



InfoLink

Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

FARA InfoLink January, 2013

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Thanks to Institute Sponsors!

Without the FARA Institute and our generous contributors, FARA training symposiums would not be possible. Many, many heartfelt thanks go out to all of our Institute donors as follows:

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Counting Down to FARA's Annual Symposium 2013

By: Meredith Wivell, Conference Committee

Happy New Year from the conference committee! We hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season! The conference committee is happy to announce that the finalized schedule is available and we are excited about the wonderful speakers that will be attending this year's conference!

If you haven't registered to attend this year's upcoming conference, do it now! Don't miss out on a wonderful training opportunity this year! Register today!

This year there is a wide variety of sessions available. Let's take a look at the first day's events. On Tuesday, look forward to learning more about what's new with FARA. Find out first how FARA can benefit you and your organization. Then move into a session to learn about how verification can help reduce false alarms in your jurisdiction. Relax and take a breather at the luncheon. Then continue the day with a session about what can be done about unethical and/or dishonest sales practices in your jurisdiction. Learn what you can do to combat the problem and find what the best course of action to take. FARA promotes a working relationship between public safety and the alarm industry. We all face similar challenges in dealing with false alarms/false dispatches, so why not work together? Wrap up your day by learning all you can about how to get started and see firsthand actual examples and what beneficial outcomes look like over time.

Now that we've shared what to expect on Tuesday, please visit FARA's website to see the rest of the conference's schedule.

Does your jurisdiction face challenges with funding your training? No worries, there are funds available from the FARA Institute! To learn more about how to apply, please visit <http://faraonline.org> today. These funds are available for members of public safety. You must have your agency's permission before you can apply. Don't delay; funds are limited so plan on submitting your request as soon as possible. These funds are made possible by the generous donations from FARA Institute Sponsors. FARA has the privilege of having some of the greatest partnerships you could ask for with industry members.

Remember, registration is open now. We are counting on you to be there! Help us make this year's conference the best yet! Each year we strive to continue to build a greater relationship among public safety and industry members. We need each other to learn from, to share our experiences with and to continue growing in the path of success we all strive for.

Please join FARA and AAF this April in Orlando; we will be waiting for you!

Attention Symposium Attendees breakfast will not be provided at the 2013 Symposium, FARA Board of Directors felt it was important to reduce expenses allowing more funding for FARA's Scholarship Program

News from the Membership Committee

By: Brandy Watson, Membership Committee

The Membership committee would like to shake things up, regarding our referral program.

Currently we give out \$25 gift cards to those that refer new members.

Is this still a motivation for you or do you have a better suggestion?

Is the monetary value enough?

What would you like to receive something else or some other type of recognition?

Please contact [Debbie Hansen](#), [Kristina Walker](#) or any other Membership Committee member with your comments or suggestions.

CAM Spotlight – Brandy Watson

By Shellie Reid, T & C Committee Member

The Training & Certification Committee continues their efforts to encourage members to take the certification exam to become a Certified Alarm Manager. The CAM spotlight is a fun way for members to meet others working in a similar position while learning a bit about the exam too.

This month, we make a stop in Gainesville, Virginia, to meet Brandy Watson. She is one of the newest CAMs since she took the exam at the last symposium. I think you will enjoy reading about her experience, and how the CAM opened some doors and led to a big move.

Current Position

Currently, I am an Alarm Services Specialist with Vector Security in their National Accounts Division in Gainesville, VA. Our National Accounts Division provides a range of loss prevention and security solutions to companies throughout North America. Vector Security is a pioneer in false alarm prevention. In fact, we won the 2012 FARA Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award.

Hobbies or Interests (list a few activities you enjoy)

Since I recently moved to Virginia to work for Vector Security, I enjoy exploring my new surroundings, including visiting Washington D.C. I had never been to D.C. before and plan on many more visits to check out the museums.

How long have you been a member of FARA and do you participate in any FARA committees or activities?

I have been a member of FARA for three years and have participated on the Communications and Membership Committees. I have been to symposium twice.

