**OMFPOA 50th ANNIVERSARY**

**HISTORY**

Although the association was formed in 1956, the organization’s official available recordings are from 1965 to the present. The first nine years of history may have been recorded, unfortunately it is not contained in any of the association’s existing documents.

The origin of the Fire Prevention Officers’ Association has its roots in Southwestern Ontario. There were no other organizations that dedicated themselves to the preservation of life and property in existence at the time. The OFMPOA is the longest standing fire service organization of its kind serving the fire prevention and life safety needs in Ontario. In the beginning, the only organizations serving the fire service were the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, the Professional Firefighters Association and the Ontario Firefighters Association.

The formation of this organization was the brain child of James Fitzgerald, a Fire Prevention Officer with the City of London Fire Department. He was encountering problems in the field of fire safety and realizing that others were probably encountering similar issues, he wondered how they solved their problems.

Because of his curiosity, he invited a handful of FPOs from the general area of London to meet and discuss fire prevention issues. It was obvious from the flood of issues that arose from their discussion, that a brief meeting was not sufficient to even cover half of the items that everyone wanted to discuss. In fact, it would require several days to discuss and resolve them.

Correspondence and inquiries were sent to all fire departments in the Southwestern Ontario region and eventually, a two day conference was conceived and held in London, commencing on May 9th, 1957.

It was attended by 16 persons representing ten departments and the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM). During two full days of round table discussions, many problems were brought up and other attendees spoke of how they had handled similar issues. There were still many problems not solved and it became evident that even two full days was not long enough to cover everything. It was then decided to expand this conference to three days and make it an annual gathering. An executive was elected and the group became known as the Fire Inspectors Conference, Southwestern Ontario Region.

The group remained very small for several years but was instrumental in bringing about standardization of inspection practices and many needed changes to municipal by-laws and government codes. So much was accomplished, that it was decided to invite others in Ontario to attend the conference, with the hope that other regions would come into being. Those who attended wanted to join the current group, rather than start one of their own and so the group was enlarged to include the Hamilton and Niagara regions.

The name was changed to the Municipal Fire Prevention Officers’ Association (Southwestern Ontario region). It progressed in its enlarged state for a few more years, but still no other regional groups evolved. All wanted to join or remain with the existing group. It was finally decided to expand across Ontario and the title of the organization was changed to the Ontario Fire Prevention Officers’ Association.

The first constitution of the OMFPOA was adopted at the ninth annual conference held in Chatham, Ontario on April 7th, 1965. President Sills spoke about the history of the association and the reasons for the constitution. Mr. Pelletier from the Office of the Fire Marshal, was most helpful in advising the members when they voted on the constitution, that it was most important that “Municipal Fire Prevention Officers” remain in the name for any new association.

Highlights of the 1965 conference included the call for greater cooperation between building and fire officials to ensure buildings and life safety systems were constructed and installed to afford the occupants an acceptable degree of safety.

One major problem that FPOs of this era faced, was that there was no uniform building code in the province of Ontario at this time. Most municipalities enacted their own building code, which was put in place mainly to collect permit fees and contained few construction requirements. Many of the larger municipalities adopted the 1963 National Building Code of Canada as their building code. Because there was not a standard or a universal building code during this time, it was difficult for the organization to pass resolutions concerning building standards with respect to fire and life safety in Ontario.

Even though the revisions to the Hotel Fire Safety Act had not been enacted, inspectors had been appointed under the existing Act, however, local regulations applied when they were more stringent. All hotel inspectors were trained by the OFM staff and FPOs attending were reminded that the Fire Marshal’s Act could not be used to enforce the Hotel Fire Safety Act.

During the 1965 conference, the membership had a lengthy discussion on where the conference should be convened annually. At the end of the discussion, the majority of delegates felt that the conference should be held annually and moved to a different municipality each year. This practice of accepting applications to host our annual conference from fire departments has been followed since the motion was brought forward in 1965.

The highlight of the 1966 conference was discussions which ensued regarding fire alarm systems and the recommendation for the installation of detection in each fire separated unit was accepted. As well, the zoning and annunciation of these systems needed to be improved to allow for a more rapid fire attack.

It wasn’t until the enactment of the Ontario Building Code in 1975, that smoke alarm installation in residential occupancies became mandatory. Since then, changes to the legislation have been ongoing, from a single smoke alarm to requiring smoke alarm installation on all levels.

Even though four municipalities had adopted the National Fire Code of Canada and 19 had adopted the National Building Code of Canada, Gerry Pelletier advised that the codes could not be adopted by reference. He went on further to explain that considerable changes would be required, depending on existing municipal regulations and conditions. He concluded by advising the delegates it would be wise to consult with Mr. F. Braybrook of the Ontario Department of Municipal Affairs, to discuss the legality before adopting these codes.

Mr. Allan Williams, Chief Inspector from the Office of the Fire Marshal, pointed out that it was the fire department’s responsibility to determine fire cause and to disprove accidental causes. In the case of arson, it is necessary to prove the following:

1. That a fire has occurred
2. That the fire was incendiary
3. That there was a motive
4. Proof of guilt

He advised that there were fire investigation courses available in both Canada and the U.S.A. but the Ontario Fire Marshal had no separate programs/courses at this time.

Dr. G. Pelletier advised that the association had reached a turning point, where it would either be a complete success or would have to fall by the wayside. He further went on to say that he was concerned about the association’s future.

The following resolution was passed, as a result of Mr. Pelletier’s statement:

**Whereas**, it is vitally necessary to have full cooperation with other groups working to improve fire safety and fire prevention in the province of Ontario and;

**Whereas**, the Fire Chiefs of the province have proven their interest and;

**Whereas**, the work of the building officials is also closely associated with fire safety;

**Be it resolved**, that the Ontario Municipal Fire Prevention Officers’ Association request that the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and the Ontario Building Officials’ Association each appoint a member of their respective executives to attend the annual conference of the OMFPOA and that this organization request permission to appoint a representative of this organization to represent it at the annual meetings of the OAFC and OBOA,

**And be it further resolved**, that if this request is granted in one or both cases, the executive of this organization be authorized to appoint such delegates.

To follow up this resolution, a further resolution was forwarded to Mr. Martin Hurst of the OFM, who was the chairman of the Associated Committee on National Fire Codes, to establish a guideline to assist with “Areas of Responsibility” in plans examination and inspections of premises during construction and major alterations.

During this year, the association received its first financial gift of $200 from a donor who requested to remain anonymous. The funds were used to purchase the following items:

1. An associate membership in the NFPA
2. A set of NFPA Codes
3. A subscription to ‘Fireman’s’ and ‘Fire Technology’ magazines and a copy of the National Building Code

The approved fees to attend the 1967 conference were as follows: $5.00 for registration plus $2.50 if registered, or $4.00 if not registered, to attend the prime rib dinner at the banquet. Vendor display tables sold for $10.00.

At the executive meeting held on July 13th, 1967, it was moved by Britton and seconded by Gray, that ‘The fiscal year of the OMFPOA be from January 1st to December 31st and this shall commence as of January 1st, 1968’. Carried.

The Secretary was instructed during this time to investigate the costs associated with having the association incorporated. He reported at the next executive meeting that it was very costly and therefore the group did not proceed with this.

In February, 1968, at the executive meeting, the Secretary read correspondence received from the Australian Fire Service and the Michigan State Association of Fire Inspectors. The executive agreed to the request of both groups, to have our minutes, literature and an invitation to attend our annual symposium, forwarded to them.

Breaking news at the 1970 conference held in Windsor, was from Fire Marshal Martin Hurst, proposing a building code and fire code for the province of Ontario. Although the announcement was made in 1970, the first conference workshops on these new codes weren’t held until 1974 at the conference held in Nepean, Ontario.

During the 1970’s, the association executive held their meetings at the cottage of Bob Sledziewski in the Gravenhurst area and at the home of Harvey Baldwin in Barrie, because of the association’s financial situation. The minutes indicated that the executive often praised Harvey’s wife Lillian, for the wonderful meals that she prepared and served.

From time to time, the request has come forward to rename the association, as many members often complained that it was a mouthful to say and at times somewhat confusing. The first recorded request was at the association’s executive meeting held on October 26th, 1973, with the minutes stating that ‘Discussion re: taking out the word ‘municipal’. Unfortunately, that was the total recording, so it appears there was no mover, nor seconder and the suggestion was withdrawn.

