



InfoLink

Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

FARA InfoLink Special Annual Training Symposium Issue May, 2010

In this issue:

- 14th Annual International FARA Training Symposium Held
- Thanks!
- More Thanks!
- General Membership Meeting
- Board of Directors Meetings
- FARA Awards
 - Norma C. Beaubien Public Safety Member of the Year Award
 - W. Rex Bell Associate Member of the Year Award
- False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award
- Professional Certification Program
- Opening Session/Luncheon
- Specialized Training
 - New and Existing Member Session – Preparing to Get the Most out of Your Symposium
 - Professional Certification and Recertification Prep Class
 - How Burglar and Fire Alarm Systems Work
 - Canadian Alarm Coordinators Meeting/Attending an Actual Regional Meeting
 - Strength in Numbers with Regional Meetings
 - FARA Falls
 - Success Stories – Learn What's Possible
 - Working it Out Together
 - Attaining Positive Press in an Age of Distraction
 - Enforcing Standards to Cut False Alarms
 - How to Fix Specific Alarm Sites
 - Politics and Turf Wars
 - How to Survive the Next Summer Sales Season
- Vendor Presentations and Exposition
- Extras!
- Training Symposium Presentations On-Line
- Please Share Your Newsletters and Tips with Us
- FARA Mission Statement
- Contact Us



14th Annual FARA Training Symposium Held

We're Back!!! The False Alarm Reduction Association held an incredibly successful training symposium in Buffalo/Niagara Falls, New York from May 4 through May 7, 2010.

Given today's economic strife, we were blown away at the attendance, with a high of 68!

The training classes were second to none and covered a wide variety of topics. FARA Falls, hosted by alarm industry icon Rex Adams, was a blast and a definite "not to forget" event! The Night on the Town at the Falls was awesome.

There was wonderful networking, new friends were made, old friends reconnected and feedback on FARA's 14th Annual International Training Symposium by attendees was excellent!

Thanks!

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

Platinum (\$3000 or more donation)

Broadview Security, Inc.
National Electronic Security Alliance (NESA)
Public Safety Corp (CryWolf)
Texas Burglar & Fire Alarm Association (TBFAA)

Gold (\$1000)

Canadian Security Association (CANASA)
IQ Board
Maryland Burglar & Fire Alarm Association
(MDBFAA)
Vector Security, Inc.

Silver (\$750)

DSC

Bronze (\$500)

ADS Security
PMAM Corporation
South Carolina Alarm Association (SCAA)
Vintage Security, LLC

Sponsor (\$250)

Emergency 24, Inc.
Homesafe Security Systems

Plan to Join Us in San Antonio

If you were unable to attend the training symposium this year, read through this special edition of the InfoLink to find out what you missed and then use this information to help you gain approval to attend next year's training symposium on the historic River Walk in downtown San Antonio, Texas in early April 2011!

The Conference Committee will begin planning the training courses and other events in the very near future. Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to learn more about false alarm management and how you can assist your department and community in dealing with this issue. FARA Institute funds will, once again, be available to help public safety FARA members attend by reimbursing approved expenses, such as hotel and airfare.



Thanks to Our Sponsors!

The FARA Board of Directors, on behalf of the entire FARA membership, extends a huge thank you to all of our event sponsors, who generously contributed to the success of the FARA Training Symposium. These sponsors/sponsorships are *in addition* to the FARA Institute donations.

Broadview Security – Programs and Handouts
Crywolf – Awards Luncheon
Regional Municipality of Niagara – Canada Day
Sonitrol Buffalo – Canada Day
Vector Security – Networking Luncheon
Guardtronics - Breakouts

We are very grateful to all of our sponsors, who help FARA provide excellent benefits to symposium attendees, as well as the membership in general. Sponsorship funds allow us to provide meals, break out snacks and other amenities that keep costs manageable and allow many more FARA members to attend than would otherwise be able. Thank you for your continued support and participation!

Thanks to Betty Lou!

A very special thank you also goes out to Betty Lou Bell, who for thirteen years running has so graciously donated incredible amounts of time to manning the registration desk, answering questions, selling raffle tickets and generally keeping the symposium (and Rex!) running smoothly. Your dedication and effort to assist the membership is greatly appreciated by all!

General Membership Meeting

The annual FARA General Membership Meeting was held on Thursday, May 6, 2010. President **Natasha Pitts** gave her final President's Report stating that FARA's journey was one of great success. She expressed her pride in serving and that she believed the position helped her grow personally and professionally. President Pitts announced the availability of the 2009 annual report, as well as the draft 2010 strategic plan.

