street. Fire Fighter John DeLellis an EMT, first upon the victim, discovered that she was in Cardiac Arrest. Fire Fighter DeLellis immediately started CPR and continued until the arrival of his fellow rescuers. The arrival of Unit 937 with Lieutenant Doucette, Firefighter Korona and Firefighter Hudson, all EMTs, brought much needed assistance to the scene and allowed them to take over CPR from Firefighter DeLellis. With no further rescue assistance responding to the scene, these members continued CPR and packaged the patient for transport to the Hospital. The patient was placed in the Ambulance where CPR and basic life support skills were continued, and the patient was turned over to Hospital staff and a follow-up on her condition 2 days later revealed that she was in ICU and had survived this medical emergency. Lieutenant Doucette, Firefighter DeLellis, Firefighter Korona and Firefighter Hudson, using their EMS skills and determination, maintained adequate circulation and airway maintenance for the victim till they could get her a higher level of treatment.

Assistant Chief Doucette was awarded a Unit Citation for his work on Friday August 21, 1998, when the Hicksville Fire Department was called to assist the Jericho Fire Department for an overturned gasoline truck on the Long Island Expressway. Upon arrival at the scene, it was unknown how much product was in the tanker since its driver sustained injuries and was transported to the hospital. A Hazardous Material Command post was established, and a review of the load and delivery tickets concluded that the truck was carrying approximately 10,000 gallons of gasoline. Various operations were being conducted which included the stabilization of the truck, monitoring of storm drains, the evacuation of residents and the cutting of six 4" holes into the side of the tanker and offloading its contents into a second truck while foam was being applied. Periodic meetings at the command post, among the various agencies involved, allowed for good communication during this large-scale incident that lasted approximately ten hours and started on a hot and sunny day.

Steve was awarded an EMS Award in 1998. On Thursday November 6, 1998, the Hicksville Fire Department responded to a rescue call for a suicide attempt. The patient was an unconscious male in his early forties that had cut his wrist and had respirations of about eight per minute. There were two self-inflicted lacerations on his left forearm, from a utility knife and blood was throughout the bedroom. It was also determined that the patient consumed an unknown amount of alcohol. As part of the team Assistant Chief Doucette started an intravenous line. The heart rate was monitored, and a bag valve mask (BVM) was used to help with ventilations. The patient was brought out to the ambulance and quickly transported to the hospital where he survived his injuries. For their determination and teamwork in sustaining a life, the Hicksville Fire Department awarded these members its EMS Medical award.

During his 8 years in the Chief's Office, Steve was able to pride himself on several cutting-edge accomplishments. He secured Morning Pride turnout gear with leather boots and helmets for the entire Department. He upgraded communications throughout the district and with surrounding departments with new frequencies. He was an active part of the Committee that standardized the engines to help improve operations. Steve was also instrumental on getting the first training facility built on the grounds of Station Three.

On Wednesday, June 20, 2001, our department received a special call for mutual aid assistance for Engine 932, from the Huntington Manor Fire Department. Chief Doucette responded as part of the crew. Upon arrival at the scene, it was observed that there was a large lumberyard fire, inclusive of three structures fully engulfed with fire. Orders were given to



secure a water supply and report to the front of the fire building. The crew was able to locate a water supply (hydrant) while two mutual-aid Engine Companies were able to perform change-over operations and assisted in supplying an adequate water supply through 1,400 feet of 5" hose. An additional water supply approximately 1,000 feet from Engine 932, which was also used to feed Engine 932, enabling the engine to utilize a deck-gun operation. While 932 was in operation the crew was utilized in the rear of the building working with a 2 1/2" hose line to protect exposures, search for additional fire and protect property. Some 10 hours later, the crew was relieved and released late in the afternoon on Sunday. For their actions, the crew went above and beyond what is expected under normal conditions and used their skills and strength to assist this mutual aid department in their time of need and were awarded Unit Citation for their work.

On September 11, 2001, a day that will never be forgotten, Steve left his place of employment and reported to Fire Headquarters, prior to being called by FDNY Special Operations to aid at the scene. Heavy Rescue Company #8 was requested and responded to Ground Zero, under his direction. They spent the next 24 hours there assisting and providing support to the FDNY. During the days that followed, the Department continued to provide assistance at Ground Zero and throughout the city.

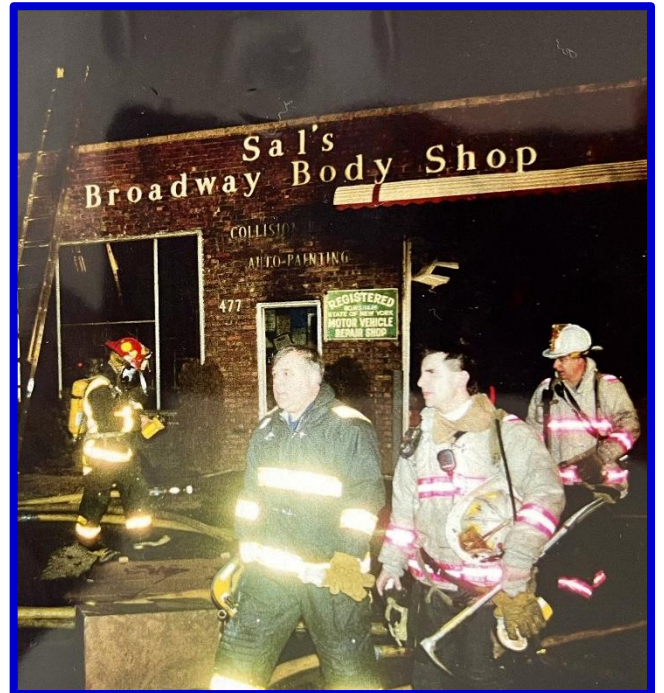
Steve Doucette received an EMS Unit Citation award for his actions on an EMS Call. On December 18, 2003, the Hicksville Fire Department received a call for a female choking at 616 South Oyster Bay Road. The call stated she was alert and conscious. Within three minutes of the time of the alarm, Chief Doucette was on scene reporting that the female was unconscious, unresponsive and in respiratory arrest. Her heart was beating at a rate of 30. With the assistance of the first responding members, the patient was intubated with an I.V. established and the patient was medicated. While clearing/suctioning the airway, a large piece of food was removed using the forceps. Shortly after the food was removed, the patient's vital signs returned to normal limits, and she regained consciousness. The quick actions of this crew working together saved the patient's life and the actions involved and outstanding EMS operation, which was dependent upon teamwork and cooperation, resulting in the sustaining and or saving of human life.

Due to OSHA requirements, the Hicksville Fire Department was no longer able to host the Annual Labor Day Drill. Chief Doucette said it was indeed unfortunate that the Department could no longer host the drill portion of the event and that the grandstands did not meet the requirements as mandated under OSHA. The parade continued to be hosted and Chief

Doucette in an open letter to community thanked the community for their unmatched support and dedication to the men and the women who proudly serve.

In addition, Steve served as co-chairman of the Department Training Committee, as a member of the Labor Day Committee, as co-captain of the Department Hazzbeens old fashioned racing team and played on the ice hockey team.

Steve is currently a NYS certified Paramedic and continues his job with the Nassau County Police Department as one of their Medics. He and Karen remain Hicksville residents with their two daughters and son.



***Served 2 Years***

Robert Chiz was born August 18, 1954. He was adopted by his loving parents Frank and Margaret Chiz and brought home to 19 Preston Lane, Hicksville where he still lives today. Bob graduated from Hicksville Senior High School in 1972. In October of 1976 he married his lovely wife Mary O'Malley. They have three children, Peter, Douglas, and Linda. Bob worked in the electronics industry for the private sector most of his career, then was employed by the Town of Oyster Bay Division of Public Safety.

Bob joined Engine Company 7 in 1974. He served as company lieutenant from 1981-1984 and as Captain in 1985-1986. In the years to follow, Bob again took on the responsibility of company officer and served as Captain, a second time, in 1992.

Bob was elected 3rd Assistant Chief in 2000 – 2001, 2nd Assistant Chief 2002 – 2003, 1st Assistant Chief 2004 – 2005 before he was elected as the 64th Chief of Department in 2006 and 2007. His Assistant Chiefs were Robert Lang, 1st Assistant, Edward Korona, 2nd Assistant and Christopher Moskos, 3rd Assistant.

While emergency medical services were in their infancy in the firehouse, he became a state certified EMT. Bob is also a charter member of the Hazardous Material Team. In addition to his duties on the fireground, Bob has been active on department committees, representative to the community and continues to serve on other countywide committees. Bob was a participant on the Annual Labor Day Parade and Tournament Committee for many years and served as Chairman in 1981. He was President of the Ninth Battalion Active Chief's Council, and past Advisor to the Hicksville Junior's Organization. Bob ran as a member for the Hicks Drill Team, and later as a member of the Hazzbeens. He also was a member of the bowling team.

On Thursday, December 23, 2004, at 9:14 p.m. firefighters battled a raging fire in a two-story apartment house on West Cherry Street. Bob, who was first on the scene, encountered a fully involved structure with fire out multiple windows on both floors. Neighbors were screaming, glass was breaking, and power lines were starting to burn and falling as the



first engines arrived. Eighty-five Hicksville firefighters under command of 1st Assistant Chief Chiz, assisted by Assistant Chiefs Bobby Lang and Edward Korona, battled the blaze for three hours, utilizing five fire hydrants, before getting it under control. Hicksville used all five of its engine companies as well as a ladder company and was assisted at the scene by additional ladder companies from Syosset and Westbury and medical units from Plainview, Jericho, and Nassau County Police. Bethpage and Plainview also sent engine companies to assist. One firefighter suffered a torn muscle in his shoulder and was transported to the hospital for treatment. There were several other close calls from a flashover, but firefighters were able to escape. Their protective gear was seriously damaged by the heat, but effectively protected them from injury. LIPA, fearing damage to primary wires shut down electric to the downtown area for over an hour. Keyspan service was on scene quickly and shut off the gas supply to the structure. Firefighters were on scene until 3 a.m. mopping up and putting out small pockets of fire. Town of Oyster Bay Building Department officials were on scene and after an inspection, deemed the structure unsafe. On December 24, after fire investigators completed their on-scene investigation, the investigators stated the fire was arson. The structure was torn down.