When you did you first obtain your certification?

I obtained my certification at the Albuquerque Symposium in 2012, so I am a brand new CAM!!!

How long had you worked in an alarm unit/the industry before taking the exam?

I have been in the alarm industry for 8 years I started out as a monitoring dispatcher.

What made you decide to take the exam?

I decided to take the exam because there were only a few in the industry that had taken the test, I felt there was a need for representation from more alarm unit personnel, and what better way to open up communication with jurisdictions!



Did you receive any response from employers, alarm industry, family, or members of the community about your achievement?

Yes, I was featured in Security Sales and Integration magazine, the Wichita Business Journal and the Wichita Eagle newspaper (I was living and working near Wichita, KS when I got my certification). It was really exciting when family, friends, coworkers and members of FARA would forward news clip links to me!!!

Do you think accomplishing your certification has benefited your career or position as an alarm manager/coordinator?

Yes, I am now working with an amazing group of people at Vector Security.

Has it made a difference in what you do or how you do things?

It has. I was going to relocate and start a new career path, but through my connections with FARA, I was offered an opportunity with Vector Security. I'm happy to remain part of the security industry, and with a company that has a division that is dedicated to compliance and false alarm reduction.

Do you think others could benefit from achieving their Certification status?

I do think others would benefit. Certification provides a sense of accomplishment and you have validation that you have a clear understanding of the steps needed to put successful procedures in place to prevent and reduce false alarms.

Where is your certificate now? (Displayed on wall? Hidden in a drawer?)

It was proudly displayed on my desk when I was working in Kansas, but since I have moved recently to Virginia, I cannot find the box I packed it in. I'm searching for it, so that I can proudly display it once again! I do have the CAM letters behind my name in my email signature line and gladly tell anyone who asks, what they mean.

Whooo

is taking the exam to become a **Certified Alarm Manager?**



It's not too late to get started. If you have questions, post them on the **FARA Forums** and get advice from others who have taken the exam or stop by the website and check out the **Certification** section on the **Info for Members** tab.

Featured Resource – Door to Door Sales Bulletin

By Brad Shipp, FARA

If the “summer sales” phenomenon has not occurred in your community, it is most likely not far away. This business model has young men and women (usually college students) going door to door selling alarm systems during the spring and summer months. Some use ethical sales practices, but many do not. Various state, provincial and local officials have filed suit and/or entered into settlement agreements with numerous companies for deceptive sales practices.

The full list of FARA other presentations and publications can be accessed on our [web site](#). Copies can be downloaded from the member’s only site.



Door to Door Sales Beware of Potential Fraud

If the “summer sales” phenomenon has not occurred in your community, it is most likely not far away. This business model has young men and women (usually college students) going door to door selling alarm systems during the spring and summer months. Some use ethical sales practices, but many do not. Various state, provincial and local officials have filed suit and/or entered into settlement agreements with numerous companies for deceptive sales practices.

The companies that are involved in this business model are often young men and women who are not affiliated with the alarm industry. They are often not affiliated with the alarm industry and are often not affiliated with the alarm industry.

Be on the lookout for door-to-door sales activities when:

- They are not from your existing alarm company and are there to sell, upgrade or replace your alarm system.
- They are not from your existing alarm company and are there to sell, upgrade or replace your alarm system.
- They are not from your existing alarm company and are there to sell, upgrade or replace your alarm system.

Steps you can take to avoid being scammed:

- Do not let anyone enter your home without your permission.
- Do not let anyone enter your home without your permission.
- Do not let anyone enter your home without your permission.

FARA’s Believe it or Not

By Brad Shipp, FARA

Man cashing in stolen lottery tickets nabbed for burglary, cops say

By Barbara HijekFloriDUH
8:29 a.m. EST, December 22, 2012

The Big Midget store owner told cops, who had responded to an alarm, that several lottery tickets were stolen along with some cash. Surveillance footage showed a dude wearing a shiny black jacket, black pants, black shoes and a dark hat committing this burglary, according to a [news release](#) from the Ocala Police Department.