Treasurer **Steve Heggemann** reported that 2009 was an extremely challenging year for FARA, but that we were still in the black.



All of FARA's committees; i.e., Awards, Communications, Conference, Fire, Membership, Training and Certification and the Professional Certification subcommittee, provided reports on their accomplishments in 2009 and where they want to go in 2010. All made pleas for the general membership to consider joining one of our very worthwhile committees, as they are all in desperate need of additional assistance.

Elections were held for FARA Director and Officer positions. Results were as follows:

- **President, Gerry Miller**, Peel Regional Police, Brampton, Ontario
- **Vice President-Fire, Amy Lowe**, Lynchburg Communications Center, Lynchburg, Virginia
- **Treasurer, Steve Heggemann**, Baltimore County Alarm Reduction Team, Baltimore, Maryland
- **Associate Director-Fire, Kathleen Schraufnagel**, Broadview Security, Irving, Texas
- **Vendor Associate Director, Frank Farren**, EnablePoint, Livonia, Michigan

Executive Director **Brad Shipp** reviewed six different proposed bylaw amendments. He explained the reasons behind the proposals and what the outcome of the changes would be if enacted by the membership. All six amendments passed unanimously.

Open forum time was provided to allow the membership to raise issues or ask questions.

Natasha Pitts received a recognition plaque for her service as President of the False Alarm Reduction Association.

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors held their annual face-to-face meeting on Friday, May 7, 2010. In a marathon session lasting more than seven hours, the Board discussed FARA's financial status and procedures for providing timely reimbursement to qualified FARA Institute recipients.

Discussion was held on the just concluded Buffalo/Niagara Falls symposium, what we did right, what we still need to work on and evaluations received. Evaluations were extremely positive with many thanking the FARA Institute for providing a means for their attendance.

President Pitts reported that the new Committee reporters were selected as follows: Communications-Norma Beaubien, Fire-Natasha Pitts, Membership-Stacey Peacock, Conference-David Wilson, Training and Certification-Anne Veary. The reporters are responsible for submitting monthly stories to Executive Director Shipp for inclusion in the newly revamped newsletter.

Discussions were also held on moving the Fire Committee forward, status of the web site database project, amendment and approval of a FARA benefits document to be mailed with membership renewals, and developing a back-up office plan in case of a catastrophe. Timelines were set for selecting a 2011 hotel in San Antonio, with preference on the River Walk and a site visit by Executive Director Shipp was approved for June 22, 2010.

When Gerry Miller was elected to the President's position, she vacated the Vice President-Electronic Security position on the Board. The bylaws require her, as President, to appoint someone to fill out that term. Discussion was held on possible candidates.

2009 - FARA Public Safety Member of the Year Award

The Norma C. Beaubien Public Safety Member of the Year Award for 2009 was presented to **Steve Heggemann** of the Baltimore County Alarm Reduction Team in Baltimore, Maryland for his immeasurable contributions to both FARA and the Baltimore community.

Steve was honored for his continued support of FARA and our mission for over ten years with involvement in FARA and consistent outreach to other associations and organizations.



Steve serves as the Treasurer of FARA, as well as on the boards of the Maryland Burglar & Fire Alarm Association and IQ Certification Program. On the IQ Certification Board, he is the sole public safety voice and successfully persuaded the board to develop and execute procedures to remove companies that do not comply with local regulations and codes. He has been active in several FARA committees and overseen enhancements to FARA's accounting and tax preparation processes. He implemented FARA's first audit by a committee of members, which FARA passed with flying colors.

Steve has also been a willing presenter, panelist and participant in many FARA Symposiums. He has solicited donations for the Symposium, and he has represented FARA at several presentations of the PDQ awards.

As the manager of Baltimore County's Alarm Reduction Team, Steve has developed strong relationships with users and alarm companies to administer an effective program in a way that is consistently viewed as fair. His false alarm reduction program reduced the residential and commercial false alarm rate from over 1.25 to 0.35 with one of the lowest fee schedules in the area.

Steve was also instrumental in helping to found the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of FARA (formerly MD FARA) and encouraging others to take leadership positions in the chapter. He worked diligently with FARA Mid-Atlantic, the alarm industry, and media outlets to make consumers in the Baltimore Washington Corridor aware of the dangers of buying a security system from door to door salesmen. He also shares his expertise with other jurisdictions in Maryland by helping them develop and implement a false alarm reduction program of their own.

He brings willingness to work, a slightly warped sense of humor and a needed reality check to each task.

In short, Steve was incredibly deserving of this award because he is an excellent implementer of the FARA mission. He consistently promotes the exchange of information and always fosters "an environment of cooperation among public safety, the alarm industry and the alarm user." We are very fortunate to have someone of Steve's caliber on the Board and active in FARA.