On the evening of January 13th, 2006, the department responded to a reported fire with people trapped at 14 Boulevard Drive. Upon Arrival, Bob found a heavy smoke condition coming from second floor of a split-level house. Ex-Chief Patrick Scanlon was returning from a previous alarm in his private vehicle and responded directly to the scene. Upon his arrival he noted a working structure fire upstairs and entered the structure without the use of any personal protective equipment. Due to the extreme heat and heavy smoke condition, Scanlon had to make his way through the home on his hands and knees. At the end of the hallway, he entered the bedroom and after hearing gurgling sounds, found Joseph Shunnan and pulled him out of the room and down the hallway where he and an adult male civilian carried Shunnan downstairs. While Scanlon was performing the rescue, Engine 934 arrived on the scene. Ex-Chief Owen Magee assisted Scanlon in the rescue and, together, they carried Shunnan outside and began Basic Life Support. Upon the arrival of EMS, they assisted in the treatment and packaging of the patient who was transported to Nassau University Medical Center in unstable condition with respiratory distress and a compromised airway. Mutual aid was requested from surrounding departments. Ex-Chief Patrick Scanlon was presented with the Hicksville Fire Department's Henry Gebhardt Award and Ex-Chief Owen Magee was presented with the Hicksville Fire Department Certificate of Merit for their heroic actions.

On June 25th, 2006, at 9:47 a.m., Nassau County Firecom toned out the department with a working fire possible people trapped on North Drive. Bob was first on scene and reported



a fully involved working house fire. The first due engine 933 arrived, picked up a hydrant and stretched a hand line to the front of the house. Upon charging the hydrant they found the hydrant was faulty and they had to find another source of water and a source was soon established. The second due engine 937 picked up a hydrant down the block and stretched 2 lines off the engine. The first due truck team began to search the house for the victim. As the fire was being knocked down reports came back to command that the victim was found in the dining room area, but it had been too late. 938 and 931 performed the truck company duties upon their arrival at the scene. The fire was quickly knocked down and the house was checked for extension of fire. Upon the full completion of the overhaul, the fire marshals were called to investigate the origin of the fire and the fatality. It was determined that the cause of the fire was an electrical extension cord which had been placed under the carpeting and stapled to the front staircase. There were no other reported injuries in this fire.

On Tuesday night July 12, 2006, at around 11:00PM, the department responded to a report of a house fire on East Barclay Street. Upon arrival Bob found the second story of the house completely involved in flames. Once inside, the firefighters began to extinguish the fire and try and locate a reported victim still trapped inside the house. Upon searching the second story bedroom, firefighters found the resident on the floor and began to call for first aid and tools to aid in the removal of the victim. Upon removal from the house, the victim was transported in ambulance 9322 to NUMC with reports of 2nd and 3rd degree burns on most of his body as well as burns to his respiratory tract. It took 5 pieces of apparatus and 40 firefighters approximately 45 minutes to place the fire under control. Mutual aid was received from the Syosset, Plainview, Jericho, and Bethpage fire departments.

It was reported on July 12th that the victim of the fire passed away and that the fire was still under investigation for a cause but was deemed non-suspicious.

In the early morning hours on Saturday, September 30, 2006, the department was dispatched to a report of a building fire on South Broadway. The building served as the corporate headquarters of Diagnostic Imaging Group. The Bethpage Fire Department was on scene and Bob was the first Hicksville Chief on scene. Upon arrival, firefighters encountered a fully involved fire in the rear and through the roof of the two-story commercial building. Approximately 200 firefighters and some 25 pieces of apparatus battled the blaze for over 8 hours. The entire building was destroyed and there was a partial collapse of the second floor. Damages were estimated at over \$2 million. No injuries were reported.

On January 13, 2007, a blaze broke out about 3 a.m. outside Trinity Deli at 1 West Village Green. The deli is attached to several other businesses, and flames spread to Good Taste Chinese Kitchen and DiMaggios Pizzeria. The fire started in the rear of the building when a pile of flattened cardboard boxes was set ablaze. First arriving Engine 934 quickly deployed a line and knocked down a large bulk of fire before fully extending into the buildings. The fire was under the command of Chief of Department Robert Chiz, and he was assisted by Assistant Chiefs Lang, Korona & Moskos. The incident was concluded by 5: 00 a.m.. Nassau County Fire Marshal confirmed that the fire was arson, and they are investigating to determine who started the blaze.

At around 3 a.m., April 30 the department received a call via Firecom for a house fire at Valley Lane. Upon arrival Bob found a fully involved fire in the home's attached garage with fire extending into the home. Falkenthal, his grandmother, wife, daughter, and the family's dog were asleep inside the home at the time of the fire. All escaped safely.

About two hours later, fire department personnel finishing up at the Valley Lane home received the alarm with an overturned auto around the corner from the fire scene. Upon arrival at Jerusalem Avenue and Winding Road, firefighters found homeowner Falkenthal and his brother-in-law had helped get the driver out of the overturned vehicle and a woman out of her vehicle, which was leaking gasoline.

The driver of the overturned vehicle was not seriously injured and was transported to an area hospital by a fire department ambulance. The cause of the house fire is still under investigation; however, it is not considered suspicious.

Bob has received citations and awards for his actions at a structure fire in a garage when he sustained second degree burns along with thirteen other firefighters who also received burns or were injured, the Avianca plane crash, the Alboro Company Propane fire, and other rescue efforts. Bob was recognized and awarded by the Fire Department of the City of New York the rank of Honorary Battalion Chief for his assistance on September 11, 2001, and the days and months following.

In 1994 Bob was awarded an EMS Award, for his role in a team that resuscitated a woman in Cardiac Arrest. On September 17, 1994, at 21:08 hours the department responded to 194 9th Street for an unconscious and unresponsive female. As one of the first on scene Bob encountered a female victim in cardiac arrest and immediately began CPR. With the arrival

of the ambulance a couple of minutes later, Lieutenant Drayer and Firefighter Huttler entered, assisted, and continued doing CPR while Ex-Captain Brevogel set up the advance life support equipment in the ambulance. The Patient was moved out to the ambulance, and CPR was continued. While transporting the patient to Central General Hospital, several attempts were made to establish an IV, but these attempts failed. The patient was now showing a very slow heart rate, and medications were ordered from medical control. Because of the lack of an IV, medications were administered down the endotracheal tube which had been inserted earlier. Upon their arrival at hospital, the patient was stable. Because Bob and the team applied their basic and advanced EMS skills and teamwork, the patient was resuscitated and survived her life-threatening ordeal.

In 1998 Bob was awarded the Hicksville Fire Department's Class 1 - Henry Gebhardt Award, for his role along with other Hazardous Material Team members for their heroic actions when an 18-wheeler carrying 10,500 gallons overturned and rolled over onto its side while entering the Long Island Expressway in Jericho near Route 106/107. The crash occurred on Friday, August 21, 1998, shortly after 2 PM. As the truck skidded to a halt, missing all other vehicles, the driver escaped with the help of MTA police officer, John Kowalchuk. The driver suffered only minor injuries.

The Jericho fire department arrived on the scene under the command of Assistant Chief David Ginzburg. County Emergency Services personnel arrived on the scene as did Hicksville's Hazardous Material Team and foam truck. Police and Hazardous Material Team members immediately checked the tanker for additional leaks and checked storm drains as well. Police determined that the temperature on the highway was 116° Fahrenheit. Additional foam was applied to prevent ignition of the fumes from the spilled gasoline.

Traffic was backed up in both directions on the expressway, as well as on Route 106/107. The expressway was closed until after midnight. Residents within a half mile of the accident evacuated their homes. Team members under protection of foam hose lines mounted the trailer and, working with county police E.S.B. officers using air drills and hole saws began cutting six 4" holes in the various compartments. Then using a suction tube, the gasoline was pumped through the holes and off-loaded into a second truck. The off-load was completed around 8:00 p.m. and the tanker was up righted at 9:30 p.m. At 10:00 p.m. hazardous materials operation was terminated, and clean-up operations began.

Bob received a Certificate of Merit for his actions as part of a crew for his efforts on February 27, 2005. The Hicksville Fire Department received a call for a possible cardiac arrest at 355 Newbridge Road in Apt. 67. Upon arrival, Bob noted the patient to be pulseless, not breathing and transmitted a "Code Red". The crew from 939 arrived. Firefighter Wicks and Assistant Chief Korona moved the patient to the floor and started CPR. As other members from the ambulance crew arrived, they took over CPR and assumed compressions and maintained the airway, which became difficult due to the patient's positioning in the room. While basic life support care was established, Lieutenant Farrell began cardiac monitoring and determined that the patient had an agonal rhythm. While the patient was being stabilized, the crew began to prepare for the packaging of the patient by securing the appropriate equipment from the rig. As they were using basic life support maneuvers, the patient went into ventricular fibrillation. After counter shocking, the patient resumed agonal rhythm. Following the defibrillation, the patient was packaged and moved to the ambulance and transported to the hospital when the patient's blood pressure returned to 150 over 90. The patient's status was confirmed by the Emergency Department staff, and it was noted that the patient was connected to a ventilator with stable blood pressure and in sinus tachycardia. The patient was later transferred to the Cardiac Care Unit and then to a medical floor. Within two weeks, she was scheduled to return home. The teamwork and level of skill displayed by the members of the crew on scene contributed to the patient's survival.