Photo: Ocala Police Department (December 22, 2012)

A detective contacted a Florida Lottery agent, who then told him the stolen tickets had been cashed in at another local store, The Big Apple, for \$58.00.

When the detective reviewed the video from The Big Apple, he was able to ID a suspect, Jerry M. Stevens, 51, as the person cashing in the lottery tickets, according to the release.

Later, Stevens allegedly admitted he had cashed in the lottery tickets, but denied burglarizing the store.

However, clothing was reportedly found in his home that matched the clothing of the burglar in the surveillance video.

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/strange/floriduh-blog/sfl-unlucky-lottery-20121220.0.3958697.story>

Do you have any stories you would like to share about stupid criminals or strange, unusual, or funny reasons for false alarms? How about outlandish things that happen in the course of your usual work day? I know we all have them, so let’s share and give everyone a chuckle! Please forward your stories to lespinosa@beavertonoregon.gov and we’ll put them in the next InfoLink for all to share!

Joke of the Month

Southern Law Joke

Questions asked in a courtroom can be very revealing... especially in the South. Even of an old, sweet lady many would be happy to call grandma.

In a trial in the heart of the South, a prosecuting attorney called his first witness, a grandmotherly woman he had known since childhood, to the stand.

He approached her and asked, "Mrs. Whitaker, do you know me?"

She responded, "Why, yes, I do know you, Mr. Coolidge. I've known you since you were a young boy, and frankly, you've been a big disappointment to me. You lie, cheat, you manipulate people and talk about them behind their backs. You think you're a big shot when you haven't the brains to realize you never will amount to anything more than a two-bit lawyer. Yes, I know you."

The lawyer was stunned! Not knowing what else to do, he pointed across the room and asked, "Mrs. Whitaker, do you know the defense attorney?"

She again replied, "Of course, I do. I've known Mr. Johnson since he was a youngster, too. He's lazy, bigoted, and he has a drinking problem. He can't build a normal relationship with anyone and his law practice is one of the worst in the entire state. Yes, I know him."

The defense attorney turned red with embarrassment.

The judge upon hearing the questions and answers thus far asked both counselors to approach the bench. In a very quiet voice he said, "If either of you asks her if she knows me, I'll throw you in jail for contempt."

Do you have any great jokes to share? Please send them to lespinosa@beavertonoregon.gov

FARA Position on Do It Yourself Systems Generates Stories

- **Public Safety Officials: DIY Alarm Systems Need to Be Regulated**
12.21.12 - CE Pro - The False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) is advising municipalities to create ordinances that do not allow Do-It-Yourself security systems to contact law enforcement officials directly, and require them to be inspected. [More Info](#)
- **FARA adopts position on DIY alarm systems**
12.27.12 - SecurityInfoWatch.com - Association makes recommendations for alarm ordinances. Earlier this month, the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) announced that its board of directors has adopted a position on do-it-yourself alarm system response..... [More Info](#)
- **FARA Adopts Position on DIY Systems Response**
12.20.12- Security Sales & Integration - The Board of Directors of the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) has adopted a position on dispatch response for do-it-yourself (DIY) alarm systems. [More Info](#)

Trained Dog Saves Master's Life By Pressing the Panic Button

12.25.12- *Counsel and Heal* - [Read more](#)

After a recent report by researchers from Belgium about the usefulness of trained dogs in helping people with excessive daytime sleepiness, there is more evidence to the fact that a dog is a man's best friend. According to a report in Mail Online, Paul McKenzie, 47, who recently slipped into diabetic coma, was saved by his dog Millie, who was trained to press the panic button.

Although Millie was trained to press the panic button only when McKenzie shouted out "alarm," but in this instance McKenzie was in no shape to do so. When Millie, who has obviously surprised everyone with her intelligence, found McKenzie on the floor, she pressed the button all by herself.