2009 - FARA Associate Member of the Year Award

The W. Rex Bell FARA Associate Member of the Year Award for 2009 was presented to **Ben Binder**, Digital Design, Inc., for his exceptional contributions to FARA, his company and the communities he serves.

Ben is an active FARA member and vendor who promotes FARA with prospective clients and the security industry. Ben willingly participates in the FARA vendor show every year and attends and participates in FARA symposiums, sharing his expertise on a wide variety of issues.



Ben joined FARA's Communications Committee several years ago and has been an active, participating member ever since. He served as lead on several documents collating suggested revisions and presenting them to the full committee for consideration. He does an excellent job of cutting through extraneous words to get to the root of an issue and is excellent at conveying those issues in writing for the benefit of the entire membership. Ben provides expertise and guidance on software and hardware related issues to the committee, so that FARA is able to give accurate, informative and germane information to its members on computer related issues.

Ben has incorporated FARA false alarm reduction measures into his software product and promotes them with his clients. He has many satisfied customers, who laud its ease of use, wide functionality, and the capabilities to produce numerous reports and letters.

Ben also stepped in and served on FARA's first ever member audit committee during the Charleston training symposium. His knowledge and expertise in money management and audit policies and procedures lent greater credence to the process and helped FARA understand where it was doing a great job and where we needed some improvement.

For all those reasons and more, Ben Binder was the perfect candidate to receive the W. Rex Bell Associate Member of the Year Award. We are all delighted that Ben continues to volunteer his time to make FARA a better association.

FARA Member of the Year Awards – 2008

Since FARA did not hold an on-site training symposium in 2009, President Pitts awarded the Member of the Year Awards for 2008 during the General Membership Webinar. Because both recipients were present in Buffalo/Niagara Falls, President Pitts gave them the recognition they so richly deserved and awarded their plaques during the General Membership meeting.

2008 - FARA Public Safety Member of the Year Award

The Norma C. Beaubien Public Safety Member of the Year Award for 2008 went to **Gerry Miller** of the Peel Regional Police in Brampton, Ontario.

Gerry has been a FARA member since its early days. She has been a willing presenter, panelist and participant in many FARA symposiums. She has coordinated regional meetings and recruited many FARA members over the years. Her calm demeanor and soft-spoken approach lend itself very well to dealing with alarm users and alarm companies alike, and she is always professional, courteous and helpful in those dealings.



She is a testament to a well-run, effective alarm management program, as she has continued to reduce false alarms in her own community.

Gerry has been a supporter of FARA and our mission for many years. In 2001, she became co-chair of the Membership Committee and has been chair and/or board liaison ever since. She joined the FARA Board of Directors in 2003 as an At Large Director and assumed the vacancy for the Vice President- Electronic Security in 2008. In these roles she has overseen the mentoring program and made numerous calls to new members to make them feel welcome. She coordinated the Regional Training Class in Brampton that attracted large attendance and she solicited more than enough in registrations and sponsorships to pay for the session.

She has maintained a strong working relationship with the Canadian Security Association and has staffed booths at association and IACP events.

Gerry has a reputation with users and alarm companies as a fair administrator of her local program. She brings a calm persistence to all her endeavors.

We also know that Gerry has a life outside of FARA, which is truly remarkable. Many of you may know that Gerry has horses and can often be found on her down time riding and relaxing with her horses. What you may not know is that she is involved in competitive barrel racing! She also, many years ago, performed in rodeos. She is a member of the Barrel Racing Association Board of Directors. Even with all that, she still makes the time to devote to FARA.

In summary - Gerry deserves the award because she lives by the FARA Mission. She always fosters "an environment of cooperation among public safety, the alarm industry and the alarm user" and has gone above and beyond to promote the exchange of information. FARA is truly fortunate to have someone of Gerry's caliber working to promote and strengthen our association.

2008 - FARA Associate Member of the Year Award

The W. Rex Bell Associate Member of the Year Award for 2008 went to **Mary Galloway** of Dynafire and the Alarm Association of Florida.

Mary has been a contributing member of FARA for a number of years, and constantly goes out of her way to promote FARA in her state with the alarm industry and public safety communities alike. She joined and worked tirelessly on the Conference Committee to ensure an excellent Charleston training symposium.



Mary has always been willing to jump in to help on FARA initiatives. She has taught classes at our annual symposium and provided free CD's to all participants. She attended the last several training symposiums as President of the Alarm Association of Florida and provided excellent input and information on alarm company aspects of false alarm prevention and what the industry is doing to further the cause.