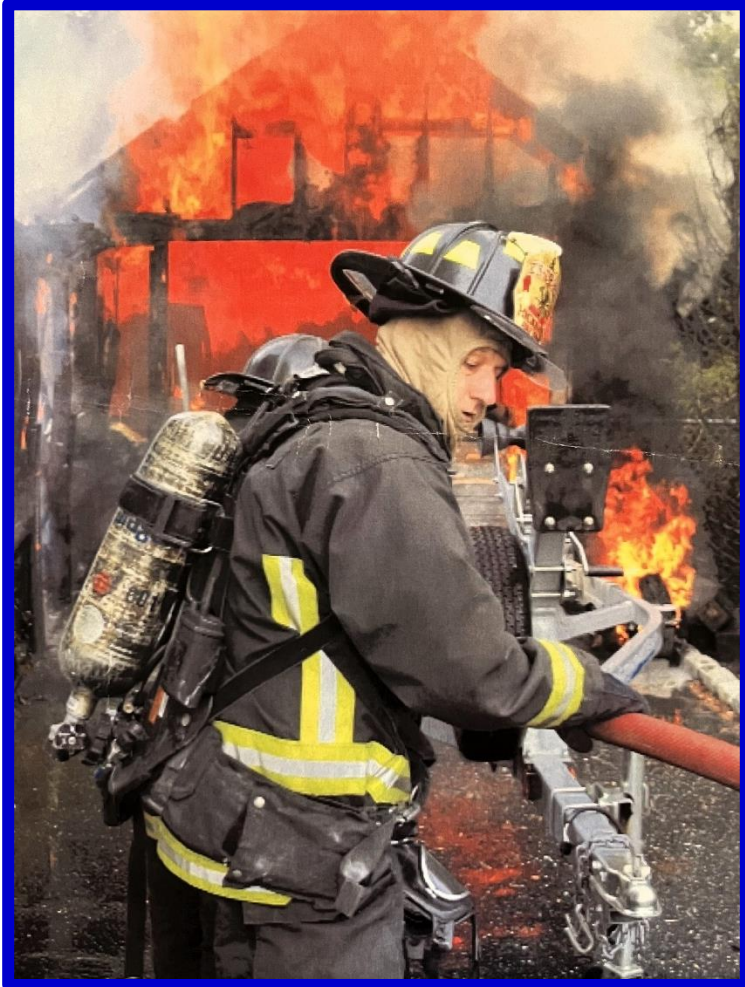
On May 19, 2000, the department Hazardous Materials team received a call for mutual aid from the Melville Fire Department for an 18,000-gallon propane tank leaking. The tank was located at the Huntington Quadrangle on Route 110 and the Long Island Expressway (LIE). Upon arrival, the Hazardous Materials team began conducting downwind monitoring continuously. A shift in the wind could cause a major disruption in the Friday evening rush for both the LIE and Route 110. The tank continued to vent with hand lines being used to disperse the vapors, but this procedure could take days to empty the tank. The decision was made to remove the broken fittings and replace them with caps or shutoffs. Hazardous Materials team members had to climb into the hole where the tank was and get right on top of the leak. Hazardous Materials team members Robert Johnson, John Keyer, Tim Chase, George Howard, Mike Scanlon, and Bob Chiz took turns removing the damaged pipes. Under very dangerous conditions, these members removed broken pipes and properly capped the leaks, while being supported by numerous members of the department on scene, ready to help in any way they could. After four hours, the leak stopped. For their bravery in the face of extreme danger, Chief Robert Chiz, Ex-Captain Robert Johnson, Ex-Captain John Keyer, Ex-Captain Michael Scanlon, firefighter Timothy Chase and the late Ex-Captain George Howard (posthumously) were named

recipients of the Hicksville Fire Department's Class 1 - Henry Gebhardt Award. Other team members who worked at the scene in a support capacity to the above mentioned Gebhardt Award recipients; each received a Unit Citation awarded to personnel whose actions involved in an outstanding fire ground or heavy rescue operation, which depended upon teamwork and cooperation resulting in the protection and or saving of human life.

On June 20, 2001, our department received a special call for mutual aid assistance for Engine 932, from the Huntington Manor Fire Department. Ex-Captain Chiz responded as part of the crew. Upon arrival at the scene, it was observed that there was a large lumberyard fire, inclusive of three structures fully engulfed with fire. Orders were given to secure a water supply and report to the front of the fire building. The crew was able to locate a water supply (hydrant) while two mutual-aid Engine Companies were able to perform change-over operations and assisted in supplying an adequate water supply through 1,400 feet of 5" hose. An additional water supply approximately 1,000 feet from Engine 932, which was also used to feed Engine 932, enabling the engine to utilize a deck-gun operation. While 932 was in operation, the crew was utilized in the rear of the building working with a 2 1/2" hose line to protect exposures, search for additional fire and protect property. Some 10 hours later, the crew was relieved and released late in the afternoon on Sunday. For their actions, the crew went above and beyond what is expected under normal conditions, and used their skills and strength to assist this mutual aid department in their time of need and were awarded Unit Citation for their work.

Bob is proud to serve alongside his son Doug and his son-law, Tom Price, who are also members of Engine Company Seven.







***Served 2 Years***

Robert “Bobby” Lang was born November 18, 1955, in Bethpage, New York and is the son of John and Louise Lang. He joined Hook and Ladder Company 6 in August of 1974. During his tenure in the 70’s, Bobby was an integral part of the “Hicks” Drill Team. After 10 years of serving his community he left the Department to become one of New York City’s Bravest, joining the FDNY, serving for over 2 decades including time spent during the rescue and recovery at Ground Zero. After years of hard work and true dedication he retired in 2005.

Robert married Elizabeth “Betty” Voorhies, (daughter of ex-Chief Mel Voorhies) in 1984. He still resides on Herman Avenue where they raised their two children, Michael, and Kristin. He now shares his life with Christina Neofytides. Michael and his wife, Jaclyn have 4 children: Robert, Luke, Tyler and Antoinette. His daughter Kristin married Douglas Chiz, (son of ex-Chief Robert Chiz) and gave Bobby three grandchildren: Eloise, Emma and Connor. The families remain residents of Hicksville, with Mike and Doug continuing to serve both the FDNY and the Hicksville FD. Following in his father’s footsteps, Michael is an ex-Captain of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1. Bobby’s brother Dave is also a member of Company 1 and a retired Firefighter with the New York City Fire Department.

While still serving the city, Bobby returned to the Department, joining Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 in August of 1994. He was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant before subsequently elected as their Captain.

Bobby was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief 2002 - 2003, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief 2004 - 2005, and 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 2006 - 2007. Robert was elected as the 65<sup>th</sup> Chief Officer in 2008 and 2009. His Assistant Chiefs were Edward Korona, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant, Christopher Moskos, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and Frank McGeough as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief.

Bobby is a past Captain of “Hicks” Drill Team and has had the responsibility of being the team’s driver since 2007. For many years he was an integral part of the Labor Day Parade

& Drill, serving as Chairman in 2001. He was given a lifetime achievement award by the Nassau County Drill Team Association for his years of commitment both on and off the track, an honor that is only presented to one individual each season.

Bobby has been involved in many training committees throughout his years in the Department to teach and pass on his firefighting skills. One of the more unfortunate things associated with the fire service is dealing with the loss of a friend and coworker. In October of 2008, Chief Lang was notified of a workplace fatality of probationary firefighter George Dillman, of Volunteer Hose Company 4. George, employed by Consolidated Edison, was killed while working in an underground electrical structure in Queens. Chief Lang led the members through this difficult time as they participated in the funeral.

Under the direction of Chief Lang, fifty firefighters battled a blaze on November 26, 2009, at the Nassau County Public Works Building on Cantiague Rock Road.

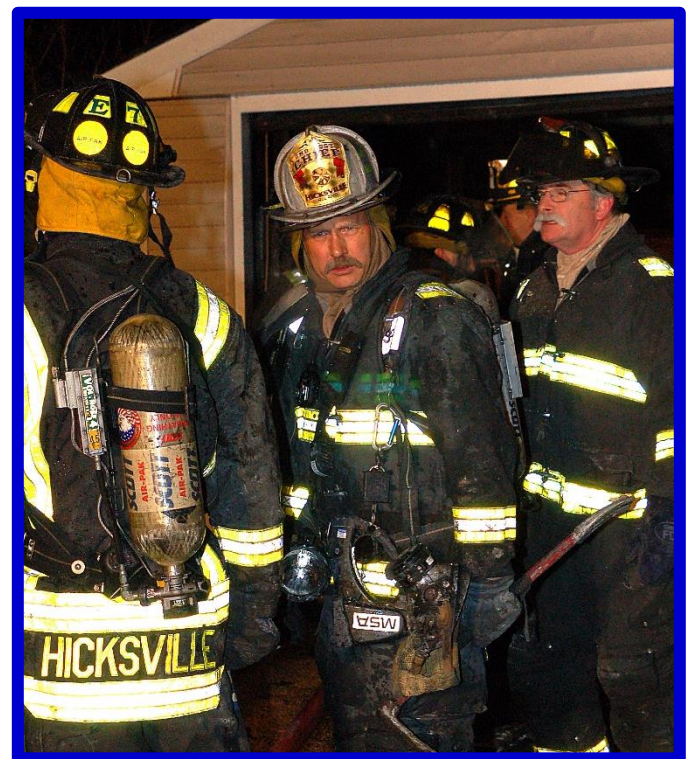
Bobby was presented with the Hicksville Fire Department Henry Gebhardt Award for his quick thinking and actions, and for the great personal risk taken in the saving of a life. The Hicksville Fire Department received a call from Firecom for a report of a house fire at 200 Richard Avenue. Upon arrival 2nd Assistant Chief Robert Lang was flagged down by a frantic teenage female who stated that there was smoke coming from the rear of the house and that the resident was still inside. Chief Lang proceeded to the rear of the house and upon investigation, forced entry into a rear door and noted a heavy smoke condition. Without the use of any personal protective equipment, he proceeded into the apartment to do an initial search. In doing so he located and removed an unconscious, unresponsive female. After exiting the house, he radioed that first aid was needed immediately at the back of the house. He began basic life support and was met by Nassau County Police Officers that had arrived on the scene. The victim was turned over to the Nassau County Police Emergency Services and was transported to Nassau University Medical Center where she was listed in critical condition. As of December 26, 2004, after speaking with the patient's father, it was reported that the female had suffered from smoke inhalation, respiratory burns, second and third degree burns to her hands, chest, and feet. She had been moved from the intensive care unit and was removed from the respirator.