At this same meeting, the executive voted to increase the conference registration for the first time, from $10.00 to $15.00.

During this time, the association discussed the need of identifying the organization. The executive of the time put forth the idea of a contest to design a logo for the organization. The first motion put forward was to pay the winner $100.00, subsequently, an amendment was voted on with the winner receiving $25.00. It appears that nobody submitted any entries or the executive did not accept the proposals, as an artist’s conception was later approved.



The Ontario Building Code Regulation was finally passed approximately two years after the Building Code Act was enacted. Lots of controversy ensued for some time, over the interpretation and application of the new regulations among building and fire officials, designers, engineers and architects with respect to fire protection and life safety matters.

If the issues could not be resolved, the Building Code Act established the Building Code Commission (BCC) and the Building Materials Evaluation Commission (BMEC), to act as tribunals to rule on the disputes before them.

A municipal employee could not serve on the BCC but could serve on the BEMC. The association’s first appointee to the BEMC was Ron Weir from the Brampton Fire Department. Other members who served on the BEMC were Brian Wallace from Scarborough, Scott Richardson from Markham and Craig Cunningham from Toronto.

To assist with the work of the association in 1975, the Attorney General’s Department of the Ontario Government provided a cash donation. This appears to be the first time that the association received any funding from the Ontario Government. From 1975 until the mid 1990’s, the association received an annual grant from the Office of the Fire Marshal. Soon after the formation of the Fire Marshal’s Public Fire Safety Council (FMPFSC), the annual funding to our association was discontinued.

Later in 1975, the Treasurer stated that ‘We are in the black and it looks promising that all business of the association will be transacted without worry for the first time in years’.

With the passing and implementation of the Ontario Building Code Regulations, it was time to establish a Fire Code Regulation for the province. When these documents were first discussed, it was agreed that they would be sister documents and the revision cycles would be conducted simultaneously. However, the Building Code Regulations were in use approximately five years prior to the Fire Code Regulations being enacted. The Association received correspondence from Solicitor General Sidney B. Handleman, appointing Bob Sledziewski as our representative to the Fire Code Commission.

The first meeting of the committee was held on January 25th, 1977 with Bob being appointed sub-committee chairman for Parts 2, 6 and 7 of the code. These meetings continued through to 1979 when the first gazetted copy of the fire code was printed. This code included all parts including retrofit.

When the fire code was gazetted, Mr. George Fleming, a building official from Scarborough, wrote a white paper report which was not favourable for the fire service or the fire code and the passing of the regulations were postponed. The code was sent back to the committee by the government to be revised. The Fire Code Regulations were finally published and passed by the Legislature in 1981. The Fire Code Regulations were passed, minus Parts 4 and 9. These Parts were held in reserve.

Late in 1982, the Office of the Fire Marshal formed a committee to begin to rewrite Part 9 Retrofit of the fire code, as the original Part 9 drafted in the gazetted copy printed in 1979, was unacceptable. During these deliberations on retrofit, another white paper report known as the ‘Henderson Report’ was commissioned by the Property Standards Officers’ Association of Ontario, suggesting that retrofit was not needed as most of the requirements were already being carried out by the Municipal Property Standards Officer.

As this report was circulated, it was evident that there was considerable opposition being aired by the building officials and the property standards officers. Because of this opposition, the association had to stand up in support of the fire code and why the fire service should administer it. To do this, a sub-committee was formed to develop a ‘Position Paper on Strategies’ for the preservation of the fire code for the fire service.

At the annual conference in Kitchener in 1979, the executive made a presentation to Roy Philippe, recognizing his guidance and assistance to the members of the OMFPOA.

There was a major change in the weather during this symposium. The temperature was warm and sunny until Wednesday afternoon, when a blizzard moved in and closed highways within a 30km radius of the city. When contacted, many Fire Chiefs found it hard to believe that delegates had to stay for an extra night, as the weather in their areas was fine. Delegates used their wives’ hair dryers to melt snow from under the hood and dry out the ignition wires to get their cars started so they could leave for home the following morning.

Even though regional chapters were proposed in 1957, there was very little activity by the association until 1982 when the executive had further discussions on this subject. It was recommended by the executive to bring this issue forward to the membership at the annual conference in Brampton. Further to those discussions, it was reported approximately one year later, that there were now seven regional chapters operating. By 1992, the number had grown to 13 chapters throughout Ontario.

With the Ontario Fire Code being applied across the province by the fire service for approximately five years now, it appeared that a detrimental trend was forming with those persons who installed and maintained fire protection equipment and life safety systems. The fire service found that many of these technicians were inexperienced or improperly trained to perform the appropriate service on this equipment.

Because of this, the first of many resolutions requiring all fire protection equipment and life safety system installers and service personnel to be trained and certified to their discipline, was voted on and forwarded to the OAFC and the OFM.

Even though the incorporation of the association had been discussed almost 20 years previously, the executive decided in 1988 that it was time to incorporate as a ‘not for profit’ organization, because of the activities that the association was involved in and was promoting.

1990 saw the first Fire Chief appointed as the Ontario Fire Marshal. Fire Chief Bernard Moyle, Fire Chief for the City of York, became the new Fire Marshal. He succeeded Mr. John Bateman upon his retirement.

In a move by both the provincial and federal governments, to protect an individual’s privacy, the governments enacted the Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act. This Act changed the way in which fire departments could distribute copies of fire department documents, to those who requested them. In most incidents, before any documents are released, they are reviewed by a municipal employee (usually in the clerk’s department), ensuring that all private or personal information has been deleted from the documents.

If the fire service or the municipal employee refuses to release the documents, the requestor could appeal to the provincial or federal commissioner, requesting their intervention in the dispute.

The commissioner either rules in favour of the municipality or the appellant. This was and still can be somewhat of a complicated process for members of the fire service. Just ask anyone who has been involved in a Freedom of Information process!

During the 1990’s, the provincial government decided to eliminate its direct delivery service programs. The fire safety inspection service of the OFM was one of the programs the ruling government looked at. A pilot project was entered in to, with the OFM and a number of fire departments, for the transfer of inspection authority for hotels, nursing homes and homes for the aged. When a fire department agreed to participate in the project, training programs were provided for staff by the OFM and special legislation was enacted to permit fire department staff to conduct these inspections.

Some fire departments embraced this opportunity and others were not so supportive, as the added workload would be taxing for their existing staff, as applicable legislation required that a number of the occupancies be inspected twice a year. Even though this program was initiated approximately ten years ago, not all departments have assumed these inspection duties for one reason or another.

When the National Building Code revision cycle for the 1995 edition was announced, it contained a proposal for the inclusion of fire sprinkler protection in all high rise residential buildings.

The association followed this amendment and requested the opportunity to present its position to the Standing Committee on Fire Protection and Occupancy in Ottawa. Members of the association travelled to Ottawa and presented our position on April 7, 1992, supporting the inclusion of this life saving measure in the building code.

This amendment was adopted and became a requirement for all new buildings constructed under the 1995 edition of the National Building Code. Unfortunately, the fire service was not as successful in Ontario, when the Ontario Building Code revision cycle concluded in 1996. Even though there have been a number of fatal fires in high rise residential buildings in Ontario, this requirement has still not been adopted.

The fire service has continued to have the Ontario Building Code Regulations amended to include fire sprinkler systems in all high rise residential buildings during each of the revision cycles since 1996, to no avail.

In early 2001, the Ontario Fire Marshal formed an ad hoc committee to look into having all residential dwellings/units equipped with a fire sprinkler system. Through the committee’s work and discussions with Mrs. Linda Jeffrey, MPP for Brampton Centre, the first attempt to regulate the installation of fire sprinklers in homes, was introduced in the Provincial Legislature on November 2nd, 2004, as Bill 141. The proposed legislation was called the ‘Home Sprinkler Act’. Unfortunately, this Bill died on the Order Paper as the legislative session came to a close. Mrs. Jeffrey reintroduced Bill 2 on October 13th, 2005. The Bill received second reading on November 3rd, 2005 and has been sent to committee for debate and hopefully law.

This association is a supporter of the proposed legislation and has been pursuing the need for the installation of these life safety systems for many years. When the time comes to address the legislative committee, the association will be there in support of Mrs. Jeffrey’s proposal.

There is however, considerable opposition at this time from the building industry who continue to use data from CMHC, which contains statistics that smoke alarms provide adequate fire safety protection for those who live in residential dwellings.