Pressing the button alerted staff at a 24-hour control center who tried to contact McKenzie, before dialing 999 and alerting his neighbors about his situation. Mr McKenzie was taken to hospital immediately for medical attention.

"Millie is my very own Lassie - she saved my life, and if it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be here now. She is a lifeline for me anyway - she is specially trained to help me do household tasks, as I have trouble getting about and lifting and carrying things on my own. I can't believe how clever she is. We have trained her to press my emergency button on command, and I often use it to call for help if I've fallen at home and can't get up," the former IT consultant was quoted as saying by Mail Online.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think that Millie understood the consequences of her pressing the button - that help always arrives. The emergency services were amazed when they realised it was my dog who had called for help. She's one in a million - my best friend," he added.

Millie was trained by canine assistance charity Canine Partners, who provide assistant dogs to people with disabilities to help them with day to day life. Millie also helps McKenzie in picking up things from the ground that he can't reach.

As part of her training, the 4-year-old was taught to press the emergency button if Paul got into difficulties, and has done so around ten times in the last two-and-a-half years.

"We train all our dogs in emergency procedures, whether it is fetching help or activating a Lifeline button. Usually the dogs do this on command, but in Millie's case she knew Paul was in trouble and worked out that by pressing the button help would be summoned. We are very proud of Millie," a spokesperson for Canine Partners said, according to the report.

Earlier this month, researchers from Belgium had recommended using trained dogs, quoting the example of a 35-year-old patient who suffered from excessive day time sleepiness. The patient suffered sleep attacks up to six times in a day and would sleep for 16 hours straight.

With the help of a dog, who wakes the patient in the morning and even during the day while travelling etc, the patient has been finally able to move around independently and efficiently, the authors said.

News on Door to Door Sales

Courtesy of NESAs

- **TX: CBS 11 Investigates: Door Delivery Notice May Not Be What It Seems**
12.19.12 - CBS 11 - North Texas - CBS 11 learned Willes also owns an alarm company in Arizona. ... Chris Russell with the North Texas Alarm Association said if the notices are being used to ... [More Info](#)
- **Vivint vs Elite**
12.18.12 – Find A Case - Vivint requests the court to enjoin the Defendants "from making false or misleading misrepresentations to any and all Vivint customers to convey the false impression that" any of the nine alleges misrepresentations are true, to enjoin Elite from "any conduct that leads a customer to reasonably believe the Elite sales representative is affiliated with the customer's existing security company, and otherwise unfairly competing with Vivint." [More Info](#)
- **Bogey helps settle contract dispute**
12.29.12 - Victorville Daily Press - So four years ago, she engaged APX Alarm Security Systems, Inc. to install a security system. Hernandez thought that the contract was for two years. [More Info](#)
- **Burglar alarm firms again top Utah BBB complaints list**
1.4.13 - Salt Lake Tribune - The Better Business Bureau of Utah has released its Top 10 list of the industries that generated the most complaints last year, with burglar alarm companies ... [More Info](#)

Public Safety Updates

Courtesy of NESAs

- **AL: Foley is eliminating alarm-registration fees**
1.14.13 - Gulf Coast News Today - Foley, AL - That's because during its regular meeting Monday, the Foley City Council agreed to change its current city ordinance regarding fire-and burglar alarms within the ... [More Info](#)
- **AZ: False alarms pricey for police**
12.18.12 - Arizona Republic - Phoenix, AZ - It costs Phoenix police more money to respond to false alarms than what the department recovers in fines. Officers last fiscal year spent 17,644 hours answering ... [More Info](#)