On September 28, 2020, an alarm was transmitted at 0525 hours for a reported house fire at 9 Sutherland Road, with possible people trapped. A Signal 10 was transmitted and Captain Moskos II directed two firefighters to wrap the hydrant and stretch an attack line to

the front door. This house was set way back off the street behind another house that fronted on Sutherland Road. Entry was not possible from the front door, so Captain Moskos and Lieutenant Andrew Niemczyk and crew forced the side door on exposure 4 side to gain entry. Moskos and Niemczyk were met with a push of heavy smoke and heat as they entered. A short way in the female victim was found in the kitchen on the floor unconscious. Captain Moskos grabbed the victim, along with Lieutenant Niemczyk removed the victim from the structure. Once outside, although unconscious, the victim was breathing. At that point, they turned the patient over to waiting EMS personnel.

In 2010, Robert was elected to serve as Fire Commissioner of the Hicksville Fire District serving two 5-Year terms, serving as the Chairman in 2013 and 2019.







***Served 2 Years***

Edward Korona Jr. was born July 7, 1962, in East Meadow and grew up in Levittown. He is the son of Edward Sr. and Florence. He married DeAnna in September of 1986. Edward was employed by Nassau County for over 40 years, working as a Supervisor in the Printing & Graphics Department, as well as a Deputy Commissioner of Nassau County Emergency Management and served as a Deputy Chief at the Nassau County Fire Service Academy. He lived on Bobwhite Lane in Hicksville.

Ex-Chief Korona started his volunteer career as a Cadet (Junior Firefighter) with the Levittown Fire Department and was very active in the Junior Firefighter program before he moved to Hicksville.

Chief Korona joined the department in June 1988 as a member of Volunteer Hose Company 4 under the command of Captain Gene Pietzak. After just completing his probationary period, he was asked by Captain Bob Becker to assist with the department's Labor Day Committee where he continued to serve for many years. In 1989 Ed was chosen to lead the department as Grand Marshal and Chairman of the 70th Annual Labor Day Parade & Drill by Chief LaNasa.

In 1990 Ed was elected as Corresponding Secretary to the department. Over the years Ed served on the 100th Anniversary Committee in 1993 and co-authored the department's history book along with Chief Karl Schweitzer. In 1995 Ed was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant to Hose Company 4 and was later elected from 1997-1999 as its Captain.

Edward Korona, Jr., was elected 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 2004 – 2005, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief 2006 – 2007, and as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief 2008 – 2009, before he was elected as the 66th Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department in 2010 - 2011. Edward's Assistant Chiefs were Christopher Moskos, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant, Frank McGeough, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and Richard Diaz, 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant.

In 2010 Chief Korona announced that they would no longer sponsor the annual Labor Day Parade. The 2009 parade was the last one. The first Labor Day Parade and Drill started in

the mid-1920s and at one time the parade consisted of six divisions with almost 50 fire departments marching and now the committee was hard-pressed to get 20 departments to parade. The parade and drill were held as a fundraiser, and in recent years, it had cost the department to run the event. The drill portion was dropped in 2005 under Chief Doucette because the grandstands did not comply with OSHA standards.

Over the years Eddie received numerous firematic and service awards and served on the Department Training Committee for many years and was appointed to chair that committee from 1996 until 2004 when he was elected 3rd Assistant Chief. In addition, Eddie was a member of the Department Hazardous Materials Response Team and was a member of the Rescue Squad (EMS) where he served 9 years as an Emergency Medical Technician. He was also a member of the Department's Fire Police Squad.

As a Firefighter, Eddie received an EMS Award for his actions taken on March 22, 1993. The Hicksville Fire Department responded to a reported cardiac arrest at 136 First Street. Firefighter John DeLellis an EMT, first upon the victim, discovered that she was in cardiac arrest. Firefighter DeLellis immediately started CPR and continued until the arrival of his fellow rescuers. The arrival of Unit 937 with Lieutenant Doucette, Firefighter Korona and Firefighter Hudson, all EMTs, brought much needed assistance to the scene and allowed them to take over CPR from Firefighter DeLellis. With no further rescue assistance responding to the scene, these members continued CPR and packaged the patient for transport to the Hospital. The patient was placed in the Ambulance where CPR and basic life support skills were continued, and the patient was turned over to Hospital staff and a follow-up on her condition 2 days later revealed that she was in ICU and had survived this medical emergency.

In 1993, firefighter Edward Korona was presented with a Department Service Award for his research and authoring of the 100th Anniversary History Book. He along with Assistant Chief Schweitzer formulated and compiled information for the writing of the Hicksville Fire Department's 100th Anniversary Historical Journal. This historical journal would turn out to become the most comprehensive and concise history ever produced on the history of the Hicksville Fire Department. The task of putting this document together required firefighter Korona to spend many hundreds of hours researching information, meeting with local historians, visiting local libraries and having to travel hundreds of miles upstate to visit museums and to speak with past Hicksville residents. All this time did not come easy and required Eddie to take personal time off from his place of employment. After many hours reviewing slides, photographs and over 10,000 photocopies of news clippings from 9 different

publications dating from 1890 through 1992, firefighter Korona's task was now to layout and edit this historical journal. In December 1993, after 4 years of research, typing text, editing and re-editing, the finished version of the Hicksville Fire Department's - First One Hundred Years, an historical journal, which consists of over 300 pages was finally completed and put to print.

Over the years with the Hicksville Fire Department, Eddie received numerous firematic and service awards including responding to the Avianca plane crash in 1990 and the Suffolk Wildfires in 1995.

Captain Korona was awarded a Unit Citation for his work on Friday, August 21, 1998, when the Hicksville Fire Department was called to assist the Jericho Fire Department for an overturned gasoline truck on the Long Island Expressway. Upon arrival at the scene, it was unknown how much product was in the tanker since its driver sustained injuries and was transported to the hospital. A Hazardous Material Command post was established, and a review of the load and delivery tickets concluded that the truck was carrying approximately 10,000 gallons of gasoline. Various operations were being conducted which included the stabilization of the truck, monitoring of storm drains, the evacuation of residents and the cutting of six 4" holes into the side of the tanker and offloading its contents into a second truck while foam was being applied. Periodic meetings at the command post, among the various agencies involved allowed for good communication during this large-scale incident that lasted approximately ten hours and started on a hot and sunny day.

Captain Edward Korona was awarded a Certificate of Merit for his actions at a house fire in 1999. On November 17, 1999, The Hicksville Fire Dispatcher received a call for a report of a house fire at 46 Andover Lane with the possibility of a victim trapped. First members on scene, proceeded to attempt a rescue by trying to enter the front door. They were forced away due to the heavy volume of fire and smoke pushing from the front of the residence. They went to the rear and kicked in the rear door and again were met with heavy smoke and heat. Engine 932 arrived at the scene and picked up a hydrant and the line was stretched to the front door. As the hose crew entered the front door, they encountered a heavy volume of fire in the hallway. At that time a flashover occurred throwing the hose crew and the officer out onto the front lawn and the search team was thrown out the rear door. The Second due Engine 937, arrived with Captain Korona as the officer in charge. He immediately split his crew with one stretching a second line. His crew immediately started ventilation on exposures 2 and 3. Engine 2's crew regrouped and proceeded to take the line in the rear door of exposure 4 through the hallway

into the kitchen, hitting the heavy volume of fire in the kitchen and dining room. Captain Doughty and Korona entered the kitchen with the second line and advanced up the hallway and assisted the search crew. A second crew entered through a window on exposure 2 side without the benefit of a hand line and started a search of the first floor with heavy smoke, heat, and fire above them. At the same time, a third crew entered the rear door with the protection of a hand line in place and started a search for the victim. The three search teams met in the middle of the house and located the victim. They then proceeded to remove the victim with a heavy fire condition above them. The victim was handed over to an awaiting NCPD ambulance.

Eddie received a Certificate of Merit for his actions as part of a crew for his efforts on February 27, 2005. The Hicksville Fire Department received a call for a possible cardiac arrest at 355 Newbridge Road in Apt. 67. Upon arrival, Assistant Chief Chiz noted the patient to be pulseless, not breathing and transmitted a "Code Red". The crew from 939 arrive, Firefighter Wicks and Assistant Chief Korona moved the patient to the floor and started CPR. As other members from the ambulance crew arrived, they took over CPR and assumed compressions and maintained the airway, which became difficult due to the patient's positioning in the room. While basic life support care was established, Lieutenant Farrell began cardiac monitoring and determined that the patient had an agonal rhythm. While the patient was being stabilized, the crew began to prepare for the packaging of the patient by securing the appropriate equipment from the rig. As they were using basic life support maneuvers, the patient went into ventricular fibrillation. After counter shocking, the patient resumed agonal rhythm. Following the defibrillation, the patient was packaged and moved to the ambulance and transported to the hospital when the patient's blood pressure returned to a pulse of 150 over 90. The patient's status was confirmed by the Emergency Department staff, and it was noted that the patient was connected to a ventilator with stable blood pressure and in sinus tachycardia. The patient was later transferred to the Cardiac Care Unit and then to a medical floor. Within two weeks, she was scheduled to return home. The teamwork and level of skill displayed by the members of the crew on scene contributed to the patient's survival.

Chief Korona served on the Department Training Committee for many years and was appointed to chair from 1996 until 2004 when he was elected 3rd Assistant Chief. In addition, Eddie was a member of the Department Hazardous Materials Team and was a member of the Rescue Squad (EMS) and served 9 years as an Emergency Medical Technician. He was also a member of the Department's Fire Police Squad. Ex-Chief Korona had a love for fire department history, he was the historian for Volunteer Hose Company 4 and helped in the restoration of the Hose Cart that would be part of the Department's Anniversary Parade and now proudly sits

on display at Station 4. He would author various historical programs and coordinate the display cases at Station 4 and because of his background in printing, Eddie was the “go-to” for all the Department’s printing needs.

Ex-Chief Korona was instrumental in fund raising activities at the Department level, within Volunteer Hose Company 4 and while a member of the Rescue Squad. Everything from Craft Fairs to BBQ Cook Off’s, Car Washes, Car Shows, Baseball Card shows and much more. Eddie would have a hand in making them successful.

In July of 2024, the department was saddened to learn of the passing of Chief Korona who unexpectedly passed away at the age of 61. With him throughout his career has been his wife, DeAnna, and their children, Devin, and Taylor.

It takes a special dedication, a strong desire to help others and a tireless sense of community to forsake precious time with family and friends to respond to the call that a neighbor is in need. Ex-Chief Edward Korona, Jr. is such a member; throughout his years of devoted service he has heroically performed, above and beyond the call of duty, those responsibilities which define the task of fire protection.





