



# Fire News



## Markham Fire & Emergency Services Update - Spring 2010

### MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF



Almost 9 months ago Fire Chief Snowball, Deputy Alexander and myself were provided the opportunity to lead the Markham Fire & Emergency Services. As a team we have started to establish what is necessary to manage the department and plan for the future. One of our primary objectives is to maintain open communications with staff. It is our intention to continue with staff visits in an effort to provide visible leadership and opportunities for staff to meet with senior management.

Station 93 is scheduled to open July 1<sup>st</sup>. New firefighters have been hired to replace retirements and to provide a full complement of staff for the new station. Also, several promotions will occur to facilitate the opening of the new station.

Work is moving forward with the Cathedral Station (93) being well underway. Four additional major projects are also in progress: Emergency Operations Centre and Relocation of the Alarm Room to 8100 Warden, Master Fire Plan and Joint Fire and Waterworks Training Facility Study.

During March the announcement was made to restructure the Markham Fire & Emergency Services Management Team. At this time Platoon 1 and 2, Communications and Mechanical Divisions along with the Special Projects and Public Education Officers will report to Deputy Chief Alexander. Platoons 3 and 4, Training and Fire Prevention Education Divisions will report to me.

Since our last newsletter one interesting milestone has occurred. Firefighter Bill Vliek retired after 38 years of service ... the significance is that he is the last of the twelve original full-time firefighters hired for the Markham Fire & Emergency Services from 1971.

It is important to share with you the sadness related to the unfortunate passing of Retired Platoon Chief Bill Sheridan. Bill passed away at Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie on Tuesday March 16, 2010 due to complications from cancer. Thank you to the retired and active members of the Markham Fire & Emergency Services that attended the service on Sunday March 21<sup>st</sup> in support of Bill's family.

On behalf of Bill, Phil and I, we would like to thank the members of the Markham Fire & Emergency Services and all Town staff for on-going support and assistance. Working together is necessary for success.

# Suppression

## Gas leak Natasha Way

Fire crews responded to 9181 Woodbine Ave to a reported explosion and transformer fire. Once on location it was determined there had been a natural gas leak that reached a hydro transformer which provided an ignition source.

The transformer subsequently caught fire and was by the leaking gas line. Approximately 60 houses and 120 – 200 residents were evacuated at the start of the incident and returned safely to their homes after Enbridge Gas and Powerstream worked to restore power to the area.



## Don Park Road Fire

Markham Fire & Emergency Services responded to a reported fire and explosion in an industrial building on Don Park Ave. On arrival flames were visible from the roof and crews performed an aggressive fire attack, quickly bringing the fire under control. All occupants exited the building safely and no injuries were reported. The building sustained extensive damage. The investigation is ongoing.

## Central Park Drive Incident

Markham Fire & Emergency Services responded to a vehicle entering the residence at 71 Central Park Drive in Unionville. The vehicle had impacted the structure with sufficient force to displace some of the main structural members of the residence and there was the possibility of partial collapse of the building. There were no reported injuries to the driver or anyone inside the residence. The home was determined to be uninhabitable in its' present condition and the property was turned over to the owner's insurance company. Accommodations were secured for the displaced family. The accident remains under investigation by York Regional Police.

## Bur Oak Fire



MFES responded to a reported working house fire on Bur Oak Ave. The fire was on the second floor of a three storey townhome. The occupants were not home at the time of the fire. The fire was contained to the floor of origin and there are no reported injuries. MFES crews were able to conduct an aggressive interior fire attack to support search and rescue. MFES Responded with 4 Engines, 2 Ladders and 2 Command Officers (26 Staff). The fire is still under investigation.

Thanks to Ajeet Ghumman for the amazing photographs capturing our crews on scene!

Pictured below:  
District Chief Ken Robertson (centre)  
LtoR: Firefighters Jeremy Acton, Dave Swain and Mike Perry



Pictured right: Firefighter Terwerai Janda

# Training Division

## NEW RECRUITS 2010

We are please to announce that 26 recruit firefighters and 1 recruit fire prevention officer have successfully completed the recruitment process for Markham Fire & Emergency Services. The suppression recruits started their 15 week training program on March 15th with our Training Division and the fire prevention recruit started her training on April 6th.

Welcome to:

Daryn Ackers	David McCartney
Daniel Allen	Brad McDonald
John Barber	Shea McGuire
Matthew Batten	Todd McKenzie
Tenille Biro	Chris Pasinelli
John Blackburn	Neil Reid
Mike Brouillard	Suresh Subramaniam
Giovanni Ciufu	Martin Teaz
Ryan Cousins	Carlo Troccoli
Heather Elchuk	Adrian Tsui
Aidan Loughran	Markian Chorostil
Kristopher Mackenzie	Lukasz Wybraniec
Dominic Parker	Luke Andrews
Kristy Jarrett	

## WATER RESCUE TRAINING

Platoon 4 participated in Ice Water Rescue Training at Mt. Joy during the month of March.