- **CA: Fremont's longtime police chief retiring Sunday**
12.30.12 - San Jose Mercury News - Fremont, CA - As chief, some of his choices proved unpopular, such as his decision in 2005 to stop responding to burglar alarms. The "verified alarm policy," still in effect, calls ... [More Info](#)
- **CA: With \$1.1 million less, Mammoth police realities**
1.7.13 - Sierra Wave- Mammoth Lakes, CA - Police will not respond to second alarm or burglar alarm calls, said the Chief. They will limit their assistance to fire and paramedic calls. [More Info](#)
- **CT: Stamford smoke alarm ordinance takes effect**
1.14.13 - The Advocate - Stamford, CT - Mayor Michael Pavia's office has issued a news release reminding residents about the new law's requirements. The Board of Representatives passed the ... [More Info](#)
- **DC: D.C. implements ASAP**
1.9.13 - Security Systems News - Washington - The District of Columbia has implemented the Automated Secure Alarm Protocol, becoming the sixth U.S. municipality to take the step toward faster and more efficient alarm call management. What does this mean for 911 call takers and the future of ASAP? [More Info](#)
- **GA: Cities crack down on false alarms**
12.27.12 - WTVC - Johns Creek, GA. (AP) -- Three suburban Atlanta communities are cracking down on false alarms in security systems. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports ... [More Info](#)
- **GA: Council meetings grow testier on both sides**
12.18.12 - Dunwoody Crier - Dunwoody, GA - Police Chief Billy Grogan answered some questions that council asked previously about not responding to alarms if false alarm fines are not paid. If passed, a ... [More Info](#)
- **GA: False alarm fines begin in Sandy Springs**
12.28.12 - WXIA-TV - Atlanta, GA- Sandy Springs, is now joining a crowd of Georgia cities who are fining alarm system owners for excessive false alarms that result in police or fire ... [More Info](#)
- **IA: Does city pay for a false fire alarm call?**
12.29.12 - Dubuque Telegraph Herald - Dubuque, IA - Assistant fire chief says false alarms are an opportunity to educate and assist the ... Fire Department is called to a college only to find out it's a false alarm? [More Info](#)
- **IN: Columbus Police, Fire To Charge For False Alarms**
12.18.12 - WBIW.com - Columbus, IN - Starting January 1, the Columbus Fire Department and Columbus Police Department will begin enforcement of the city's municipal code ... [More Info](#)
- **MA: Burglar alarm registrations due in Barnstable**
12.27.12 - Wicked Local - Barnstable, MA - The Barnstable Police Department sent a reminder that all burglar alarm registrations within the town expire at the end of December. All alarm users, commercial ... [More Info](#)
- **MO: Have a Security Alarm? Don't Forget Your Permit**
1.11.13 - fox4kc.com - Kansas City, MO - As you think about all of those fee renewals for 2013, don't forget a very important one if you live in Kansas City, Missouri – as it could be ... [More Info](#)
- **NC: 911 center on call on holidays - 'Emergencies don't stop'**
12.24.12 - StarNewsOnline.com – Wilmington, NC - Then a loud alarm sounds throughout the room. The alarm means an officer needed help. Telecommunicators quickly call the officer, but it was a false alarm. [More Info](#)
- **NJ: Push made for carbon monoxide detectors in schools**
12.26.12 - Vineland Daily Journal - Neptune, NJ - New Jersey School Buildings & Grounds Association officials, as well as some local fire officials, say schools would be safer if required to have the alarms. [More Info](#)
- **NY: Town of Ulster approves false alarm law — again**
12.26.12 - Kingston Daily Freeman - Town Of Ulster, NY - Town officials say they've lost track of how many times a proposed law regarding false fire and burglar alarms has ...
- **TX: Alarm systems help save on criminal court costs**
1.10.13 - Your Houston News - Houston, TX - The detailed justification of raising home alarm fees by County Tax Assessor/Collector J.R. Moore Jr. on the surface seems well thought out. However, it did not ... [More Info](#)
- **TX: City of Odessa Makes Change to Alarm System Ordinance**
1.1.13 - NewsWest9.com - Odessa, TX - If you live in Odessa and you need to register or renew your alarm systems, the City of Odessa recently made a change to their alarm system ... [More Info](#)
- **TX: Harris County tightens rules on false alarms**
1.8.13 - Houston Chronicle - Harris County, TX - Residents and business owners in unincorporated Harris County whose burglar, fire or panic alarms falsely dispatch law enforcement to their properties will be more likely to be hit with a fee after changes to alarm regulations approved on Tuesday by Commissioners Court. [More Info](#)
- **TX: Odessa's New Alarm Registration Fee Clarified**
1.9.13 – KOSA - Odessa, TX - New information on Odessa's alarm registration fee. We reported that the city will begin to charge its 10,000 registered alarm owners a fee. Police say ... [More Info](#)