***Served 2 Years***

Christopher Moskos was born August 13, 1964, and is the son of Charles and Joan (Foley) Moskos. He married Thea Hans on February 20, 1988. Christopher was employed by the Hicksville Water District working as a Plant Operator until he retired in 2021. Christopher and Thea live on Myers Avenue.

Christopher Moskos joined as member of Emergency Company Five (5) in July of 1983, following a brief stint with the Junior Firefighting group in 1981 and 1982. While a member of Emergency Company 5 he was elected 2nd Lieutenant, a position he relinquished when he decided to join his brother, John by transferring into Floodlight/Heavy Rescue Company 8 in January of 1988.

Following his transfer to Company 8, Chris was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant for the term of 1992 and 1993, then elected to 1st Lieutenant in 1994 and 1995 and subsequently was elected Captain in 1996 and again in 1997.

Company 8 again tapped into Chris' experience, and he was elected to a second term as Captain in 2005. After serving his second term as Captain, Chris was then elected to the position of 3rd Assistant Chief in 2006 and 2007. He continued his ascension through the ranks of 2nd Assistant Chief in 2008 and 2009, and 1st Assistant Chief from 2010 - 2011. In December, Chris was elected as the 67<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Hicksville Fire Department. His Assistant Chiefs were, Frank McGeough, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant, Richard Diaz, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and Robert Telender Jr. as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant.

An early morning fire, at the height of a snowstorm, destroyed the offices and shop of the Pioneer Window Co. located at 15 Frederick Place. The facility is located across from the IHOP restaurant on Old Country Road. When the alarm was reported at 4:11 a.m. the fire was already throughout the building.

Firefighters were called out to the Town of Oyster Bay Senior Citizen's complex on



Newbridge Road on August 8, 2012. A fire started in the second-floor apartment where the homeowner suffered smoke inhalation and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns. The fire was contained to the single apartment but not before smoke and water damaged several other units.

On November 25<sup>th</sup> one firefighter was injured battling a blaze that caused "extensive damage" to an auto service center. The fire was reported at the Advanced Auto Service Center on Old Country and Newbridge Road at 7:45 p.m.. Firefighters contained the blaze before it spread to a nearby gas station. Firefighters found heavy smoke coming from the repair center. The Advanced Auto Service Center specializes in maintenance and repairs, has an inventory of used cars and trucks for sale, and has a gas station.

A fire in the kitchen at the Royal Bukhara Grill at 70 Broadway was quickly brought under control by the building's automatic sprinkler system, preventing what could have been a major downtown blaze. Hicksville's dispatcher received the alarm at 1:40 p.m. on July 31. Damage (mostly water) was confined to the kitchen area.

In 1987, Chris was recognized as part of a Unit Citation for his role in an EMS Incident for a non-breathing resident on Glenbrook Road. In the early afternoon on February 10, 1987, the Hicksville Fire Department received a call for a woman passed out. As part of the crew on 935 responded to 42 Glenbrook Road they encountered a woman in her early to mid-70's in full cardiac arrest. On the scene administering C.P.R. was Lieutenant William McKee and another civilian. The crew from 935, including Chris relieved the two men to continue C.P.R. as the officer on 935 requested a second alarm for an AMT and an ambulance. The entire crew continued their first aid efforts until they received vital signs.

In 1990, Chris was recognized by the Knights of Columbus for his participation in the Avianca Airline crash.

During his 29-year tenure in the department Chris served as Chairman of the 1995 Labor Day Parade and Drill and served as a member of the Parade Committee since 1989. In 1993 he was chosen as the Chairman of the Departments 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade Committee. Chris has also served on various committees, such as the Hazardous Materials Response Team, "Hicks" Drill Team, and "Hazzbeens" Old Fashioned Drill Team.

A proud moment in Chris' career came in 2009, when his son, Christopher, was sworn into Floodlight/Heavy Rescue Company 8, following in his footsteps.



***Served 2 Years***

Francis McGeough was born December 6, 1974, and is the son of Francis and Ellen McGeough. He married Sara in 2015. Frank is employed by PSEGLI working as an overhead lineman and lives on Ballpark Lane in Hicksville.

Frank is the brother of Chief Patrick (Paddy) McGeough. Frank joined Independent Engine and Hose Company 2 in May of 1993 and was assigned badge 168. He would be elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant and subsequently as their Captain in 2002 and 2003.

Frank would then continue his rise through the ranks and was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 2008 and 2009, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 2010 and 2011 and 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 2012 and 2013. He was then elected as the 68<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief in 2014 and 2015. His Assistant Chiefs were Richard Diaz, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant, Robert Telender Jr., 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and for the first time in the department's history, the members elected a female to the position of Assistant Chief. Newly elected Elizabeth Flahavan, a 26-year member and former Captain of Company 8, would serve as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant.

On January 19, 2015, the department responded to the John Deere store on Old Country Road. On arrival heavy smoke was pushing out of the store and there was a fire in the garage area in the rear. While damage was kept to the rear storage area, the fire loss was considerable to the lost equipment.

Chief McGeough was saddened to learn of the untimely and unexpected passing of Stephen "Flounder" Ocuto from Independent Engine and Hose Company 2. Stephen was a 20-year veteran who got his start with Emergency Company 5 and was a Nassau County Sheriff. He left behind a wife and two small children.

Chief McGeough recognized the need to act and meet the needs of the community by addressing the emergency medical service. He created a committee to evaluate the current



and future status of its EMS Service. He charged them with researching, investigating and making recommendations on how to create, establish and assign a group of members that will aid in the response of the emergency medical services within the Department. In 2015, the Chiefs Office adopted EMS Squad Rules and Regulations based on the findings of a committee overseen by the Chiefs Office to explore the potential benefit of chartering a Ninth Company to enhance the level of EMS service to the community. The Committee presented its findings and made recommendations at a Department Meeting, and the membership adopted those recommendations via a vote on the floor. This was the second attempt to reorganize the EMS service. There was a failed attempt in 1991 and in 1996 the Rescue Squad was replaced with an EMS Committee.

Multiple calls were received for a fire in the rear of H&Y Marketplace on South Oyster Bay Road on June 11, 2015. On arrival, firefighters encountered a fire in the 10X20 storage containers that extended into the rear of the building.

On August 15, 2015, a small, single-engine plane crashed onto a Long Island railroad crossing killing the pilot, injuring a passenger, and shutting down service on a branch of the nation's busiest commuter rail line. The plane crashed at a railway crossing between the Hicksville and Bethpage stations of the Long Island Railroad around 7:45 a.m. The impact left a pile of metal that was burning with one of the wings torn off, and the other mangled with the body of the plane. The Hawker Beechcraft BE35 aircraft departed from Francis Gabreski Airport in Westhampton Beach and the pilot reported an issue and was trying to get to Republic Airport in Farmingdale at the time of the crash.

Chief McGeough responded to a school bus fire on September 2, 2015, finding a minibus fully engulfed in fire. Several children were pulled from the bus before the fire spread and taken to area hospitals.

On Wednesday, June 20, 2001, our department received a special call for mutual aid assistance for Engine 932, from the Huntington Manor Fire Department. Captain Frank McGeough responded as part of the crew. Upon arrival at the scene, it was observed that there was a large lumberyard fire, inclusive of three structures fully engulfed with fire. Orders were given to secure a water supply and report to the front of the fire building. The crew was able to locate a water supply (hydrant) while two mutual-aid Engine Companies were able to perform change-over operations and assisted in supplying an adequate water supply through 1,400 feet of 5" hose. An additional water supply approximately 1,000 feet from Engine 932, which was also used to feed Engine 932, enabling the engine to utilize a deck-gun operation. While

932 was in operation, the crew was utilized in the rear of the building working with a 2 1/2" hose line to protect exposures, search for additional fire and protect property. Some 10 hours later, the crew was relieved and released late in the afternoon on Sunday. For their actions, the crew went above and beyond what is expected under normal conditions, used their skills and strength to assist this mutual aid department in their time of need and were awarded a Unit Citation for their work.

Frank was a pivotal member of "Hicks" Drill Team from 1993 through 2008. Additionally, Frank remains a member of the Department's Ice Hockey Team since 1995.



***Served 2 Years***

Richard Diaz was born July 20, 1962, and is the son of Roland and Vera (Jelic) Diaz. He lives on Lowell Street. Before retirement, Richard had been employed professionally by the New York City Housing Authority where he had been a supervisor for 25 years. He oversaw the operation and maintenance of the mechanical equipment for 154 Community and Senior Centers and 13 NYPD Housing Bureau Police Service Areas throughout the 5 boroughs.

Richard "Rich" joined Emergency Company 5 on April 5, 1981, and was assigned Badge 977. He was elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in 1991 and 1992, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant 1993 and 1994, before subsequently elected as the 44<sup>th</sup> Captain in 1995 and 1996.

Additionally, he was elected again to serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in 2006 and 2007, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant 2008 and 2009.

Rich was elected 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief in 2010 and 2011; 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 2012 and 2013; 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 2014 and 2015. He was elected the 69<sup>th</sup> Chief of Department in 2016 and 2017. His Assistant Chiefs were Robert Telender Jr., 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant, Elizabeth Flahavan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant and William Efinger, 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant.

On June 21, 2016, the Hicksville Fire Department responded to a house fire on 1st Street by Jerusalem Avenue. A mother and daughter suffered smoke inhalation, and the mother also suffered minor burns. Both were taken to NUMC by NCPD Ambulance. Hicksville firefighters quickly had the fire under control.

On January 26, 2017, the department was alerted for smoke coming from a home in the area of Georgia Street. On arrival, police and firefighters were notified that all residents were out of the home, but the family dogs were still inside. Aggressive moves by incoming firefighters and the local police officers were able to get all three dogs from the house and resuscitated them once outside.

Chief Diaz joined the members of Independent Engine and Hose Company 2 to help celebrate their 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to bestow the title of Honorary Captain to Michael Kretz.