Firefighter Bradley Lamport

Below:

Firefighter Brad Lamport, Captain Mike Hallyburton  
Firefighter Rob Whitmore



## Staff Promotions

- District Chief George Birtig was promoted to Platoon Chief, Platoon 4.
- Acting District Chief Mike Perreault promoted to District Chief, Platoon 4.
- Captain John Hummell will assume the position of Acting District Chief on Platoon 2 following the completion of the Acting District Chief promotional process held in January 2010.
- Designate Captain Dave Creighton was promoted to the position of full Captain Platoon 1, Station 96
- Designate Captain Marty Coutts was promoted to the position of full Captain Platoon 3, Station 91

Congratulations to all of you in your new positions!

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS...**

Please welcome our new Administration Clerk Fery Vaghei who joined the Fire and Emergency Services Department in December. Fery joins us from the Building Department and has been with the Town for 14 years. Please welcome Fery to the Administrative Offices at 8100 Warden Avenue!

### ***EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT***

We are delighted to announce that Sonia Singh will be joining the Town of Markham on April 12 as the Emergency Preparedness Co-coordinator.

Sonia brings with her over fourteen years of experience in the public sector including York Region Public Health, Provincial Ministry of Health and most recently as the Toronto Public Health's Emergency Planning Coordinator.

Sonia will be reporting to the Commissioner of Community and Fire Services and will be responsible for the Town of Markham's Emergency Management Program and the legislative requirements of the program.

Sonia will be working from the 8100 Warden Avenue office. Join us in welcoming Sonia to the Town of Markham.

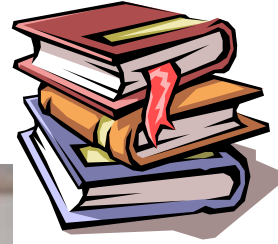
### ***FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION***

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Kristy Jarrett as our new Fire Prevention Officer. Kristy joins us from Crown Fire Equipment Services where she provided inspections, repairs, installations and many other Fire Safety services to various companies. Kristy is also a graduate of the three year Fire Protection Engineering Technology program from Seneca College.

Kristy will start on April 6, 2010 and begin her training within the Fire Prevention Division.

Kristy will be located at Station 98 when her orientation has been completed. Please join us in welcoming Kristy to our Department.

## School Literacy Program Events



Markham Fire & Emergency Services staff supported Markham Gateway Public School literacy program. It involves grade 8 boys mentoring the grade 1 and 2 boys on the importance of reading by using basketball as an incentive. The boys participated in a reading program and then played basketball against the Fire Department. The Markham Fire team included Adam Grant, Glenn Dick, Joe Lanni, Alex Freeman and Glenn Ambrose pictured above with students.

We received a letter of thanks from students of Ellen Fairclough Public School Boys' Literacy Crew telling us how much they appreciated staff Alex Freeman, Dave Blizzard, and Adam Grant going to the school and participating in a basketball game.



**School Safety Program**

Markham Fire & Emergency Services launched a new School Safety Program to ensure that all primary students attending elementary school in the Town of Markham have the opportunity to receive fire and life safety education. Fire Prevention Officers and Suppression staff will visit their adopted school three times per year to share fire safety messages. Topics for each session include smoke alarms, Calling 911, use of home escape plans, crawling low under smoke and how to stop, drop and roll. Fire Prevention Officers and Suppression staff will continue to grow and expand this program as new ideas are introduced and developed.

Pictured below: Fire Prevention Officer Jason Scovell at Milliken Mills Public School



**April Safety Message:**  
Store propane barbeques outside

# Around Town...

Markham partnered with **Free The Children**, a Canadian registered charitable organization, to raise funds toward Haiti's reconstruction after the country was devastated by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake on January 12, 2010.

Community and staff members joined together at the **Markham Miracle - Community Dinner event** held on February 10th at the Markham Event Centre. It was a huge success and 100% of the proceeds go to Free the Children.

Pictured below:

back row LtoR —R.Klassen, A.Marshall, R.Mosor, M.Pehlemann, S.Hart, D.Asals, S.Daniel, J.Lanni, A.Grant, N.Patel,  
2nd row LtoR—M.McKnight, D.Blizzard, M. Bekking, W.Brinston, M.Gottlieb, B.Snowball, J.Scovell  
Centre: Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Councillor Alex Chiu and community dignitaries

A big thanks to Markham Fire & Emergency staff for volunteering their time to help make this event so successful!



## BOTTLED WATER VS TAP WATER

On March 11, in celebration of Canada's first Bottled Water Free Day, over 340 Markham staff participated in a blind taste test held by Waste and Environment Department in partnership with Waterworks Department. The results were an overwhelming 67% said they preferred the taste of tap water or could not taste a difference between bottled and tap water.

Thank you for making this a successful event. We encourage everyone to please make drinking tap water your first choice.