After the large tire fire in Hagersville, Ontario, the government realized that there was no legislation in place that protected the residents of Ontario from potential environmental hazards, as a result of fires such as this. So, on June 21st, 1991, amendments to the Fire Marshal’s Act were introduced by the Honourable Mike Farnan, the Solicitor General for Ontario. These changes to the Act received second and third reading on November 7th, 1991 and received Royal Assent soon after. This legislation provided the fire service the opportunity to deal with potential environmental hazards in their communities.

Also contained in this Bill, were important amendments such as the right of entry, the right to recover costs, immediate threat to life provisions and the establishment of the Fire Code Commission. One of the proposed amendments that the fire service was hoping to be included, was the payment of fines to be directed to the municipality. This was not included in the final Bill. This issue still remains unresolved throughout most of the province, although a number of regional municipalities have been granted operation of the provincial offences courts located within their municipalities. By operating the courts in this manner, the fines collected are proportionally distributed among the municipalities, after operating costs of the courts have been deducted.

During a meeting with Deputy Fire Marshal Roy Philippe, he advised that the OFM would soon be issuing a communique advising that the impact of installation of smoke alarms by education, is proving to be more effective than installation by legislation. A survey conducted at the time by the government, suggested that 84% of all homes in Ontario had at least one smoke alarm installed.

In an effort to promote the virtue of good fire prevention and lifesaving practices in the home, members of the OAFC and the OMFPOA held meetings with various large retailers. Beaver Lumber was the first retailer to agree to promote these practices. They committed their spring and fall sales flyers to promoting the installation of smoke alarms, equipping your home with a fire extinguisher and the slogan ‘Change your clocks, change your batteries’.

The first resolution from the OMFPOA requesting that the Ontario Fire Code be amended to include a requirement to make the mandatory installation of smoke alarms in all dwellings, was endorsed by the membership in 1992. Approximately six years later, mandatory installation of smoke alarms was introduced as a requirement of the Ontario Fire Code. Effective March 6th, 2006, this requirement would be amended again to require the installation of smoke alarms on very level of the home, whether or not the level contained sleeping areas.

During Fire Prevention Week, on October 7th, 1992, the Honourable Allan C. Pilkey, the Solicitor General, announced the retrofit regulations for high rise and low rise buildings in Ontario. In his speech to the legislature, a number of groups, including the OMFPOA, were thanked for their cooperation, their involvement and their support in the development of these regulations.

Soon after the filing of this legislation, the OFM proceeded to host seminars to assist all parties with the application of the requirements and the compliance dates. These regulations addressed key issues from the Rupert Hotel inquest and the Webber Commission Public Inquiry into high rise fire safety.

Residential retrofit regulations 9.5 and 9.6 were passed into law in October, 1992. 9.8 two unit residential retrofit soon followed, in July, 1994. After a number of multiple fatality fires in 9.6 and 9.8 buildings, the OFM formed a Residential Retrofit Implementation Task Group to review the level of compliance that existed and to recommend actions to alleviate any concerns.

Talks began with the idea of forming a fire safety foundation early in 1992. This foundation would be a non-profit fire safety foundation, funded through corporate and private donations with the object being to develop and promote fire safety education programs throughout the province. The delivery of these programs would remain with the fire service.

For the first time in Ontario, the New Democratic Party was elected the ruling party in the provincial election. With this, came a number of social housing amendments, one being Bill 120. This Bill created new problems for the fire service and the municipalities in Ontario. The legislation was enacted over the displeasure of both the fire and building officials. It resulted in a number of municipalities initiating a legal challenge with respect to the constitutionality of it.

The association published and circulated a position paper to the Ministries of Housing and Municipal Affairs, outlining its concerns and issues with respect to fire and life safety requirements.

Further to the association’s concerns being voiced to the Ministry of Housing, it confirmed its endorsement of the Bill, because the Bill would provide a safer environment for those who occupied these dwellings. Soon after the next provincial election, the new government repealed and amended portions of the legislation. All this happened within two years of the passing of Bill 120.

Retrofit requirements for high rise and low rise buildings were being actively applied in many municipalities when the issue of accepting tubular core suite entrance doors became a concern for the fire service. A number of tests were conducted on these doors at the ULC laboratories in Toronto. At the conclusion of the tests, the OFM accepted these doors as complying with the fire code. Upon acceptance and review of the test results, Fire Marshal Moyle issued a Fire Marshal’s Directive, which permitted the use of these doors as an equivalent, where retrofit required fire rated suite entrance doors.

With the down turn in the economy and the threat of losing building inspectors, the building officials began questioning the need for fire service personnel to examine plans and inspect new buildings for compliance with building code requirements. Some building officials were successful, while the majority were not. One of the criteria used by the building officials in their efforts, was the fact that most building inspectors had obtained their CBCO (Certified Building Code Official) designation. At this time, the designation was an OBOA designation assigned to all its members who had completed the required Ministry of Housing courses.

This self-designation soon changed when the OBOA was successful in having a Private Members Bill Pr 40, enacted by the province to recognize the CBCO title.

After serving the association from 1971 to 1993, the executive voted to replace the old wooden banner with one made from vinyl, as the old crest was showing signs of wear and tear and it was very cumbersome to transport and store. The new banner was revealed at the 1994 conference in Welland, Ontario.

With the introduction of the Crime Stoppers program, this association and the OAFC teamed up with the OFM and produced a poster that was affixed to a building where the cause of the fire was believed to be of criminal intent. These posters asked persons who may have information on the fire to contact the local police force. The posters were affixed to the buildings by the OFM.

Our long standing operating grant from the OFM was cancelled in 1993, as a result of financial constraints of the government. Through the work of President Paul Olah, the OFM grant was reinstated for one more year (1994).

These same financial constraints were affecting municipal fire departments and fire prevention divisions, as many FPOs were returned to the suppression division or were not replaced when a member retired. This action was taken by the Fire Chiefs, in an effort to maintain their firefighting and first responder staffing complements.

During the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, the Toronto Area Chief Building Officials’ Committee (TACBOC) was formed and remained affiliated with the OBOA. Soon after, another organization of building officials was formed which included all municipal building officials from municipalities that had a population greater than 50,000. This organization was called the Large Municipality Chief Building Officials’ (LMCBO). As a group, they claimed that their municipalities accounted for approximately 85% of all new construction in the province.

Because of the high concentration of construction in these municipalities, this group had a very strong presence with the MMAH, the Building Code Act and regulation changes.

The Canadian Fire Alarm Association asked for this association’s support in their endeavor to amend the Ontario Fire Code. In their view, the proposed ‘ULC Certificate Service for Fire Alarm Program’ failed to recognize the educational requirements and training of personnel servicing fire alarm equipment. The association agreed, as there were numerous problems throughout Ontario with systems that were serviced by persons unfamiliar with their operation.

Again, at the 1994 annual conference, the association passed another resolution ‘Requiring certification of persons installing and/or conducting required testing and maintenance of life safety systems and fire protection equipment’. Approximately five years later, on November 21st, 1999, the changes to the fire code were enacted and this provision became law.

The development of the Fire Marshal’s Effectiveness Model was underway and the association, amidst some criticism, requested standing at the meetings in regards to the ‘Discussion Paper on On-Site Staffing’.

The association’s presentation was directed at two specific areas which addressed fire prevention and public education. It has often been said that code enforcement is not public education and that public education is not code enforcement. However, this association believed that enforcing the fire code and related standards is in fact public education. When addressing a group during a fire safety presentation, the fire service often relates to codes and standards to enforce or emphasize the main points of the presentation.

Further on in the presentation, it was stated that fire prevention and public education should be part of a recruit’s initial training. Fire prevention and public education should be emphasized throughout a firefighter’s career training. Good sound fire prevention practices save lives and property.

Fire Marshal Moyle announced the creation of the Fire Marshal’s Public Fire Safety Commission (FMPFSC) in 1993. ‘The purpose is to provide our clients with more accessibility to our services and to ensure that we focus on those activities which will increase the level of fire safety enjoyed by the residents of Ontario’. In May, 1995, the OMFPOA agreed to become the official financial arm of the council, responsible for maintaining the financial records and fund raising. In return for these services, the council agreed to provide a grant of $7,500.00 to assist in supporting the activities of the OMFPOA.