Mary also worked hand-in-hand with the Florida Chiefs of Police to create a model burglar alarm ordinance for the State of Florida, which is used heavily in enacting false alarm legislation. For several years, she has worked with AAF to offer FARA meeting space and accommodations, at no charge, to present a regional training class during their annual conference.

Mary's "babies" are her enormous dogs, who she pampers just as if she had birthed them herself! We even learned that Mary takes the time to make home-made dog food for her "babies" so they aren't exposed to the chemicals that come in regular dog food, which her one dog reacts unfavorably to. Mary's dogs probably eat better than some humans do!

Mary is an excellent choice for this recognition because she truly believes in FARA's mission of building cooperative relationships among the alarm industry, public safety and the alarm user and initiates steps to see that happen. We are truly privileged to have Mary as a member of FARA and look forward to working with her for many years to come.

False Alarm Reduction Association Achievement Award

The False Alarm Reduction Association Achievement Award is granted for significant or meaningful contributions towards the FARA mission.

The attendees at the training symposiums receive all nominees and then select the person they believe is most deserving.

The award this year went to **Sue Clark** with the Montgomery County Police Department, False Alarm Reduction Section, in Gaithersburg, Maryland.



For the past several years, Sue has served as the chair of FARA's Training and Certification Committee. She has done an outstanding job with a committee that has very few contributing members. In her role as T&C Chair, she recruited new members and named a new chair of the Professional Certification Subcommittee.

She worked tirelessly to get the regional training classes off the ground – personally made numerous phone calls to area public safety (fire and law enforcement) advising of the classes and seeking participation. Sue spearheaded the immensely successful Essentials of False Alarm Reduction class in San Antonio, Texas in October 2009. She also co-authored the Train the Trainer course to get more qualified people to serve as instructors of the Essentials class. Sue promotes FARA membership and attendance in training venues at every opportunity.

Sue was also in on the ground floor in helping to create the Mid-Atlantic (former Maryland) Chapter of FARA. She served as its initial secretary for many years. She has built extensive working relationships with area alarm coordinators and their staff, always ready, willing and able to assist with problems or questions.

In her “real job” she works closely with over 360 alarm companies that do business in Montgomery County to ensure they are properly licensed and comply with the provisions of the alarm law. She took on large corporate accounts to educate them on false alarm reduction – cut false alarms in half for one particular bank in Montgomery County last year alone.

Professional Certification Program

FARA's one-of-a-kind Professional Certification Exam, which is a staple at FARA symposiums, was given again this year at the Buffalo/Niagara Falls symposium. Attainment of the “Certified Alarm Manager” status, through successful completion of the exam, signifies a proficient and significant level of expertise in the management, coordination, preparation and implementation of a false alarm reduction program.

Stacey Peacock, Barnstable Police Department, Hyannis, Massachusetts and **Kristi Golden**, Protection One, Wichita, Kansas joined the ranks of those professionals who have achieved the “Certified Alarm Manager” designation by successfully completing the FARA Certified False Alarm Reduction Professional Exam.

Congratulations to our newest members of this elite club!

Opening Session/Luncheon

FARA President **Natasha Pitts** opened the 14th Annual International Training Symposium with a wonderful luncheon that allowed all attendees to meet new people, reconnect with old friends and learn what the symposium was all about. President Pitts thanked our awesome FARA Institute and event sponsors and talked about the need for FARA to implement a program that allowed for face-to-face meetings again. She explained the FARA Institute, why we created it and how beneficial it has already been, given the great turn-out in Buffalo/Niagara Falls. Even though the symposium was shortened, the amount of actual training classes and opportunities was not.



President Pitts talked about how exciting it was to see so many people in attendance. Everyone got an opportunity to introduce themselves and, for a little levity, to tell us if they could be any super hero, who it would be! Many interesting answers!

In the second part of the opening session, all attendees were asked to describe exactly what they hoped to learn at the symposium – what specifically brought them to Buffalo/Niagara Falls. We heard things like, “How can I get ordinance changes implemented?” “How can I get my commanders to buy into the false alarm reduction program?” “How can I get the software I need to effectively and efficiently run my program?” “Are others having their units downsized?” “How are others dealing with being forced to do more with less?” “I’m new and I need to learn everything!” President Pitts explained that we would answer all those questions and more during the training symposium.

New and Existing Attendee Session – Preparing to Get the Most Out of Your Symposium

FARA Secretary **Norma Beaubien**, Director with the Montgomery County Police Department, False Alarm Reduction Section in Maryland talked about how and why FARA was officially formed back in 1997; its current structure, philosophy, bylaws and committees. She gave an overview of the symposium and talked about what we hoped all attendees would get out of the training sessions, as well as the networking opportunities. Norma described the Vendor Expo and the value of attending, even if you were not in the market for new software.