The department responded to a worker trapped in a 15-foot wood pile on Cantigue Rock Road on August 27, 2016. The worker operating a chain saw cut his leg and Chief Diaz had to use Ladder 6 and set up a technical rescue to remove the worker while EMS personnel applied a tourniquet.

The department responded to a working fire on Levittown Parkway on April 12, 2017. A heavy smoke condition was visible on arrival with engine companies quickly stretching handlines to douse the flames. Damage was limited, but not before several mutual aid companies were called upon.

In April, Chief Diaz received word from the New York City Fire Department that William Tolley was killed in the line of duty. Firefighter Tolley was a former member of Heavy Rescue Company 8 and a member of Ladder 135 in Queens. He was the 1,147<sup>th</sup> member of the FDNY killed in the Line of Duty. Chief Diaz was saddened to learn of the passing of 52-year member and Honorary Chief Conrad Strauch from Engine Company 7.

On June 24, 2017, Luigi Q Restaurant on South Oyster Bay was gutted by fire after a call was received around 12:30 p.m. Firefighters arrived to find smoke and flames coming from the roof. The restaurant was closed at the time. Firefighters from several other departments had trouble getting to the fire, which appeared to originate from just under the roof. Firefighters battled the blaze for about two hours.

At the September 11<sup>th</sup> ceremonies in 2017, Chief Diaz helped dedicate a tree near the 9/11 memorial at Station 3. In October of 2001, a pear tree was discovered at Ground Zero that was severely damaged, with snapped roots and burned and broken branches. The tree was removed from the rubble and cared for. After its recovery and rehabilitation, the tree was returned to the Memorial in 2010. The tree now has new, smooth limbs extended from the stumps, creating a visible demarcation between the trees past and present. At the dedication, the tree will now stand as a living reminder of resilience, survival, and rebirth.

In September of 2016, Chief Diaz joined with the Officers and Members of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 to accept delivery of their Sutphen Ladder. This 100-foot aerial tower with 2,000 gpm, four door tilt cab, has a Cummins engine with 247-inch wheelbase,



stainless steel body, fully equipped with 217 feet ground ladders.

Ex-Chief Diaz took on administrative duties within the Department and served as one of the Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP) Directors for 7 years. He took on medical responsibilities and served as a New York State Certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

Chief Diaz was a member of the "Hicks" Drill Team and the "Hazzbeens" Old Fashioned Drill Team. Additionally, he was a member of the Tactical Rescue Team. He served on many Company committees.

He became a member of the Department's Hazardous Materials Response team in 1989 and has served the team as a technician for over 25 years.

As part of his extensive volunteer career, Rich kept himself active and is a qualified chauffeur on many pieces of apparatus and has always kept his skills sharp through many training sessions over the years.

Rich was recognized with a Unit Citation in 2006 for his role in a propane response to the Melville Fire Department.

On May 25, 2014, Chief Diaz was awarded an EMS Unit Citation for his actions at a "Code Red" at 754 South Oyster Bay Road. Upon Chief Diaz' arrival he met up with Ex-Captain Granville and grabbed the AED, Oxygen bottle and BLS bag from his vehicle and went into the house. He checked to see if he was breathing, and he was not. He then checked for a pulse and did not find one. Captain Granville and Chief Diaz moved the aided from the couch to the floor where they immediately started CPR on the aided. Captain Granville started to connect the AED. A few minutes later Ex-Captain William Efinger and EMS member Kathy Scott arrived on the scene and took over. Kathy Scott took over CPR, William Efinger finished connecting the AED and analyzed the aided. The AED indicated that they continue CPR. Chief Diaz then retrieved the Ambu bag from his BLS bag and gave it to William Efinger who started to bag him. William Efinger analyzed the aided again and the AED advised to shock which was then delivered. The patient was loaded on the reeves and removed from the house onto the trundle. Once in the back of the ambulance the aided appeared to be breathing shallow. Once in the ambulance William Efinger obtained IV access. CPR was continued by Kathy Scott and airway management continued by Michael Epifania. The AED advised another shock which was then delivered by William Efinger. Upon arrival at North Shore Plainview ER the patient had a pulse

and was spontaneously breathing. The patient was transferred to North Shore Manhasset Hospital later that evening.

On August 22, 2017, the Hicksville Fire Department was alerted for a signal 9 for a "laceration from glass" at the MET Foodtown supermarket at 530 South Broadway. First arriving units, 9399 staffed by the District Medic were met with an adult male who was unconscious and lying in a large pool of his own blood. The patient presented unconscious with heavy bleeding from multiple deep lacerations including a severed artery in his right arm. Complicating the situation, a torrential downpour of rain began spreading blood and making it difficult to properly treat the patient. The EMT-CC took one side of the patient, and the District Medic took the other. Pressure and "quick clot" bandages were applied. Chief Diaz and Assistant Chief Flahavan began to assist with patient care assessment. Ex-Chief Gerard O'Brien provided much needed light. Ambulance 9323 arrived and the EMT came to assist by applying a tourniquet to the patient's right arm which was now beginning to bleed through the bandages. An IV lifeline was established as the patient regained consciousness and agitated. Medication was administered to calm the individual who was transported to Nassau University Medical Center in serious condition. For his actions Chief Diaz was awarded a Certificate of Merit.

Ex-Chief Diaz would attain Life Active status in April 2002 and remains an active member and chauffeur on 935 and with the Hazardous Materials Response Team.





***Served 7 Months***

Robert Telender Jr. was born in 1972, and he is the son of Robert and Rita Telender Sr.. Robert graduated from Hicksville Senior High School in 1991 and is employed by the Hicksville Water District.

On February 24, 1991, Robert joined as a third-generation firefighter, his grandfather, Walter, and his father Robert Sr., were both members of Chemical Company 3. He was assigned badge 127.

Robert served as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant 1995 - 1996, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant 1997 - 1998 and was subsequently elected as Captain in 1999 - 2001. Robert was elected again to serve as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in 2010 and 2011 and again as Captain in 2012.

In 2013 Robert was elected as 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief and again in 2014. He would go onto serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 2015 and 2016, then elected to 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief in 2016 - 2017. In 2018, Robert was elected as the 70<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Department. His Assistant Chiefs were Gary Lewis, William Efinger, Joseph DiFronzo. He became the 1<sup>st</sup> Chief to serve the position that his grandfather Walter Telender did in the 1960's.

After taking up from a previous alarm, on March 31, 2018, the department was alerted for a dryer fire on Nicole Court in the Cambridge Court Apartment complex. Arriving units reported smoke showing and Engine 3 secured a water supply and stretched a hoseline to the second floor of the two-story complex. The fire was quickly extinguished but not before smoke and water damaged two additional apartments.

On April 18, 2018, the department responded to a building fire at Sakana Chinese and Japanese restaurant on Broadway. Arriving units found smoke showing from the roof of the closed restaurant and evacuated an apartment over the store.

Chief Telender joined with Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 to help celebrate their 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Peppercorns in Hicksville. Company 1 was organized in 1868 by John Underhill.

In July 2018, the Hicksville Fire Department Junior program won “Youth Group of the Year” from the New York State Firemen’s Association (FASNY). This group organized in 1971 consists of 23 members who range in age from 14 to 18. The leadership team conducts monthly meetings and schedules weekly drills with the various companies within the department. They train in skills using SCBA such as reduced profiles, FAST operations, search operations, mayday procedures, forced entry, hand lines, ground ladders, tower ladders, and hazmat operations. The preservation of the brotherhood of firefighting is a benchmark for other youth groups. The Hicksville Fire Department Junior program has positively impacted the community, as the current Hicksville Fire Department membership boasts two past Juniors as Chief, three past Juniors as Commissioners and five past members serving as Company Officers. The Juniors are led by advisors, William Blazo and Mike Scanlon, both Ex-Captains.

Chief Telender assigned Ex-Captain Tim Meyer as the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Chairman. In celebration of the department’s 125th anniversary between July 12<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>, the Hicksville Fire Department held a four-day carnival located across from the firehouse on East Marie Street with a wide selection of delicious food, live entertainment, and carnival games. On July 14<sup>th</sup>, the combined Anniversary Parade was part of the Nassau County Firefighter’s Parade. There was nightly entertainment including *Band 231*, *Overdrive* and *Stagecoach*.

Chief Telender was an active member of the Hicks Drill Team for many years. He attained Department Life Active status in 2012. In August of 2018, Robert stepped aside as Chief.







***Served 18 Months***

Robert Chiz was born August 18, 1954. He was adopted by his loving parents, Frank and Margaret and brought home to 19 Preston Lane where he still lives today. Bob graduated from Hicksville Senior High School in 1972. In October of 1976 he married his lovely wife Mary O'Malley. They have three children, Peter, Douglas, and Linda along with three grandchildren Liam, Colin, and Eloise. Bob worked in the electronics industry for the private sector most of his career, then was employed by the Town of Oyster Bay Division of Public Safety and currently working at Nassau County Office of Emergency Management.

This was Bob's second stint as Chief of Department. The Department elected Bob as Chief in August of 2018, when Chief Robert Telender Jr. stepped down. The first few months back in the office were extremely busy for Bob and the department. The first two weeks the department battled two house fires, a motor vehicle accident with entrapment and then in early October battled another working house fire.

On Tuesday September 4, 2018, the department responded to a house fire on Cantiague Rock Road. Firefighters arrived at a heavy fire condition on the second floor. One firefighter sustained minor injuries battling the blaze. Mutual aid came from Westbury, Jericho, Syosset, and Bethpage. The fire, under the command of Bob, was brought under control in 30 minutes with overhaul taking an additional hour.

On Friday afternoon September 14, 2018, the department was alerted of a house fire on Cortland Avenue. The arriving crews were met with heavy smoke coming from the two-story home with a fire located on the second floor. The fire was quickly extinguished, and no injuries were reported.

On Thursday September 27, 2018, at 05:48 a.m., the department was alerted to a motor vehicle accident with entrapment on South Broadway. Crews extricated the passenger and transported him to Nassau University Medical Center where he succumbed to his injuries.

At 23:50 hours, on October 5, 2018, the department was alerted to a reported house fire on Brooks Street. Upon arrival, Bob transmitted a Signal 10, stating a fire on the second floor of a 2-story split level private dwelling. First arriving Engine, 932 stretched 2 lines. The second line being operated by member of the second arriving engine, 933. The fire was knocked down quickly and reported under control in about 40 minutes. Neighboring departments from Plainview, Bethpage, and Levittown supplied Mutual Aid to the scene.