Soon after the official formation of the FMPFSC, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Canadian Automatic Sprinkler Association (CASA). CASA donated $25,000 to the FMPFSC for the purchase of the NFPA video ‘Fire Power’. This video was distributed to every fire department in the province by the FMPFSC.

An article printed in the Ontario Restaurant News created a controversy when the article stated that prior to issuing a liquor licence, the premises must be inspected by the OFM or local fire department and that ‘the capacity shown on the licence shall be determined by the Fire Marshal’. Unfortunately, the contents of this article were not correct and a meeting with the LLBO was convened.

The results of the meeting were: the building official would be responsible for new premises and material alterations to existing premises; the fire official would be responsible for all existing premises and those required to comply with Part 9 Retrofit; where these departments were not available or unwilling to calculate occupant loads, the LLBO inspector would do so.

In the February, 1995 issue of the Ontario Building Officials’ magazine, the ‘Journal’, Vice-President Tony Chow wrote an article titled ‘A View on High Rise Safety’ where he stated that ‘the multiple fatality fire at the Inn on the Park Hotel in January, 1981, served as a catalyst to the speedy enactment of the long awaited Ontario Fire Code’.

Further along in the article, he referred to the early morning fire in North York, on January 6th, 1991, which claimed six lives. He then questioned why this happened, in spite of past experiences and the findings recorded by Judge Webber in his report, more than a decade before.

Mr. Chow then went on the offensive, by commenting that the Ontario Building Code has adequately addressed fire safety in all new high rise buildings and questioned why it took almost 11 years for Retrofit 9.6 to be passed into law. To further create additional controversy, he stated that ‘instead of requiring immediate compliance, as is the case with most new legislation and regulations, the retrofit regulations permit the owner two years to comply, with a further two years of extension. The granting of an extension by the municipal fire chief is contingent upon the owner providing sound logistical or financial reasons’. He then commented that the reality is that owners of these buildings would do nothing for the first two years and then apply for a two year extension. His suggestion was to eliminate the first two years of compliance time, since it was beyond most municipal fire departments’ resources.

After saying that, his solution was to consider the consolidation of municipal services. For example, some staff could conduct integrated municipal inspections on all matters relating to buildings new and existing. Better enforcement would go a long way to ensuring minimum life safety in all buildings.

He concluded the article by saying that he hoped that it would not take another multiple fatality fire to speed up the implementation of these important policies. After all, there should not be a difference between new and existing buildings when it comes to fire safety.

Not long after the suggestion of consolidation by Mr. Chow, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) held a press conference in Toronto where it was said that ‘the Ontario Municipal Act is like a straightjacket’. For example, it requires municipalities to send different inspectors to make sure that buildings meet fire, construction, plumbing and other codes, when one person could do the job’.

The OMFPOA discussed this article along with the possible ramifications of the Pilkey Report with the OAFC. Soon after, Chief H. Tulk, President of the OAFC responded to Mr. Chow and the OBOA.

Subsequently, all three associations met a number of times to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. President Davis of the OBOA placed a quote from Chief Tulk’s response to the OBOA in its June newsletter and it stated ‘the OBOA is extremely well organized and politically astute’. Things have not changed as both the OBOA and the LMCBO continue to be well organized and politically astute in all their endeavors and matters with respect to health and safety issues and the Building Code Act and regulations.

The code for existing buildings remained a hot topic. Again, all three organizations met to discuss each other’s position. The OBOA advised that they would like all regulations affecting building construction, health, safety and maintenance to be contained in one code.

They stated that there was no uniformity of standards throughout the province and because of that, there was no uniformity in enforcement of these requirements.

The OAFC countered by stating that a code for existing buildings and consolidation of the building standards is perceived as undermining the fundamental values of the fire service, which are: public safety, building safety and fire protection standards.

Further discussions continued about enforcement and the building officials reiterated that the province had mandated the municipalities to enforce the building code, whereas the fire code mandates the owner to ensure compliance.

The groups also looked at the history of the proposals from the Henderson Report to Bill 103 and 112, the Pilkey Report and finally, the minority report on the fire code.

The final comment of the day, made by the building officials, was ‘the strength and knowledge of the municipal departments will dictate the enforcement of any legislation. This will be based on the level of service that the municipality WANTS to, or can PROVIDE’.

During the deliberations with the OAFC, it was resolved that the OMFPOA would develop a position paper on a code for existing buildings and the need for the fire service in Ontario to continue to enforce the fire code.

It was further discussed at the OMFPOA’s and the OAFC’s annual conferences that there was the need to enlist all fire departments in Ontario to become more active in the enforcement of the fire code, as only 15% were actively enforcing the fire code at that time.

A historic meeting of sorts took place between the OPFFA and the OMFPOA, where many issues were discussed, such as tradition and ways on how to possibly change the views of the fire service and how prevention programs should be promoted through the OPFFA to ensure acceptance by the rank and file. Also during this meeting, the OMFPOA congratulated the OPFFA on passing a resolution to endorse the Alarmed for Life program.

As the association prepared the final amendments to the discussion paper on ‘Enforcement of the Ontario Fire Code and Associated Jurisdictional Issues’ for distribution, the ‘Hardeman Task Force/Legislative Reform’ was initiated to look at municipal reform. This task force was looking at the way municipalities were able to and required to conduct business. The task force’s specific objective was to review and make recommendations to change the Municipal Act which was written in 1849.

An interesting objective of the group was to eliminate all statutory duties and positions by letting the local government decide the way in which it would shape itself to deliver government and services. To obtain their objectives, the government was looking at possible changes to the Municipal Act, the Building Code Act, regulations and the Planning Act. The committee was looking at the Alberta model as the document of choice. It was noted that the Alberta model took eight years to be enacted and it was the goal of this committee to have the changes consolidated in seven to eight months.

The discussion paper was tabled, discussed and adopted at both the OMFPOA’s and the OAFC’s annual conferences. Soon after the conferences, the discussion paper was presented to the Provincial Solicitor General and Housing Minister.

The amendments to the fire code were soon approved and a meeting was convened by the OFM to discuss how the fire service would like the new code to be formatted. It was agreed that an 8 ½ x 11” page, in a three ring binder, would be the preferred style because of the ease of changing pages when the code was amended.

In 1996, a good friend and supporter of our organization, Mr. Rich Morris, was elected Chair of the NFPA, becoming the first Canadian in the history of the NFPA, to be elected to this position.

President John Peters wrote in his congratulatory letter ‘for over 40 years, your dedication and support in promoting fire safety and the fire service is well known and appreciated by our association. In addition, your commitment in promoting the Learn Not To Burn program was a decisive factor in bringing the program to Canada’.

When written and adopted, Retrofit Parts 9.5 and 9.6 did not address the audibility of fire alarm systems in existing buildings. When the 1995 National Building Code was released, it, for the first time in any building code in Canada, contained requirements addressing minimum fire alarm sound levels in a suite to be not less than 75dbs. After reviewing this issue and receiving input from the fire service, the OFM published a communique that addressed various options the fire service could use to obtain acceptable sound levels in existing buildings.

On May 6th, 1997, the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Ernie Eves, announced the establishment of an endowment fund for the families of police officers and firefighters who had been killed in the line of duty. The $5 million endowment fund would provide funds to cover the costs of tuition and text books for surviving spouses and children who wished to pursue post-secondary education.

November, 1997, was historic to the fire service, as the Fire Marshal’s Act was repealed and the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA-Bill84) was enacted. Also, Part 4 of the fire code became law.

Dr. Joshy Kallungal, P. Eng., from the OFM, provided the following article on the development and history of Part 4:

The province of Ontario enacted its first fire code, a provincial regulation, in November, 1981. The Ontario Fire Code (OFC) was based on the Model 1980 National Fire Code of Canada (NFCC). In 1980, the report of an advisory committee set up in 1978 and the proposed regulation (Fire Code) were published in the Ontario Gazette, in order to seek comments from the public.

The proposed regulation included a modified version of the 1980 NFCC Part 4 (flammable and combustible liquids). Based on the comments and concerns expressed by the industry sector and various Ontario provincial ministries, Part 4 of the regulation was held in reserve when the Ontario Fire Code was enacted in November, 1981. The Ontario Fire Code was a regulation made under the Fire Marshal’s Act. Responsibility for the administration of the code was given to the OFM. Five fire code engineers were hired in 1982 for the purpose of administering the fire code. This included training the fire service, providing advice and assistance and developing those parts of the code that were placed in reserve.