Benefits of FARA membership were also discussed; items such as the Assistance Requests used to ask questions of the full membership; bulletins and brochures and how others were using them to assist in false alarm reduction; guides, manuals and all other publications available to help do your jobs more efficiently; numerous training opportunities available through FARA; the web site; networking and the mentor program for all new members.

Associate Director-Fire **Kathleen Schraufnagel** with Broadview Security, Inc. in Irving, Texas talked about ongoing initiatives such as OTIS, which is a database of all known burglar alarm ordinances throughout North America and their main provisions. She described the project, the fact that it is being done on a volunteer basis and how the initiative is moving forward. She also talked about FARA's model ordinances and how we are working to allow members to create their own customizable alarm ordinance that best suits their jurisdiction by selecting specific provisions where the verbiage can easily be cut and pasted into a Word document. Discussion was also held on the FARA newsletter, how we know that its current form does not meet the needs of most of the membership and that it is being completely revamped. Questions from members were asked and answered. This session provided a great starting point for the rest of the symposium.

Professional Certification and Recertification Exam Prep Class

As a result of suggestions made at previous training symposiums, FARA created a Professional Certification Exam prep class, which is now a staple of annual training symposiums. The class was open to all those who were planning to take the exam, as well as those who felt they might want to take the exam in the future. It was also open to existing Certified Alarm Managers to help them learn how they could earn the required 100 CEU's to maintain their certification on an annual basis.

There was a good turn-out for instructor **Amy Lowe**, Lynchburg Communications Center, Virginia, who is currently a Certified Alarm Manager through FARA's Professional Certification Program. Amy explained how the exam was organized, what types of questions to expect and how much time was provided for each section. She also provided insider tips on how to prepare for the exam and even provided attendees with post it notes of various sizes and colors to help them organize their written materials prior to the exam.

Amy answered excellent questions from those in attendance and assured all that she was confident they could be successful in becoming Certified Alarm Managers through FARA.

How Burglar and Fire Alarm Systems Work

We cannot effectively deal with false alarms, whether burglar or fire, unless we have a basic understanding of the equipment involved, how it works and how it is designed, installed and used.

Mary Galloway of Dynafire in Casselberry, Florida and **Kathleen Schraufnagel** of Broadview Security, Inc. in Irving, Texas provided a wonderful hands-on class dealing with burglar alarm systems.

Mary described the main components of a burglar alarm system, how each piece of equipment works, its appropriate application and how false alarms may occur if installed and/or used improperly.

Kathleen passed out specific pieces of equipment – everything from motion detectors, to door contacts, sirens, key pads and strobes and gave detailed information on the differences in the equipment and when you should use one type of sensor over another.

Mary then described the main components of fire alarm systems, how they operated and what could cause false alarms. Kathleen handed out pull stations, smoke detectors, heat detectors, and even a very noisy pull station cover that is used to scare away would-be miscreants who want to wreak havoc by pulling the fire alarm.

After we learned about the equipment, Mary assessed what we learned by asking questions on specific pieces of equipment. Prizes were awarded to those who answered correctly and by the end, people were shouting out answers to get the prizes. This was a very fun, interactive class that dealt with a potentially uninteresting subject by turning it into a game.

It was clear from the number of prizes that were awarded that Mary and Kathleen were excellent teachers and the attendees learned a significant amount about both burglar and fire alarm equipment.



Canadian Alarm Coordinators Meeting/Attend an Actual Regional Meeting

Attendees at the symposium had the unique opportunity to see and attend an actual regional meeting in progress.

In conjunction with the FARA symposium, alarm coordinators from throughout Canada held their annual regional meeting in Buffalo/Niagara Falls and allowed FARA attendees to sit in and learn more about this incredibly effective and worthwhile means of communicating.

This year the meeting was hosted by the Niagara Regional Police Service. We learned that a different police service hosts the meeting each year so that no undue burden is placed on any one agency; i.e., share the wealth!



After introductions, the Niagara Regional Police Service gave an overview of their agency. As an ice breaker, they handed out a short quiz on the NRPS and the person who got the most correct answers received a gift at the end of the meeting. A variety of topics were discussed including police response vs. guard response, who is responsible for registration/permitting of alarm users, should charges be imposed for alarm cancellations and if so, who pays; the pros and cons of using a collection agency to collect monies due; and alarm administration software, among a few others.