Pictured right: Chief Training Officer Mike Bekking and Training Officer Don Kennedy



# Staff Recognition

Markham Fire & Emergency Services crews responded to a medical call where a person had no vital signs as a result of choking on food. Paramedic's were on scene when our crew arrived. Firefighter Alex Pompilio performed chest compressions and as a result of his actions the food became dislodged from the victim's throat. The patient was taken to the hospital, treated then released. On scene was Captain Dave Irving, Firefighters Alex Pompilio, Shane Harrison and Marty Coutts. Your contribution to the community is appreciated. Thank you all for your professionalism and dedication.

Crews responded to a recent medical call where Captain Steve George, Firefighters Larry Pilkey, Steven Servinis and Rob West assisted in a defibrillation save. Fire personnel will receive recognition at the 2010 "Survivor" Event honouring emergency personnel from the Region.

## CELEBRATION OF HOPE

The Celebration of Hope luncheon was presented by York Region Breast Cancer Friends in partnership with the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation on behalf of the hospital's Breast Cancer Health Centre and Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation. It was an exciting event that attracted over 1,200 guests. Markham Fire & Emergency Firefighters attended the event.

Pictured left to right:



Firefighters Karen Harvey, Chris Nearing, Rob McVicar and Steve Servinis

Retired!

**PLATOON CHIEF RICK McWATTERS**



After a 37 year career with the Town of Markham Platoon Chief Rick McWatters retired on December 31, 2010. Rick started his career with the Town's Parks & Recreation division in 1975, and moved to the Fire Department as a firefighter in 1977. Rick moved up through the department ranks as a Captain, then Acting Platoon Chief to Platoon Chief. Rick was also seconded as an Acting Deputy Fire Chief for six months in 2009. We thank Rick for his contribution and dedication to the Town and Fire Department and wish him all best in retirement!

## MARKHAM FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES 2009- 2010 HOCKEY TEAM

Markham Fire & Emergency Services participated in the Southern Ontario Firefighters Hockey League. The season started in the first week of October and ended in the middle of February with a weeklong Tournament and playoffs in March. Congratulations Markham Fire on winning the finals. Thank you to Jim Jenkins for organizing the team and all staff and fans that supported our hockey team!

Front row: Benny Loughlin, Blair Gallant, Blaine Dobson, Rob Garland, Glenn Hall, Kevin Tsang  
Back row: Rocky Mino, Brent Milton, Jim Jones, John Roszkiewicz, Chris Beaumont, Jim Jenkins, Andrew Ireland, Brett Dean, Chris Haley



## TOY DRIVE

The 2009 Annual Toy Drive was a huge success along with the Salvation Army Christmas Program. With the help of Fire personnel, the Salvation Army in Markham assisted over 225 families which provided over 450 children with new toys and food.

Thanks to our toy drive team Firefighter Dan Makort, Firefighter Steve Morrow and the many staff volunteers who donated their time and help to make this annual cause a success.



Our bodies are meant to move...

Exercise does not need to be a workout in the gym. Go for a walk or bike ride. Go inline skating. Go cross country skiing. Jump in a lake and swim. Enjoy an afternoon of kayaking or canoeing. How about hiking or mountain biking? Go indoor wall climbing. Play a game of tennis, soccer or baseball. Go skating. Just have fun and be active. Your body will thank you!

**WATCH FOR**— Fire/EMS Safety, Health and Survival Week 2010: Fit for Duty coming June 20-26, 2010. For more information on Safety Week see [www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org).

## **Memoriam**

### **William, (Bill) Michael Sheridan Platoon Chief (Retired)**

Bill Sheridan passed away at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie on March 16, 2010 in his 66<sup>th</sup> year. Bill retired from Markham Fire and Emergency Services April 1999 after serving 26 years. Prior to joining the fire service, Bill served as a police officer with York Regional Police, formerly Markham Township Police Force in April 1964.

Bill was always ready to help those in need, even those who didn't feel they were in need. He had a huge heart and would give you the shirt off his back. Many of us will remember getting "the chair" from Bill down at the old station 92. When you got called into the office for a meeting with Bill - you were generally there for the night. Several members will remember the bread and water being slipped in the (jail) door by the brothers during these meetings.

Bill was born and raised in Markham and it only took Bill nine years of police work to realize that the Fire Department was the better of the three emergency services to have a career with. After joining the Department in January 1973, Bill rose through the ranks, being promoted to Captain in 1981 and Platoon Chief in 1996.

Bill was best known for his love of the outdoors. He was an avid hunter and fisherman. I have been told by several people who sat across the fish hut from Bill all day, while he pulled fish after fish from the same hole they were fishing in, they caught nothing. In 1998 when the ice on Lake Simcoe suddenly broke up, leaving several people adrift off the shore at Innisville, it was Bill who located stranded people and helped them find their way off the ice to safety.

Anyone who came in contact with Bill would hear everything about his pigeons and the races they competed in. He was well known and very respected amongst pigeon racers. Several staff will remember Bill sitting on the side of 400 Highway with his truck and trailer waiting to take pigeons up north for a training race. Often times the birds would beat him home.

Our condolences are extended to his family and friends. He will be truly missed.