An advisory committee, consisting of industry and government stakeholders who would be affected by the fire code regulations dealing with flammable and combustible liquids, was established in 1982, to address concerns raised through the public consultation process. Initially, it was felt that tweaking the draft published in the 1980 Ontario Gazette would suffice. It soon became apparent, however, that there were significant gaps and inconsistencies in the draft regulation and that a detailed review would be necessary.

The advisory committee considered the state-of-the-art requirements found in NFPA 30 (Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code), other internationally recognized codes and standards and current industry practices. After extensive deliberations and consultation with stakeholders, a draft proposal was developed and circulated in February, 1989, to industry stakeholders and the fire service with the intent of them using it as a guide to address fire safety issues related to the storage, handling and use of flammable and combustible liquids. Use of this draft as a guide was also expected to generate feedback on the proposed draft.

The 1989 draft was also sent to the standing committee of the NFCC for their consideration for the national model codes. Several proposed provisions and concepts contained in the 1989 draft document were adopted by the NFCC standing committee, for inclusion in the 1990 and 1995 editions of the NFCC.

In 1990, the OFM conducted a study to determine the impact of implementing the 1989 draft version of Part 4. The study was completed in 1992 and provided credible data on estimates of the potential impact costs and benefits of the legislation.

In 1995, in response to a coroner’s jury recommendation (into the death of Sean Kells) and a resolution of the OAFC (95-03), the Fire Marshal established an implementation committee to incorporate Part 4 of the NFCC (1995), which by then included many of the provisions in the 1989 draft document, into the Ontario Fire Code.

This implementation committee, made up of representatives from government ministries and external stakeholders, was given a mandate to draft suitable requirements and to suggest an implementation strategy, including a practical compliance schedule for various requirements. The committee submitted its final report to the Fire Marshal on July 10th, 1996. The implementation committee, which included industry representation, acknowledged the impact costs and was unanimous in its support of these fire safety provisions.

The legislation was drafted and enacted on November 21st, 1997 as a regulation under the new Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. The OMFPOA and its members played a significant role in the development and implementation of Part 4 of the OFC.

Since 1997, the fire losses associated with flammable and combustible liquids have fallen significantly. Fire fatalities have dropped from an average of eight to less than two per year. Injury rates have fallen from about 60 to 20 per year. The total number of fires involving flammable or combustible liquids has fallen from approximately 350 to 160 per year.

As if the new FPPA, Part 4, the proposed code for existing buildings and the Hardeman Task Force weren’t enough, the government then formed the Red Tape Commission. This was an independent group chaired by two sitting members of the provincial legislature. This commission was not required to follow government direction. It was commissioned to look into the one window approach concept, similar to the Alberta model, with the mandate to reform the OBC of red tape and over regulation.

The fire service did not have representation on this committee, therefore, it was able to comment or supply input during the group’s deliberations. The OMFPOA also had an opportunity to submit oral and written presentations to the commission.

In the association’s correspondence to the Vice-Chair of the Red Tape Commission, Roy Chalk wrote and the OMFPOA agreed, that ‘the three concepts highlighted in the report; public health, safety and the environment must not be compromised. The importance of maintaining the two code inspection groups (fire code for building fire safety maintenance and building code for new construction) is crucial’.

After the oral and written submissions were reviewed by the commission, the OMFPOA was invited to participate at the third consultation workshop, held in April, 1998.

Following up on the letter sent to the Vice-Chair, President Bob Webb sent correspondence to the Solicitor General explaining our position with respect to the Red Tape Commission.

Soon after the Red Tape Commission wound up, another came along, called the Building Regulatory Reform Advisory Group (BRRAG). The fire service was asked to sit as a member of the group but declined, as it was deemed as a non adversarial group that would not affect the way the fire service conducted its business in Ontario.

However, soon after this group was formed, it became very apparent that if their recommendations were accepted by the government, there would be major implications to the fire service and especially to those FPOs who conducted building code inspections and plans review. To ensure the government heard the concerns of the fire service, the FPOs who attended the 2001 conference were encouraged to meet with their MPP upon returning home from the conference, to discuss the issues further.

Many of the FPOS did this, resulting in a number of the BRRAG’s recommendations not being implemented.

On November 1st, 2001, Chris Hodgson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, introduced an’ Act to improve Public Safety and to Increase Efficiency in Building Code Enforcement’. He went on to say that these reforms were based on the recommendations of the BRRAG. These reforms would provide for safer, healthier and more accessible buildings through greater emphasis on code knowledge and enforcement.

In a letter to Minister Hodgson, President Jana Gilles wrote; the code development process has now evolved to incorporating the theory of performance based codes and the involvement of the public sector as the building code official. Bill 124 (an Act to improve Public Safety and to Increase Efficiency in Building Code Enforcement) as proposed, could have far reaching effects on the adequacy and reliability of the fire protection and life safety components of buildings and their fire protection and life safety systems.

AMO went on to write in their policy report, dated May 15th, 2002, on Bill 124: In New York City, the administration has been criticized for its self-certification policy that allows architects and engineers to sign off on their own plans. The policy may have contributed to an antique warehouse collapsing two years earlier. 11 people were injured and dozens of neighbours were forced to evacuate the area. When discussing the pit falls of self-regulation, one New York community board member stated that ‘usually by the time we find out about it, the damage is done’. This was a major concern when the ministry proposed the registered code agencies.

To add to the association’s activities with the proposed changes to the building and fire codes, the TACBOC engaged in forming sub-committees to again address the code for existing buildings, with the possibility of having the code enacted in this new legislation. The proposal for a code for existing buildings was mentioned every time there was a major change to, or during a revision cycle of, the building code. This action was something that the fire service needed to be cognisant of every time there were significant changes proposed to the building code.

When the FPPA was enacted, the association found that Section 14 (1) & (2) of the Act, only provided the Fire Marshal or Fire Chief the power to enter onto lands if a fire has occurred, to investigate the cause of the fire, among other duties in this section. As in most incidents, these investigative duties are performed by the fire prevention division or other staff members. Therefore, the association recommended that staff performing these duties have the appropriate authority (designation) from their Fire Chief.

Because this authority needed to be in writing, Deputy Fire Marshal Doug Crawford requested that the OMFPOA provide sample wording that could be used by a Fire Chief to designate staff those powers of entry and associated duties, as outlined in Section 14.

Unfortunately today, many fire service personnel continue to enter onto lands and premises to conduct fire investigations and/or the associated duties as contained in Section 14, without these designated powers being properly authorized by their Fire Chief.

Ontario Regulation 388/97, the Ontario Fire Code made under the FPPA, was amended by O Reg. 398/98 which transferred a number of the regulations of the Hotel Fire Safety Act to the fire code. This was done in conjunction with the transfer of the hotel inspection responsibilities from the OFM to the fire service.

With the assistance of members of Roy Chalk’s family, the OMFPOA launched its website in 2001, along with the copyrights for the domain ([www.omfpoa.com](http://www.omfpoa.com)). The website has been a source of information for its members, FPOs and others. It is continually updated and maintained by the association.

After many hours of deliberation, the executive proposed a change to the association’s long standing motto of ‘Prevention, Protection and Preservation’ which had donned our crest from 1973, to read ‘Prevention, Protection and Public Education’, at the annual conference in 2001 in Waterloo. As leaders in fire prevention and fire safety education programming, the membership agreed that the change was welcome and would have an impact on future endeavors of the organization.

 

**PROVINCIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION**

Soon after the formation of the organization, the members provided a trophy to the Ontario Firefighters Association (OFFA) to be presented annually to recognize a fire department for its efforts in fire prevention in its community. Later, the association provided gifts annually to the OFFA which were presented to the winners of their poster contest.

The OMFPOA also provided gifts annually to the winners and their schools for the OAFC’s Grade 5 poster contest. This initiative was supported until 1985 when the OMFPOA was advised that the OAFC was discontinuing the program.

As the organization worked to spread fire prevention and fire safety education across the province, it was difficult to do with limited funds. The first known promotion affiliated with the association, was with a grocery store in Northern Ontario. Working with Ralph Nicholson of the Timmins Fire Department and President of our association, the chain agreed to place promotional slogans on their grocery bags. The slogan read ‘Smoke detectors save lives’.