During the discussions, everyone was permitted time for input on how they dealt with a specific issue or problem and to hear how others handled it. Ideas were shared and open discussion was held. It was very interesting to hear the differences between how alarm management is done in Canada vs. the United States. While we had some challenges hearing everything that transpired, it was incredibly beneficial to the FARA attendees to be able to witness an actual meeting, which gave ideas on how they might hold similar meetings when they got back home.

We are all grateful to the Canadian alarm coordinators for allowing us to sit in on their meeting and learn how it's done!

Strength in Numbers with Regional Meetings

Attendance at the annual Canadian Alarm Coordinator's Meeting segued directly into a session with non-Canadian attendees on how to hold regional meetings, the benefits of such meetings and how they might be structured.

Steve Heggemann, FARA Treasurer and Alarm Manager with the Baltimore County Alarm Reduction Team in Maryland co-presented this class with **Norma Beaubien**.

Steve and Norma described how alarm coordinators and their staff have been meeting informally for years in Maryland.



Meetings are held every two months and moved around the state so that different agencies host. We learned that a matrix of alarm ordinances in the state was compiled and given out to the alarm industry to help them better comply with the mandates of specific ordinances where they work. We also learned how beneficial regional meetings are in opening the lines of communication, providing a forum to discuss areas of concern, sharing contact information for specific alarm companies and national company alarm users, and learning about the various provisions of each others alarm ordinances, policies and procedures.

The informal public safety group meets on an annual basis with the Maryland Burglar and Fire Alarm Association (MDBFAA). This allowed for the development of good working relationships with the alarm industry.

Any alarm coordinator can call on the MDBFAA member to get questions answered, bounce ideas off of and work with problem alarm users.

This informal group applied for and received recognition as the first official FARA Chapter. Any FARA member in the State of Maryland automatically became a member of the local chapter. We now hold four meetings each year for the Chapter where public safety and the alarm industry meet to share ideas and learn. This year, the Maryland Chapter was broadened to become the Mid-Atlantic Chapter and covers states adjoining Maryland and the District of Columbia.

Steve and Norma talked about how supportive the chapter is and encouraged others to apply for chapter status as well. Several attendees took application forms and were interested in starting their own regional chapters. Chapters can cover any geographic area determined warranted by the applicant, but the idea is to keep it as local as possible.

The instructors shared some work product that came out of ideas shared at regional meetings. They also talked about the FARA manual entitled, "How to Create Regional Meetings" that covers the who, what, where, when and why of regional meetings.

FARA Falls

In a rousing game of FARA Falls, modeled after the game show Family Feud, participants were able to learn about false alarm reduction and FARA in a fun, fast-paced team building game that was hosted by **Rex Adams** of American Security Devices in Richardson, Texas. Rex is the President of the National Electronic Security Alliance (NESA), which was a Platinum sponsor for the FARA Institute. Rex was hilarious as host, kept the game moving forward, interjected funny quips throughout the game, and creatively interpreted the rules to help the underdog team out!



Teams were formed, captains were elected, team names were chosen and then teams had to answer questions covering a wide range of topics related to false alarm reduction. Items were taken directly out of many FARA publications, bulletins, brochures and public safety tips. We learned that symposium attendees were an incredibly competitive group of people, who played cut-throat and gave no slack all in the name of fun and winning chocolate! Each member of the winning team received a box of chocolates made locally at a Niagara Falls shop.

This was another "out of the box" learning method that brought people together and made learning fun.

Success Stories – Learn What's Possible

Most jurisdictions are clamoring for ways to increase their collections of all types of fees, and false alarm fines and fees are an excellent target for those collection activities.

Moderator **Stacey Peacock** with the Barnstable Police Department in Hyannis, Massachusetts took us through what other agencies have done and are doing to successfully manage their collection activity.



Stacey described what she does in Barnstable and then opened the floor for this interactive group discussion on what others are doing to succeed in collecting the money they are owed.

Many excellent stories were shared and unique methods discussed. Some items include:

- having civil violations turn into criminal violations if no payment is received within 90 days
- placing liens on homes
- lowering the priority of police response to alarm users where delinquencies exist
- hiring outside collection agencies with expertise in this field
- imposing late fees
- using the alarm user's insurance company by sending them a letter when the alarm user is in a no response status for failure to remit fees/fines
- adding the amount due to the property tax bill

- suing in small claims court
- not allowing a commercial alarm user to renew their business license until all fees and fines are paid and suspending police response for non-payment

This was an excellent class that provided real life examples of the innovative ways we are all trying to collect money. If you are having problems, maybe one or more of these remedies will work for you.