Industry News

Courtesy of NESAs

- **The Quest for Smoke Detection Perfection**
12.21.12 - Security Sales & Integration - ...is a UL-Listed product to prove it. Enter the loPhic detector, a device based on using microprocessors and a new algorithm that allows smoldering fires to be deducted quicker than other technologies... [More Info](#)
- **Verified Alarms Lead to Verifiable Results for Central Stations**
12.21.12 - SDM - With the potential to reduce false alarms and increase arrests, alarm verification systems are winning the support of law enforcement and the insurance industry. Dealers stand to benefit. [More Info](#)
- **Study: Home Automation Interest Driven by Security Needs**
12.17.12 - www.appliancemagazine.com - Security was the top driver of consumer interest in home automation, according to a new survey of online consumers by the Consumer ... [More Info](#)
- **Home security industry transformed in 2012**
12.27.12 - SecurityInfoWatch - "Our vision is that everyone should have home security and not at \$30, \$40 or \$50 USD per month... the alarm companies' business models are still exactly the ... [More Info](#)
- **Big changes ahead for home security**
12.27.12 - Security Info Watch - 2012 was a pivotal year for the home security industry, which not only saw Vivint sold for more than \$2 billion, but also the spin-off of ADT from Tyco. In an SIW column, Jim McHale, director of UK-based market research firm Memoori, looks at what the future holds for the market. [More Info](#)
- **Landlines Left Behind as Households Go Wireless**
12.28.12 - Eweek - Approximately 34 percent of all adults, about 80 million adults, live in households with only wireless telephones, according to a CDC report. [More Info](#)
- **Home Security Goes High-Tech**
1.2.13 – Locksmith Ledger - The sales growth curve of the residential security market has flat lined for the last year or so and... [More Info](#)
- **McDonald's Installing DNA Spray-Dousing Security Systems**
1.11.13 - ABC News - It can be synced to a panic-button or to any alarm system within a business or home. The solution is both harmless and too small to be seen but will stay on an ... [More Info](#)
- **How dealers can help reduce false alarms**
1.14.13 - SecurityInfoWatch - False alarms aren't just an annoyance for homeowners. They can cost local authorities millions of dollars and valuable man hours each year, resulting in hefty ... [More Info](#)
- **School security in focus**
12.18.12 - Security Info Watch - Dealers and integrators share their thoughts, discuss getting back to basics [More Info](#)

Please Share Your Newsletters and Tips with Us

We would like to see how you communicate with your alarm users. Please add FARA to your mailing list if you send out Newsletters or mailings with false alarm reduction information. Do you have a brochure that describes your ordinance or program? We would like to see it. Staff will review what we receive and share tips and information with your fellow members in later issues of this newsletter.

Please send your newsletters, tips and brochures to:

False Alarm Reduction Association
10024 Vanderbilt Circle, Unit 4
Rockville, MD 20850
bradshipp@4yoursolution.com

FARA Mission Statement

It is the mission of the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) to provide a forum for local government alarm ordinance professionals to exchange information on successful false alarm reduction programs, to serve as a clearinghouse for agencies seeking to reduce false alarms, and to foster an environment of cooperation among public safety, the alarm industry and the alarm users.

Contact Us

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Email: info@faraonline.org
<http://www.faraonline.org>

Comments and suggestions regarding FARA's InfoLink are both encouraged and welcomed. If you would like to submit an article for publication, or if you have any questions or concerns about this newsletter, please contact the FARA Board of Directors at 301/519-9237, or by e-mail at: info@faraonline.org

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