Rocky Campbell, the editor of the ‘Canadian Firefighter’ magazine, discussed the possibility of the association contributing fire prevention articles to his magazine which was published six times a year. This invitation was accepted but our articles were very intermittent at best and finally discontinued.

In 1987, an opportunity for the fire service came when an FPO from the North York Fire Department was seconded by the Ministry of the Solicitor General for one year to report to the Minister on how best to reduce the fire death rate in Ontario. This was to be an independent study, separate from the OFM. One of Greg Alexander’s initiatives was working with Dr. David Suzuki from the CBC to produce a fire safety video. He also developed a home safety booklet for distribution throughout the province. Although this program was supported through the Ministry of the Solicitor General, our association provided input and materials to assist Greg in this venture.

Director Jim Fritzley requested that the association support the Shrine Club of North America’s ‘National Burn Awareness Week’, February 4th-10th, 1990. To ensure success, many fire departments worked with their local hospital’s maternity ward to provide the new parents with important information about the prevention of burns and scolding to newborn babies, infants and children.

The ‘Change your clock, change your battery’ campaign came to light in 1990 and has continued very prominently since then. This slogan and program, as simple as it is, has proven its commitment to saving lives in Ontario.

Barbequing and the use of propane as fuel, was becoming very popular and along with this popularity came problems. The use of barbeques on balconies, transporting the propane through the apartment building, improper connections between the hose and the tank and using barbeques as a heating appliance, were just a few of the problems that arose. The OMFPOA was fortunate to team up with Superior Propane to produce a video on the safe handling and usage of propane. The main contributors to this video were Brent Pennington from Superior Propane and Dave Guilbault from the Ottawa Fire Department. The video was distributed without charge to all fire departments in Ontario and to all other interested parties.

After a rough beginning, things were settling down with the administration of the OBC, until Bill 103, ‘An Act to Amend the Building Code Act’ was introduced. In the Bill, there was a clause that stated: the Minister may make regulations to regulate existing buildings’. When the members of our association looked into this proposed amendment, it was determined that it would have a direct effect on the application of the fire code and its existing and proposed retrofit sections. Also, if this amendment was enacted, it would have had a direct impact on the fire prevention staff throughout the province along with the possible demise of the Ontario Fire Code.

Rob Kidd and Chief William Brown met with Mr. George Wildish, Special Assistant Interjurisdictional Affairs, Ministry of Housing, Buildings Branch at the Ontario Parliament building in Toronto, on December 10th, 1992. They were successful in having the Act rewritten to remove any reference to existing buildings.

Also discussed at the meeting, was the issuance of conditional building permits. Mr. Wildish requested that the fire service submit a supplemental report on the fire service’s concerns dealing with the issuance of conditional building permits. The report was filed on January 18th, 1993.

Being successful in 1992 didn’t deter the building officials. Again, the request for a code for existing buildings, reappeared in the proposed building code amendments in 1996. It was adopted and remains in the building code regulations today, but has not been acted upon.

Since its inception in 1957, the association had not supported a uniform education program provincially. Thanks to the hard work of Art Pullan from the Brockville Fire Department, he began to incorporate the NFPA’s ‘Learn Not To Burn’ program in his hometown, County of Leeds and Grenville. He continued as a member of our executive to champion this program and was able to obtain $25,000 in funding from the OFM. Soon after receiving this grant, he was successful in obtaining a corporate sponsor, the Canadian Tire Corporation, which agreed to place book one of the program into every elementary school across Canada, providing the program was ‘canadianized’ for lack of a better term.

For Canadian Tire’s commitment to fire and life safety, the OMFPOA nominated the Canadian Tire Child Protection Foundation to receive an Ontario Fire Prevention and Public Education Award. Canadian Tire received this award at the 1994 award ceremony in Toronto.

The executive produced a number of workshop presentation packages which were made available to assist fire departments when they pitched the program to

their school boards and/or teachers. To supplement this program, the OMFPOA distributed and sold over 1,000 Sparky key chains and 100,000 Sparky book stickers to the teachers and school children throughout Ontario.

A number of fire departments who planned to implement and support the LNTB program in their school systems were awarded the LNTB Champion award and began piloting the program in their communities with the assistance of the NFPA and the FMPFSC.

To further augment the LNTB promotions, the executive printed Sparky placemats and distributed them through the school and daycare networks. At the end of this campaign, the association had sold over 4,500 placemats.

In the fall of 1992, the OFM conducted a ‘Fire Safety Education in Schools’ survey and of the 625 surveys sent out, 166 were completed and returned with the following results:

Departments using Learn Not To Burn 47

Departments not using LNTB 119

Departments considering using LNTB 87

Departments using other programs 72

Departments not using any programs 55

Students involved with LNTB 86,227

Schools involved with LNTB 397

What would the results be like now, fourteen years later?

To assist in the promotion of the LNTB program and home fire safety, the association teamed up with Ault Dairies to produce ‘Sparky Says’ slogans on the back of their four litre milk bags and one litre milk cartons throughout the month of October and especially during Fire Prevention Week. There were over 1 million bags and cartons distributed around the province and in Eastern Quebec in 1991 and 1992 and 2.5 million bags in 1993. By 1995, Sparky was on approximately 6 million one and two litre cartons.

In the early years of the campaign, it was estimated that these messages were read by more than six million people, once the bags and cartons reached their homes. It was noted at one store that when a mother went to pick up a bag of milk from the dairy case, her child asked for the one with Sparky on it. Proof that marketing can produce results! In 1996, Ault Dairies informed the OMFPOA that the program would run an extended period of time which meant that the program could run as long as two months.

When the FMPFSC was formed, the association decided that if Ault Dairies wished to continue the Sparky program, the FMPFSC logo should replace the OMFPOA logo on the bags and cartons.

For their efforts in the promotion of fire and life safety, the OMFPOA nominated Ault Dairies for the OFM’s Fire Safety Award and they received it on November 28th, 1991. In accepting the award, Ault pledged to continue the program in 1992, if their head office and budget permitted it.

With the NFPA LNTB program well underway, the OMFPOA, in partnership with the OAFC and the OFM, embarked on a program that we believed would enhance the LNTB program and would be used as a precursor to it. The OMFPOA distributed complimentary LNTB pre-school programs to a number of pre-schools and day nurseries, to evaluate it.

To assist with the promotion of this program, three workshops were held in Oakville, East York and, prior to the second annual public education conference in Markham, where approximately 400 daycare/nursery operators and fire service personnel were introduced to the program by Sharon Gamache from the NFPA.

Through the efforts of Elizabeth Moore, a program advisor for the Ministry of Community and Social Services, $2,500 in funding was received from the Ministry to purchase one program for every daycare/nursery school in York Region and Simcoe County, so that approximately 150 centres could teach these important lifesaving skills to all the pre-school children who attended these facilities. For their efforts, Ms. Moore and the Ministry received the FMPFSC award in 1994.

Further, Ms. Moore, the Ministry and the Markham Fire and Emergency Services, received recognition from the NFPA’s Ralph Jenson award committee for their efforts in providing fire and life safety programming to these young people, through the promotion of the LNTB pre-school program.

When the LNTB initiative ended in 1996, the OMFPOA, the OAFC and the OFM partnership had distributed over 2,139 pre-school programs to the daycare and day nurseries across Ontario.

To reduce the needless loss of life to fire in Ontario, the ‘Alarmed for Life’ program was introduced to the fire service at the FPO seminar in Gravenhurst in October, 1991. It was developed to assist the FPOs in Ontario with their public service announcements and media advertisements. To further complement the program, ‘An Alarming Initiative’, a community smoke alarm program, was introduced as a joint project between the OMFPOA and the FMPFSC, with the Canadian Tire Corporation being the preferred supplier of the smoke alarms. The program ran for a three month period (Oct.-Dec.1994). At the FPO seminar, Art Pullan informed the attendees that there were 100 fire departments that had expressed interest in participating in the program. It was agreed that the funds generated from this program would be held in trust by the OMFPOA.

In the end, over 200 fire departments participated and sales exceeded 33,000 smoke alarms. As a gesture of gratitude, the FMPFSC provided every fire department with a copy of the educational video ‘Sparky’s ABC’s of Fire Safety’ for use in their education programs.

Working to ensure that every home in Ontario had at least one working smoke alarm, the association again teamed up with the FMPFSC through 1995-1996 with the ‘Alarmed for Life’ and the ‘An Alarming Initiative’ programs and sold an additional 5,200 smoke alarms, 920 ten year smoke alarms, 10,850 batteries, 13 hand held CO monitors and 3,100 CO alarms, over and above the total of 33,000 smoke alarms sold in the previous campaign.