Working it Out Together

FARA Vice President – Electronic Security **Gerry Miller** with the Peel Regional Police in Brampton, Ontario started out this class by providing an overview of her agency and asking how many in the room were comfortable talking with members of the alarm industry and public safety communities.

The basis of this class was to learn how to develop positive working relationships with opposing members – focusing first on how public safety can start the dialogue with the alarm industry.



We learned that in Peel, Gerry deals with the monitoring centers only, because all calls, alarm dealers/installers and alarm users fall from that proverbial 'tree.' She and her staff have worked very hard at developing that relationship, and now whenever problems occur, they are quickly able to get it resolved through their contacts. Gerry shared how to get those relationships started, how to use associations in that goal, visiting each other's com centers, holding meetings and making it a cooperative effort.

Mark Fairley, who currently sits on the Ontario Board of Directors for the Canadian Security Association (CANASA) picked up the second part of this class. He expressed that the development of working relationships goes both ways!

Mark talked about CANASA's development of a Model By-Law way back in 1983 and how it was affirmed by the Model States Report in 1999. We learned about key elements of the model; things like requirements for check lists, registration of alarm systems with annual renewal, meaningful fines, appeals and reinstatement processes.

He went over specifics of the technician and alarm user check lists and talked about how they prevent false alarms by ensuring that both parties do what they are supposed to do. Mark also shared a lot about the cooperative efforts between alarm coordinators and alarm industry in Canada.

He encouraged all of us to work cooperatively for the benefit of our citizens and patrol officers, to learn about the alarm factor and how to lower it, accreditation and self regulation of the alarm industry in Canada.

We were fortunate to have Gerry and Mark co-present this class to teach us how to work it out together also!

Attaining Positive Press in an Age of Distraction

Dave Simon, Senior Manager, Communications, Government and Industry Relations with Broadview Security, Inc. and **Stan Hanson**, Cost Recovery Specialist with Public Safety Corporation, previously a Public Information Officer with a municipal police department in Rhode Island, graciously served as instructors for this class. They reviewed how to develop working relationships with the print, television, radio and other media outlets to get the false alarm reduction/prevention message out and attain positive press for our programs.



We learned that we need to think outside the box when it comes to the press and consider outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogging and various other Internet based medium. To compete in the 21st century, we are required to think of things other than newspapers, radio and television. Getting positive "press" could even include working with schools, civic clubs, retail/homeowner associations and realtors.

Dave suggested that we not exclude traditional news sources, but open our eyes to other possibilities. He also suggested that we develop press contacts, pitch stories, and call reporters directly. Trade media is always looking for stories for their on-line or print newsletters.

Stan shared stories of when he was a Public Information Officer and what worked for him.

Dave and Stan were engaging and gave us great pointers on getting positive press.

Enforcing Standards to Cut False Alarms

Tim Creenan, CEO of Amherst Alarm in New York and the current President of the IQ Certification Board, told us about various standards available to help prevent or reduce false alarms and how those standards can be incorporated into our false alarm reduction programs.

Tim shared specific information about the ANSI SIA CP-01 Control Panel Standard and how the provisions of that standard help to reduce the incidence of false alarms. The Control Panel Standard has buy-in from most manufacturers and the equipment developed today generally meets the standard.



He also went into specifics about Enhanced Call Verification, what it is, how it works, who is using it, and its incredible success rates in places where it has been mandated.

Being the President of the IQ Certification Board, Tim also told us about this voluntary alarm industry program that seeks to grant certification to those companies that can demonstrate they meet the required criteria for certification. The program includes guidelines for the alarm company, alarm user and employee training, system design, equipment, installation and monitoring. All of the guidelines are geared toward ensuring quality installation of proven equipment by highly trained and capable professionals.

We learned that there are, indeed, standards out there that are proven to reduce false alarms. Our jobs as alarm coordinators is to get these standards into our local ordinances, policies and procedures so that can have the greatest impact on reducing false alarms.

Many thanks to Tim for this very informative class.

How to Fix Specific Alarm Sites

We all have had to deal with big box stores, schools, government facilities and others that cause false alarms over and over again.

In this class, **Jordan Brown**, with GuardTronic, Inc. and the Arkansas Security Alarm Association, both in Fort Smith, Arkansas, shared his expertise with how to deal with specific alarm sites.

He drew from his own experiences and gave us examples of specific alarm users who were having problems, what his company did to identify the problems and fix them and then reported on the result of those changes.



It was fascinating to see the false alarm rates with the problems and what happened to the false alarm rates when the solutions were implemented. Jordan specifically addressed a giant distribution warehouse, a school, a big box store, a bank and residential applications.