On Saturday, March 9, 2019, at 7:33 a.m. the dispatcher received a report of a bedroom fire at 69 Bunker Lane. Bob was first on scene and reported a fully involved working house fire and a signal 10 was transmitted. Heavy volume of fire was throughout the structure, with flames extending out the front of the house. An aggressive attack was made, and the fire was knocked down. The structure received major damage. Mutual aid from surrounding departments were assisting at the scene and covering the district. Two occupants were transported to the hospital with non-life threatening injuries. Also, a pet dog perished in the fire.

Early Tuesday morning on April 2, 2019, the department was alerted to a van fire. The dispatcher received multiple calls stating that the van was very close to the house. Assistant Chief Moskos arrived and reported a fully involved van fire with extension into the house. Upon arrival Bob assumed command and a signal 10 was transmitted. First arriving Engine 933 stretched two lines and made a quick and aggressive attack, which kept the main body of fire to the garage.

At 07:47 hours on April 4, 2019, the department was dispatched to a reported house fire with person(s) trapped at 54 Park Avenue. While in route the dispatcher notified Bob that a hoarder's condition might exist in the home. When Bob turned onto Park Avenue, he reported smoke showing. Immediately upon arrival, the chief transmitted a signal 10 advising that it was a 2-story private dwelling with a heavy smoke condition coming from it. Also, at the same time, District Paramedic Scott DiPino arrived at the scene.

Several civilians at the scene stated that there was indeed a woman in the house. Bob transmitted that a person had been confirmed trapped inside the house and that he was giving up command and attempting a rescue. During this time other civilians reported to Scott that they last saw the occupant on the #4 side of the building yelling for help, out of a bedroom window. Bob attempted to make entry into the home through the front door, this effort was unsuccessful due to the amount of clutter blocking the door. However Bob did not know the front door was blocked at the time. During this time Paramedic Scott DiPino had gone

to the #4 side of the building and was joined by Bob. The occupant then appeared at the window and began screaming for help. She informed Bob and Scott that her egress from the house was cut off by smoke, heavy clutter conditions, and a fire which was rapidly spreading. Noting that the conditions inside the residence were deteriorating, and that the occupant was in obvious distress, Scott instructed the women to extend her arms which he grabbed, and Bob assisted by grabbing her hips and legs pulling the woman from the window to safety. Once lowered from the window she was moved out of harm's way onto the ground several feet away from the residence. Bob, once back at his vehicle, then radioed to the dispatcher that the occupant had been removed, and that she was the only person in the residence. Bob then established command, and Scott assessed the patient and her injuries (smoke inhalation, cuts, scrapes, etc.) The occupant was removed to ambulance 9319 when it arrived and was transported to NUMC for further care and treatment.

At the time the first engine arrived, the room that the occupant was removed from, was fully charged. Excessive clutter in the house made it difficult for firefighters to make an aggressive interior attack and contributed to a lengthy overhaul process. Access to the second floor could only be made by ladder through the second-floor window and the basement stairs were also blocked. In other rooms you couldn't walk through as there was clutter piled about four feet high in every room including the kitchen where the fire originated. Also, two dogs were located and removed from the house. Unfortunately, one dog expired on-scene. The other was immediately transported to an emergency veterinarian for further care. Numerous mutual-aid departments were at the scene as well as standing-by. Also, at the scene were Nassau County Police, Nassau County Ambulance Bureau, Nassau County Arson Bomb, Nassau County Fire Marshal, and Town of Oyster Bay Building Department.

Bob and Scott were each awarded for their heroic and lifesaving actions by the Hicksville Fire Department's Class 3 - Henry Gebhardt Award and Nassau County Fire Commission Bronze Medal of Valor.

On Monday, April 29, 2019, the fire department was alerted to a reported building fire. First arriving unit Engine 933 was met with a heavy smoke condition at the front of the building and began to stretch two hand lines. Upon arrival at the scene Bob notified dispatch of a signal 10 building fire. Upon entry crews were met with heavy fire and quickly deteriorating conditions inside. A few minutes after making the entry Bob gave the order for all crews to evacuate the building and go into a defensive operation. The entire building was destroyed and there was a partial collapse of the roof.

On Thursday, May 2, 2019, at around 12:50 p.m., a Hicksville woman died after firefighters pulled her out of the second floor of her cluttered, burning home on Ketcham Avenue. She had been quickly found in the bathroom after neighbors told firefighters there was someone inside, but efforts to revive her at the scene proved futile. There was smoke coming out of the second-floor window with no visible fire outside the windows at that time. Firefighters stretched a hose line into the house from the front door but had to deal with trash, bottles, and items in the way, including on the staircase. The clutter hampered the advancing of the line. Once firefighters were able to get up to the second floor, there was still extreme clutter there, but they were able to knock the fire down. The fire was declared under control in about half an hour, but there was an extended period doing overhaul because of the extreme clutter conditions. The woman was taken to Nassau University Medical Center, where she was declared dead.

The department responded to a reported building fire on West John Street on June 22, 2019. Engine 933 arrived to heavy smoke coming from a single-story commercial building. As crews made entry into the building with multiple handlines, the rear of the building became fully involved and all members were pulled for an exterior attack with master streams from Hicksville Ladder 931, Syosset Ladder 582 and handlines. It took about an hour to bring the fire under control with mutual aid from Westbury.

At 10:20 am on Saturday, June 29, 2019, the department responded to multiple calls for a house fire on Boxwood Lane. Bob, upon arrival, found an exterior fire had been knocked down by neighbors with a garden hose and buckets of water from the backyard swimming pool. The fire had minor extension into the home but caused major damage to the two-story house.

At 6:21 pm on Monday, July 22, 2019, a home, located at the intersection of Notre Dame Avenue and Desmond Place, caught fire after it was struck by lightning at the start of heavy rains and severe thunderstorms. Upon arrival Bob reported a fire in the attic of the three-story home and transmitted a signal 10. Crews extinguished the fire, but the home was heavily damaged. The Syosset Fire Department was called to the scene for a ladder truck. While firefighters were battling the fire across the street on Desmond Place, firefighters secured an area around a downed primary power line that was burning in a parking lot. The power authority quickly arrived and shut down the power. During the storms members operated at 8 alarms.



In September of 2018 the departments held a dedication ceremony for their new fire training facility, dedicated in honor of Honorary Chief George Howard, a department member who was tragically killed on 9/11. The new facility, located at Station 3, will allow members to train in a realistic environment and prepare them to handle the demands firefighters routinely face on the job.

In 2021, Bob was elected to serve as Fire Commissioner of the Hicksville Fire District for a 5-Year term and in 2024 elected to serve as Chairman of the 9th Battalion Fire Commission.



***Served 2 Years***

Gary Lewis was born April 27, 1978, and is the son of Gary and Barbara Lewis. He married Margaret on September 28, 2007, and they have three children, Shawn, Collin, and McKenna. Both Gary and his wife, Margaret, grew up in Hicksville. He started working for the Town of Oyster Bay in the Sanitation Department in 2002 then transferred to the Highway Department in 2005. Gary and Margaret live on Garden Blvd. in Hicksville.

Gary joined the Hicksville Fire Department in 2000 as a member of Citizens Engine Company 3 and then later transferred to Independent Engine and Hose Company 2 in 2003. He became 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant of Company 2 in 2009 and worked his way up to Captain of Company 2

for the years 2013 - 2014.

In 2018 Gary was elected to serve as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief before being elected as the 72<sup>nd</sup> Fire Chief in January 2020. His Assistant Chiefs were Christopher Moskos, Joseph DiFronzo and Christopher Wright.

On January 26, 2020, a fire broke out in a one-story warehouse at around 11:50 p.m. Firefighters received multiple alarms for a warehouse fire on Burns Avenue, near West John Street. Firefighters arrived with heavy smoke coming from the building and multiple other fire departments were called to help from Bethpage, East Meadow, Plainview, Westbury, Jericho, and Syosset. The office of emergency management was also called. The blaze was extinguished, and all searches were negative.

An alarm was received on May 31, 2020, for a fully involved vehicle fire at the BP gas station at South Oyster Bay Road and Woodbury Road. Arriving units found a fully involved vehicle fire with extension of fire to the pumps. The pumps emergency shut was secured, and fire was limited.

The first few months of his time in the chief's department went well, then in March the world was struck by the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic. This turned the community and its members upside down and put the future on hold. The community of Hicksville saw over 2,300 of its residents test positive and Nassau County and New York State would be the worst hit in the United States. Physically, emotionally, and financially, we all took hits from every direction. We were blindsided by the intensity of the punches, a deadly virus, an economic decline, peaceful and violent protests in the streets and a divisive presidential election. Chief Lewis worked on changing response protocols, protective measures to counter the current conditions.

If it wasn't bad enough, the Department and community were going through the pandemic, just as businesses were opening and people were allowed back out to establish some sort of normal, there was civil unrest sweeping the country. A Minnesota Police Officer during an arrest placed his knee onto the neck of George Floyd and killed him. George was a person of color, and the police officer was white. This sparked outrage and weeks long protests across the country including Hicksville.

A second wave of the virus came back with a vengeance in the Fall of 2020 and the presidential election went into a tailspin with a new president elected with the highest voter turnout ever. The year was capped with a Covid-19 vaccination that was developed under "Operation Warp Speed" and the first responders were beginning to get vaccinated.

On Wednesday, June 20, 2001, our department received a special call for mutual aid assistance for Engine 932, from the Huntington Manor Fire Department. Firefighter Gary Lewis responded as part of the crew. Upon arrival at the scene, it was observed that there was a large lumberyard fire, inclusive of three structures fully engulfed with fire. Orders were given to secure a water supply and report to the front of the fire building. The crew was able to locate a water supply (hydrant) while two mutual-aid Engine Companies were able to perform change-over operations and assisted in supplying an adequate water supply through 1,400 feet of 5" hose. An additional water supply approximately 1,000 feet from Engine 932, which was also used to feed Engine 932, enabling the engine to utilize a deck-gun operation. While 932 was in operation, the crew was utilized in the rear of the building working with a 2 1/2" hose line to protect exposures, search for additional fire and protect property. Some 10 hours later, the crew was relieved and released late in the afternoon on Sunday. For their actions, the crew went above and beyond what is expected under normal conditions, and used their skills and

strength to assist this mutual aid department in their time of need and were awarded a Unit Citation for their work.