Through the hard work of the OAFC and the OMFPOA, the residents of Ontario received fire and life safety messages directly to their homes, via sales flyers from the Canadian Tire Corporation and Beaver Lumber, during Fire Prevention Week, 1992. Both retailers agreed to showcase home safety items such as smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in their stores and sale priced these items during Fire Prevention Week to assist the fire service in reducing losses from fire.

The fire service was adopting catch phrases and using the following phrase as his platform ‘Fire prevention and education is the way of the future’, President Paul Olah, approached the OFM with the idea of hosting a conference for fire service personnel who were assigned the duty of teaching fire safety in their community. Paul was successful and the first Public Fire Safety Educators’ conference was held in Welland in May, 1993 with approximately 50 fire educators attending. Even though there was some uncertainty that the conference would not be repeated, it has become an annual event with increasing attendance every year.

Originally, the conference was a joint effort between a fire department and the OFM. With the advent of the FMPFSC, the council assumed the sponsorship role in 1996 and this conference continues to be a significant annual event for the FMPFSC.

‘Spring into Fire Safety’, a campaign developed by the OFM in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources to educate the general public about specific seasonal fire safety concerns, was not originally endorsed by the OMFPOA. However, after further consideration and clarification from the OFM, the association did endorse the program.

Swiss Chalet restaurants (Cara Foods) agreed to assist the fire service in the promotion of home fire prevention and life safety practices. Fire safety messages and family fire and life safety activities were printed on their placemats which were placed on every table in their restaurants. While the family waited for their meals, they would actively participate in the activities that were on the placemat.

Ontario Fire Marshal Moyle, after reviewing the investigation report into the multiple fatality fire at 6 Forest Laneway in North York, summoned members of the fire service and interested groups to a meeting, with the purpose of developing fire safety materials for those who lived in high rise residential buildings.

This group recommended an information package that included three components:

A ‘Plan Ahead Fire Safety in Apartment Buildings’ brochure/‘Fire in your Apartment Building’ brochure/A door sticker that contained fire and life safety information.

This material was provided by the OFM and distributed by the fire service throughout Ontario.

The association was always looking for a way to promote fire and life safety. As there was a controversy brewing in Toronto, because the city had received numerous applications to install additional overhead electronic signs along the Gardiner Expressway, John Dowdell contacted the Inglis Corporation, which had one of the largest signs along the Gardiner at the time. John continued his discussion with Inglis and they agreed to place fire prevention slogans on their sign. The first two messages were displayed on December 16th and 28th, 1995.

For the 100th anniversary of the NFPA, the association agreed to financially support and endorse the sale of the ‘Protector’, a limited edition print, with the profits being donated to the FMPFSC. In September, 1996, the council advised the OMFPOA that it had covered the costs of the production and in doing so, the OMFPOA received $5,000 for their effort in promoting the program.

A ‘Fire Chief of the Year’ was an idea discussed over a few beverages one night during the FPO seminar at the fire college. At a special meeting of the executive, it was agreed that we would proceed with this program and if possible, the award would be presented at the OAFC’s annual banquet. The first award was presented in 1996, to Chief Alan Speed, of the North York Fire Department. After the first presentation was completed, the OAFC suggested that future presentations be conducted at our annual conference. This award has been presented to a Fire Chief at our conference’s annual banquet since 1997.

**FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

The idea of certifying FPOs to a provincial standard was first discussed at an OMFPOA executive meeting in 1983. A committee was established to look into the possibilities for certifying FPOs in Ontario, similar to the program developed by the building officials in the province. All building officials who successfully completed the Ministry of Housing Building Code Act and Regulation programs, were eligible to obtain the Certified Building Code Official (CBCO) designation.

During discussions with the OFM and the OAFC, it was noted that the Ministry of Housing contributed the funding and the staff resources to develop the building officials’ training program. This OBC training program has recently been revamped to comply with the training requirements contained in the newly amended Ontario Building Code Act (Bill 124).

As the education committee continued working towards obtaining approvals and acceptance from the OFM and the OAFC for a certification program, it entered into talks with Seneca College about the development of an accreditation program for Fire Prevention Officers. In 1993, the OMFPOA was invited to sit on Seneca’s advisory committee for the ‘Fire Protection Engineering Technology’ program. This action was taken as the executive believed that it was important and that the association had an obligation to provide educational programming to their members.

During the ongoing discussion with Seneca College, the OAFC proposed that before a certification/accreditation program could go forward, a ‘Standards for the Fire Service’ had to be developed and requested the OMFPOA to participate in this process.

Prior to endorsing the OAFC’s request to participate in the development of these standards, the association wrote a letter to Fire Chief Moyle, Chairman of the OAFC Standards Task Force, requesting that the FPO Standard be developed in parallel with the Firefighter’s Standard. Unfortunately, this request was turned down and the Professional Standards Setting Body (PSSB) began the development of the first standard for firefighters.

During the development deliberations, the professional firefighters associations circulated correspondence to all the members of the PSSB, asking them to withdraw from the committee. The response from the OMFPOA was to continue to provide representation to this committee.

In the letter sent back to the PFFA, the OMFPOA stated that ‘our decision was largely based on the position we find ourselves in as an association, in that for the last thirty-five years we have represented a large number of volunteer firefighters as well as professional firefighters, with respect to fire prevention related matters. Our association’s initial reason for becoming involved in the PSSB process was perhaps similar to your association’s initial reason for becoming involved in the PSSB process; that being the potential benefit that a set of uniform standards could bring to the members of our association and the Ontario fire service as a whole’.

After the completion of the Firefighter Standard, a number of FPOs from across the province, participated in the Dacom process, which began the formulation of the FPO Standard. The standard was introduced at the 1991 FPO seminar at the fire college. Although revisions to the FPO Standard were scheduled to be completed in 1996, the process did not begin until 2001.

As nothing had developed from previous discussions with the PSSB, John Peters, the association’s representative on the PSSB, wrote a letter to the chairman asking him to make the FPO certification a priority of the PSSB in 1996.

After a meeting with the Fire Marshal, President Olah requested that the association form a committee to draft a certification program for FPOs and on completion, present it to the executive for review. As the association continued to work on the certification program, it had an opportunity to sit in on the Dacom Analysis for building officials, as the OBOA was looking at a possible apprenticeship program for building inspectors, to enhance their provincial CBCO designation.

At the inquest into the fire deaths at 2 Forest Laneway in North York, Fire Marshal Moyle tabled a report on ‘Public Safety Legislation Reform’.

The report suggested that the OFM fire prevention programs be reviewed and that the fire service needed to become more aggressive with respect to fire prevention matters.

Using documents from the inquest, the membership at the 1996 conference, again forwarded a resolution requesting a certification program be established and implemented as quickly as possible for FPOs.

In January, 1997, the writing of the learning outcomes for the program began. 15 FPOs, representing a cross section of the fire service from across Ontario, were seconded to write these learning outcomes.

In February, 1997, Dave Flynn, the education committee chairman, received correspondence from Lynn Lofquest, Manager of Training and Education, OFM. It contained a suggested critical path for the transformation of the FPO Standard into learning outcomes.

To complicate and set back the certification process for FPOs, the OFM introduced a proposed certificate program for public fire and life safety educators, at their 1996 conference. This new program became a priority of the OFM, over all other programs that were being developed at that time.

The Public Fire Educators’ certification program was introduced to the fire service in the fall of 1997. It was designed to address the growing needs and skills required by the public education specialist, to conduct and establish effective fire and life safety programming in their communities.

It has been eight years since the FPO standard was printed and the FPOs waited patiently for their opportunity to participate in the development of the curriculum for their certification program. During this time, the FPOs were advised that their standard had to be revised to meet the recently legislated FPPA and the new fire code requirements (ie: Part 4).

The GAP analysis process was underway at this time. The PSSB and the OMFPOA were attempting to determine the gaps in the proposed certification program and to identify the tasks an FPO performs in carrying out their duties.

During their deliberations, the committee reviewed programs such as the FPO program from Alberta and the MMAH Ontario building code programs, to assist them in the development of the FPO curriculum.