He was engaging, funny and very informative. Many evaluations listed this one as their favorite class!

Thanks to Jordan for putting together this awesome class.

Politics and Turf Wars

Moderator **Bill Douglas**, Alarm Coordinator for the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office in Virginia took us all through the sometimes frustrating politics and turf wars that exist when trying to implement a new alarm management program.

Panelists Officer **David Wilson**, Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department, North Carolina, **Amy Lowe**, Lynchburg Communications Center, Virginia and **Judy Burns**, Regional District of Central Okanagan, Kelowna, British Columbia shared their expertise from the standpoint of a patrol officer, communications center supervisor and alarm management coordinator and how they had to deal with getting others to do "extra" work so that the alarm management program could be successful.



Bill took an incredible amount of time to interview command staff, legislators, fire personnel and 9-1-1 operators and supervisors to get their take on the issues, which he filmed and played as a lead in to specific areas of discussion.

Attendees were able to ask a lot of questions, which the panelists fielded and gave excellent suggestions and feedback. The bottom line was that we are all in this together and the more we can educate each segment about why we need certain things and how it will ultimately lead to less work, the better off our programs will be.

Thanks to all who helped to make this class a success.

How to Survive the Next Summer Sales Season

Most attendees had already had some dealings with the summer sales phenomenon where hordes of young people infiltrate an area going door-to-door to sell alarm systems for the summer.

In a team-teaching approach, **Norma Beaubien**, **Steve Heggemann**, **Mary Galloway** and **Brad Shipp** went into a fair amount of detail on the summer sales issue, the problems citizens encounter, the associated costs to consumers and industry alike, and what is being done to help.



Norma dealt with background on the summer sales business model – what they do and how it impacts the alarm users and alarm companies.

Mary covered specific things we can all do to combat the problems associated with summer sales and the proactive measures FARA has already taken.

Steve talked about successes he had getting media in Baltimore County interested in the issue and doing news stories to warn citizens to be wary.

Finally, Brad shared things the alarm industry, public safety and consumer organizations are doing in various areas around the country, lawsuits that had been filed and resources available to educate consumers.

This was a great class with which to close out the symposium.

Vendor Presentations and Exposition

The FARA Board of Directors would like to extend a very special thank you to our Vendor Expo participants:

- **Canadian Security Association (CANASA)**
- **Crywolf/AOT Public Safety Corp.**
- **Digital Design Group, Inc.**
- **Enable Point**
- **Installation Quality (IQ) Program**
- **Rapid Response Monitoring**

All of the vendors were given an opportunity to speak to the entire group about their particular service and/or product. We thank all of our vendors, who so generously provided information on their specific products or services, many of which are designed to reduce false alarms or assist in the management and billing of false alarms.

Here are just a few of the comments from attendees about the vendor show

- *"I found it very useful and informative to learn about the different options for CAD feeding into the billing systems."*
- *"Great session- learned many options available for alarm tracking services. Very informative. Glad I attended. Lots of information."*
- *"FARA provides an opportunity to see firsthand other software vendors- to make a change or purchase new software."*
- *"Vendor attendance is most beneficial to any services considering the purchase of a system. We are exposed to the features of these programs and as such can make a well informed decision based on the info provided."*
- *"The vendor show helps me learn what's possible."*

Extras

The Silent Auction was a fantastic success this year! Attendees really outdid themselves with the auction items they donated, and there was certainly something for everyone to enjoy! Bidding was fast and furious right until the end.

The Silent auction earned \$567 for FARA, which will be used to benefit the membership through written publications and further training opportunities.

The 50/50 raffle brought in a total of \$306 with \$153 going back out to ticket holders in three separate drawings. The sale of FARA padfolios brought in another \$60.

FARA's hospitality suite for attendees provided an opportunity to further network in a more relaxed manner. The hospitality suite was extremely successful and will be continued in future training symposiums, as it provides a mechanism for attendees to talk one-on-one with each other and raise questions or concerns that they may not feel comfortable doing in a classroom setting.

Steve Heggemann graciously hosted the hospitality night - many thanks to him for serving in this capacity.

Training Symposium Presentations On-Line

All PowerPoint presentations that were given at the Buffalo/Niagara Falls training symposium have been posted in the Member's Only portion of the web site. You will need your login and password to access this portion of the site. If you need assistance accessing the Member's Only section, please contact Brad Shipp at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com.

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 law enforcement, the alarm industry and the alarm users.

Contact Us

False Alarm Reduction Association

10024 Vanderbilt Circle, Unit 4

Rockville, MD 20850

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

Submitted articles in this newsletter are the expressed opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Officers and Directors of FARA.