In 2018 Chief Lewis was awarded a Certificate of Merit for his actions performed on a drowning victim. At 14:16 hours on August 16", 2018, the Hicksville Fire Department was alerted for a child found in a pool. Upon arrival with Assistant Chief William Efinger and District medic they dicovered CPR was in progress. They encountered a 5-year-old boy lying outside the pool on the ground. A woman at the time was giving CPR and then the police took over while the FD was hooking up the oxygen. As soon as Gary was able to get the child slightly breathing the police scooped the boy up and ran him into the police ambulance. While inside the ambulance they worked on the boy with suction and tubing to get the water from his lungs.

Gary was chairman of the carnival/entertainment committee that helped put together the departments 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Chief Lewis was granted Life Active Status in 2021 by the Hicksville Fire Department.







Christopher Moskos was born August 13, 1964, and is the son of Charles and Joan (Foley) Moskos. He married Thea Hans on February 20, 1988. Christopher was employed by the Hicksville Water District working as a Plant Operator until he retired in 2021. Christopher and Thea live on Myers Avenue.

This was Chief Moskos' second term as Chief of the Department. He served as an Assistant Chief from 2006 through 2011, then elected as the 67<sup>th</sup> Chief from 2012-2013. He returned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief in 2018 and 2019, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief from 2020 – 2021 and was elected as the 73<sup>rd</sup> Chief of Department in 2022 and 2023. His

Assistant Chiefs were Joseph DiFronzo, Christopher Wright and Michael Murphy.

***Served 2 Years***

There have been five members who served multiple years as Chief as noted earlier in the book. Only Chief Andrew Heberer served longer than any other Chief.

At approximately 4:30 p.m., firefighters under the direction of Chief Moskos, responded to a reported building fire at 104 New South Road. On arrival fire and smoke conditions were viable in the rear of the building. Firefighters, with help on the roof from Bethpage Ladder 4, were able to minimize damage, one line was used to extinguish the fire.

On June 24 the Hicksville Fire Department was dispatched to a reported building fire at 535 South Broadway. On arrival Chief Moskos had visible flames in a 2nd floor window and a Signal 10 was transmitted. Engine 933 was first due and stretched the initial line to the 2nd floor containing the fire to the room of origin and quickly knocking down the main body of fire. With the assistance of crews from Bethpage, Levittown and Plainview, the fire was placed under control in approximately 45 minutes.

In the early morning hours of July 5, 2022, Chief Moskos along with mutual aid companies operated on the scene of a building fire on West Marie Street. The incident originated as a dumpster fire; however, the fire impinged upon the gas service to the building

as well as nearby propane tanks. As a result of the rapid fire spread there was extension up and into the structure. Despite the layout and construction of the building in addition to the compromised gas service, firefighters made an aggressive attack and were able to prevent the fire from spreading further.

Around 6:10 p.m. on September 14<sup>th</sup>, firefighters responded to a building fire at the Days Inn Motel located at 828 South Oyster Bay Road. A signal 10 was issued by Chief Moskos with 932 being the first due engine and 931 as the first due truck. Heavy smoke from a 1<sup>st</sup> floor room was observed and 2 lines were stretched into operation. Due to the possibility of fire spreading into other units, Chief Moskos brought in various mutual aid units.

Just a week later on September 22, 2022, firefighters responded again to the report of a building fire at the Days Inn Motel at 828 South Oyster Bay Road. Upon arrival smoke conditions were visible on the 2nd floor. Chief Moskos transmitted a Signal 10 working fire. Due to the nature of the building, with the 2nd floor closed in with windows, it was tedious work. 3 hand lines were stretched with 2 in operation. All occupants were evacuated safely, although some originally refused to leave.

On November 18, 2022, Chief Moskos was in command of a building fire on Broadway. The Marata Wok Chinese restaurant had smoke showing on arrival and multiple lines were stretched and mutual aid requested. The fire was brought under control within an hour and damage to adjacent business was minimal.

On June 23, 2023, at around 11:15 p.m., the department responded to a building fire on South Broadway. On arrival, fire and smoke was seen coming out of the window of the second floor. Fire was contained to the second floor and mutual aid departments were brought in for standby.

In October of 2023, Chief Moskos joined with the members of Protection Hook and Ladder Company 1 to celebrate and recognize two fifty-year members. Ex-Captain Gary Fippinger and Michael Krumenacker were bestowed the ranks of Honorary Chief and joined a group of about 25 other members who attained the rank and service.

Chief Moskos' term came to an end, but not before a house fire on Ninth Street took the life of a local resident. The fire on December 21, 2023, was transmitted at around 6:00 a.m. with people trapped. On arrival the house was fully involved, and firefighters encountered

a heavy clutter condition while attempting to make an entry. Numerous attempts were made but due to deteriorating conditions and due to a recent fire just a few months earlier, Chief Moskos had crews back out due to their safety. After the fire was knocked down, firefighters reentered and found the resident on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor who succumbed to smoke inhalation.

In August of 2023, the New York State Department of Labor opened an investigation into the department and its compliance with the fire brigade and other relevant standards. The job of enforcing safety standards lies with the State Department of Labor's Public Employee Health and Safety (PESH) bureau, which relies on federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules. Under state law, volunteer firefighters, when acting in that role, are considered public employees and are required to meet safety training requirements like those of paid employees. Chief Moskos worked with the Board of Fire Commissioners, and they worked through various documents, policies and programs. PESH did find several areas that needed improvement, and the department was given time to rectify the targeted areas. Chief Moskos had Ex-Chief Patrick McGeough, the District Pre-Planner, sit with PESH and the entire process of working with PESH to meet compliance. The overall goal was to ensure that firefighters were safe.

Under Chief Moskos' term the Hicksville Fire Department earned a prestigious national recruitment and retention award for adding more than 20 recruits in a 12-month period. The award presented by the Volunteer & Combination Officers Section (VCOS) of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and sponsored by the Volunteer Fire Insurance Services Company was handed out November 9, 2023, at the IAFC's "Symposium in the Sun" in Clearwater, Fla. More than 200 departments applied for the award. Assistant Chief Michael Murphy was assigned by Moskos to launch the recruitment program which included a movie trailer at the local theater, lawn signs, career day at the local high school and an Open House.








## Chiefs

Arnold G. Heitz  
Henry Menge  
Andrew Heberer, Sr.  
Julius Augustin  
Jacob Christ  
William Duffy  
Edward R. Schluter, Sr.  
George Neder, Sr.  
William Mohrbach  
Edward Wagner  
Anthony Manzollilo  
William Braun  
Henry Schnepf  
August Schnepf  
Henry Kerbs  
Fred Fricke, Sr.  
Charles Schaefer  
Henry Gebhardt  
Jacob Karman  
John Puvogel  
Henry Gleckler  
Valentine Kerbs  
Henry Luhmann  
Harry "Roxy" Borley  
Charles Steinhauer  
Vincent Braun, Sr.  
George Engel  
John Leckie  
Edward Mack  
George Kunz  
Fred Masters, Sr.  
Daniel Munch  
Stanford "Sam" Weiss  
Edward R. Schluter, Jr.  
Arnold Jeanson  
Lawrence Huttie  
Bernard Medard Ofenloch  
Charles F. Saurer  
Walter Werthessen  
Walter Telender  
John Specht  
Gus Cotsonas  
Clifford G. Davis  
Melvin Voorhies  
Louis "Red" Mertz  
Mario Misturini  
Roy Schaaf  
William Ferber  
Richard Kershow, Jr.  
William Donlon, Jr.  
Terrence P. Farrell  
Edward Korona, Jr.

## Final Resting Place

Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Cypress Hills National Cemetery, Brooklyn NY  
Bethpage United Methodist Cemetery, Bethpage NY  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York  
[No Record of Resting Place](#)  
New Village Congregational Church Cemetery, Lake Grove  
Nassau Knolls Cemetery, Port Washington  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
[No Record of Resting Place](#)  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Greenfield Cemetery, Uniondale, New York  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Nichols Farm Burial Ground in Trumbull, Connecticut  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York  
Washington Memorial Park, Coram, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Montefiore Cemetery, Springfield Gardens, New York  
Kelly's Corner Cemetery in Margaretville, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York  
Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York  
Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York  
Cemetery of St Magaret's, Plainview, New York  
Brookville Cemetery, Brookville, New York  
Plain Lawn Cemetery, Hicksville, New York  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York  
Pinelawn Memorial Park, Farmingdale, New York  
Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York  
Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York  
Cemetery of the Holy Rood, Westbury, New York  
Vista Verde Memorial Park, New Mexico.  
Pinelawn Memorial Park, Farmingdale, New York  
St Patrick's Cemetery, Huntington, New York  
Cremation





## **Dedication**

Dedicated to my wife Lynn and her support and understanding of my passion for local history and telling stories that would otherwise be forgotten. Her support as a firefighter, her understanding growing up as a child of a firefighter and the countless hours spent researching, writing and the commitment to this project and all my writings and the labor love.

## **Acknowledgements**

Hicksville Public Library  
James Janis, Local Historian and Librarian  
All living Ex-Chiefs for sharing their personal and firematic history

## **Resources**

Centre Island News  
Mid Island Herald / Hicksville Illustrated News  
Mid Island Times  
Newsday  
Huntington Long Islander Newspaper  
Brooklyn Daily Eagle  
Fulton Street Post Cards  
Hicksville Courier  
NYS Historic Newspapers  
Bethpage Tribune  
Freeport News  
The Nassau Daily Review & Star  
Long Island Press  
Fire News  
Daily News  
Ancestry.com  
Fold3.com  
Hicksville Fire Department History Book  
Hicksville Fire District Meeting Minutes and Records  
Kevin Imm Photography  
Charles Coutieri, K2M Fire Photography  
Steve & Cathy Greenfield, Photographers