In conjunction with the GAP analysis process, the PSSB and the OMFPOA worked diligently to revise the FPO standard to reflect the current tasks an FPO was required to perform. Most of the revisions were based on the legislative changes to the FPPA and the Ontario Fire Code regulations.

To assist with the development and printing costs of the new FPO Standard, the OMFPOA provided $5,000 in funding. In return, the OMFPOA received 100 copies of the new standard to distribute among its membership and exclusive distribution rights for five years.

Almost 18 years after being first proposed, the FPO certification program was introduced at the OMFPOA conference in 2001, by Robert French and Fire Chief Terry Allen.

To assist the staff at the Ontario Fire College and ensure the program was introduced in a timely manner, FPOs volunteered throughout the spring of 2002, to develop the necessary modules required for the certification program curriculum.

Results of their labours were soon realized, as by May, 2003, six FPOs had successfully completed the program and were certified by the Ontario Fire Marshal. Today, there are 79 certified FPOs and 469 enrolled in the program currently, working towards their certification.

The program received its accreditation on September 6th, 2005, from the International Fire Service Accreditation Council (IFSAC). Although it took over 20 years to become reality, the FPOs finally received their accredited certification program.

After all their hard work to achieve certification, the FPOs must continue to maintain their skills and knowledge. They are required to attend various seminars, training programs and courses to obtain the necessary points, within a prescribed time frame, to maintain their certification status.

To augment the FPO certification program, the OMFPOA, OFM and the OAFC signed a partnership agreement with the MMAH on May 8th, 2001, to facilitate the OBC training programs. In addition to the OMFPOA being permitted to facilitate the building code courses, all three parties were successful during their discussions with the building branch, to have the ‘fire protection’ category added to the approved list of disciplines/categories contained in Bill 124.

This would ensure that those in the fire service who were assigned plans review and inspection authority under the Building Code Act and regulations, could continue to do so upon obtaining the required qualifications.

This was an excellent move as changes to the Act were being contemplated at the time and once approved, all the persons working and using the building code would have to be registered/qualified to do so, before they could work in their respective discipline, thus establishing a new level of service standards for municipalities and other local enforcement bodies.

Deputy Fire Marshal Doug Crawford, while addressing the participants at the FPO seminar in the fall of 2005, said that because of this initiative, the fire service has positioned itself very well in building code matters.

**CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE**

Throughout the years, there has been a long serving commitment by our members, on various committees, task forces, boards of directors, associations and this commitment continues. Since the inception of the Building Code Act and regulations and the FPPA, this association has been represented around the table, especially when matters dealing with fire and life safety were discussed.

As the building and fire codes change, from prescriptive based codes to objective based codes, your association will be front and centre when issues influencing fire and life safety are involved.

Members of our association work together with staff from the OFM and the fire college, to keep you current on the issues so you can make informed fire and life safety decisions.

Members of your executive meet on an ongoing basis with the OFM, the PSSB and the OAFC, to develop and review FPO standards and programming, so the information you receive is the best available. For over 20 years, members have sat on the fire college program committee and the FPO seminar committee to ensure your needs are addressed.

To keep ourselves informed on what is happening around us, the association sits on various boards of directors, such as the Ontario Fire and Life Safety Educators’ Association and the Canadian Fire Safety Association.

Two chapters of the OMFPOA received the Fire Marshal’s Public Safety Award for their continued efforts in fire prevention in their regions: the Niagara chapter in 1994 and the York Region chapter in 2000.

When the FMPFSC was formed in 1993, the OMFPOA received membership to the council and are proud to be a founding member. As a member of the council, we have a representative appointed to the Fire Marshal’s Fire Safety Awards selection committee and have been on this committee for many years.

This association was formed by a number of concerned and dedicated fire service personnel from across Ontario. The association has maintained its visibility for over 50 years, because of the men and women who address these concerns each and every day.

May we all look to the next 50 years with the same enthusiasm as these 15 gentlemen who had the vision of a fire safe province for all to enjoy. Keep up the good work and support those who represent you and your association.

**CONFERENCE LOCATIONS/PRESIDENTS**

1957 London James Fitzgerald Chairman

1958 Sarnia James Fitzgerald Chairman

1959 Wallaceburg James Fitzgerald Chairman

1960 Brantford James Fitzgerald President

1961 Niagara Falls James Fitzgerald President

1962 St. Thomas Reg Baker President

1963 Kitchener Reg Baker President

1964 Hamilton Reg Baker President

1965 Chatham Wm. Sills President

1966 Hamilton Wm. Sills President

1967 Brantford James Sneddon President

1968 Niagara Falls James Sneddon President

1969 Sarnia John Comisso President

1970 Windsor John Comisso President

1971 St. Catharines W.A. Duff Dell President

1972 Peterborough W.A. Duff Dell President

1973 Timmins Ron Weir President

1974 Nepean Jay Cosgrave President

1975 North Bay Bob Sledziewski President

1976 Oshawa Bob Sledziewski President

1977 Brockville Bob Sledziewski President

1978 Niagara Falls Ralph Nicholson President

1979 Kitchener Ralph Nicholson President

1980 London Bob Allen President

1981 Chatham Bob Allen President

1982 Brampton John Simon President

1983 Stratford John Simon President

1984 Brampton John Bouchard President

1985 Collingwood John Bouchard President

1986 North Bay Bill Mitchell President

1987 Peterborough Bill Mitchell President

1988 Guelph Scott Richardson President

1989 Brockville Scott Richardson President

1990 Elliot Lake Brian Wallace President

1991 Scarborough Scott Richardson President

1992 Elliot Lake Art Pullan President

1993 Brockville Art Pullan President

1994 Welland Paul Olah President

1995 Sudbury Paul Olah President

1996 Oakville Paul Olah President

1997 Orangeville John Peters President

1998 Waterloo John Peters President

1999 Niagara on the Lake Bob Webb President

2000 London Jim Copeland President

2001 Waterloo Randy Kalan President

2002 Ottawa Jana Gillis President

2003 Orangeville Jana Gillis President

2004 Fort Erie Jana Gillis President

2005 Kitchener Craig Cunningham President

2006 Barrie Eric Chant President

**LIFE MEMBERS**

1975 Ken Roberts St. Catharines Fire Department

1977 Jay Cosgrave North Bay Fire Department

1990 Lou Vaughan Canadian Steel Institute

1990 Don Bryant Ontario Fire Marshal’s Office, Instructor-OFC

1990 Walter & Helen Anderson Hand Chemicals

1991 Duff Dell Sarnia Fire Department

1991 John Simon Niagara Falls Fire Department

1991 John Bateman Fire Marshal, OFM

1995 The NFPA NFPA

1997 Roy Philippe OFM

2004 Rich Morris NFPA

2005 Scott Richardson Markham Fire & Emergency Services

**REGIONAL CHAPTERS**

Chapter 1 Niagara Region

Chapter 2 Eastern Region

Chapter 3 York Region

Chapter 4 Durham Region

Chapter 5 Wellington/Dufferin Region

Chapter 6 Halton/Peel/Hamilton Region

Chapter 7 Simcoe County/Muskoka Region

Chapter 8 Southwest Region

**FIRE CHIEF OF THE YEAR**

To recognize the significant contribution made by a Fire Chief to the prevention of fire and the public education of life safety in the community.

The Fire Chief MUST be able to demonstrate support of all fire prevention activities undertaken by the fire department, and promote fire and life safety skills in the community.

1996 Chief Alan Speed North York Fire Department

1997 Chief Dave Guilbault Ancaster Fire Department

1998 Chief Cyril Hare Mississauga Fire Department

1999 Chief Jim Handcock Kitchener Fire Department

2000 \*\*

2001 Chief Clifford Jeffrey Quinte West Fire Department

2002 Chief Jim Sales Markham Fire & Emergency Services

2003 Chief Dave Fields Windsor Fire & Rescue

2004 Chief Paul Olah Welland Fire Department

2005 Chief Bennett Gananoque Fire Department

\*\* Information not available

JIM COPELAND AWARD

To recognize the significant contribution made by a citizen or group, to the prevention of fire and the public education of life safety in the community.

The nominee MUST be able to demonstrate support of fire prevention activities and the promotion of fire and life safety in the community.

2001 Ed Davies

2002 Rich Morris

2003 Stephanie Gaetz

2004 Dave Flynn

2005 Peter Bendington

STUDENT BURSARY

2004 Jason Ostapeic

2005 Colin Lahey