

FARA InfoLink

December, 2008

In this Issue:

- Happy Chrimakwanzukkah!
- Gerry Miller is the New FARA Vice President-Electronic Security
- Joe Patterson is the New FARA Secretary
- FARA looking for Board and Committee Chair volunteers
- Until You Solve Your False Alarm Problem – You Can't Afford to Miss the FARA Training Symposium
- FARA Board Holds Successful Mid Year Meeting
- Bylaw Changes Proposed for Vote at 2009 Symposium
- Board Seats Up For Election in Denver
- Help FARA Grow and Help Yourself with the FARA Membership Contest
- Leadership Grant Program Created
- Maryland Prepares for Summer Sales Season
- Nominations for FARA Achievement Awards Needed!
- Nominations Needed for FARA Public Safety and Associate Members of the Year!
- Featured Bulletin – The Holidays
- Featured Manual – Developing a False Alarm Reduction Program
- False Alarm Updates
- Crime News Briefs
- Please Share Your Newsletters and Tips with Us
- FARA Mission Statement
- Contact Us

Happy Chrimakwanzukkah!

Christmas, Hanukkah, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, Festivus- whatever your holiday- **It's that time of year again** and the FARA Board would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season and a wonderfully prosperous New Year!

We hope you are all able to celebrate the holiday(s) of your choice with family and friends and that you enjoy the Holidays and the New Year to the fullest.

Happy Holidays from the FARA Board and Staff: Jim Cogswell, Natasha Pitts, Gerry Miller, Joe Patterson, Steve Heggemann, Norma Beaubien, Kathleen Schraufnagel, Pat Killian, Rick Moore and Brad Shipp.

Gerry Miller is the New FARA Vice President-Electronic Security

FARA President Jim Cogswell has appointed Gerry Miller as the Vice President-Electronic Security, which was vacated when Jim Cogswell assumed the Presidency. The FARA board ratified the appointment at its December meeting. Gerry is the Supervisor of the Alarm Program for Peel Regional Police in Brampton Ontario. She is a long term member of the FARA Board and has served as Chair of the Membership Committee.



Joe Patterson is the New FARA Secretary

FARA President Jim Cogswell has appointed Joe Patterson as Secretary, which was vacated when Kerri McDonald resigned. The FARA board ratified the appointment at its September meeting. Joe is the Alarm Coordinator of the Greenville County False Alarm Reduction Unit in Greenville, South Carolina. He is a long term member of the FARA Board and has served as liaison to the Ways and Means Committee.



FARA Seeks Volunteers for Board of Directors

The FARA Board of Directors is still looking for public safety members to serve on the Board of Directors. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please contact President Cogswell directly at 913/642-5555 ext. 280 or via email at jimc@leawood.org. Duties include attending Board meetings, serving on a committee, and making suggestions on how to better serve public safety needs.

Various FARA committees are also desperately seeking people to take over leadership roles. Specifically, the Associate, Fire, Membership and Ways and Means committees are all looking for people to chair or co-chair their activities. Experienced board members are assigned to mentor and provide help for each committee. A good core group of people exists on most of these committees, and all they lack is someone to lead them. Are you that person? Please contact President Cogswell directly at 913/642-5555 ext. 280 or via email at jimc@leawood.org if you are interested in serving the association as a committee chair or co-chair.

Until You Solve Your False Alarm Problem – You Can't Afford to Miss the FARA Training Symposium

Join Us at the Four Points by Sheraton in Denver, Colorado on April 27– May 1, 2009.

Denver is the perfect blend of outdoor adventure and urban sophistication. The Mile High City has **snowcapped peaks providing a spectacular backdrop. And with 300 days of sunshine per year, it's** easy to see why people fall in love with Denver the first time they visit.

FARA's 2009 Annual International Training Symposium will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton Denver Southeast. The hotel offers easy highway access and close proximity to a light rail station for quick and fast access to downtown.

Here are just some of the topics that will be addressed:

- Success Stories- Learn What's Possible!
- Your Program Deserves Some Attention
- How to Survive the Next Summer Sales Season
- Enforcing Standards to Cut False Alarms
- How To Fix Specific Alarm Sites
- Politics and Turf Wars
- How Burglar Alarms and Equipment Work
- How Fire Alarms and Equipment Work
- Alarm Management 101
- Strength in Numbers with Regional Meetings
- Dealing with Alarm Companies

For full information on the symposium visit our web site -

<http://www.faraonline.org/html/symposium.asp>

FARA Board Holds Successful Mid Year Meeting

The FARA Board adapted to travel restrictions imposed on some members by holding a hybrid mid-year meeting where several board members meet in person with others joining by conference call. Our thanks to the Vector Security branch in Columbia, Maryland for hosting the meeting on September 25th and 26th.

Committees Streamlined

At the meeting the board discussed the need to get more members involved in committees and after reviewing reports from each committee agreed to streamline the committees by merging four committees into two. The Associates committee has succeeded in its mission of encouraging associates to get involved in all FARA Committees and will now become a part of the membership Committee. The Ways and Means committee has always worked very closely with the Conference Committee and the board decided that a merger would be in order to make our efforts more effective.

Membership Contest

After brainstorming about ways to increase membership the board decided to establish a membership contest (See Related Story- *Help FARA Grow and Help Yourself with the FARA Membership Contest*).

Bylaw Changes

The Board reviewed the current Bylaws and agreed to make recommendations to the general membership to change who runs the FARA Board elections to the FARA Executive Director and to specify that new board members take office at the conclusion of the training symposium in which they are elected. Board also agreed to recommend a change to the Associate membership to reflect that up to three associates may join under one membership. (See Related Story- *Bylaw Changes Proposed for Vote at 2009 Symposium*)

Leadership Grants

All agreed it was very important for the Board to be in Denver to show the strength of the association. Board discussed the creation of "Leadership Grants" which would be funded through donations and would be available to FARA public safety Board members, Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs, and Committee members only. (See Related Story- *Leadership Grant Program Created*)

Bylaw Changes Proposed for Vote at 2009 Symposium

Change #1

Objective: To change who runs the FARA Board elections to the FARA Executive Director.

Text: Section 3. Nomination and Election of Officers and Directors:

B. Members who are interested in seeking a position as an officer or member of the Board must submit, to the **Secretary Executive Director**, a request for consideration of candidacy for the particular office they are seeking along with a biographical resume no later than ninety (90) days prior to the commencement date of the annual FARA International Training Symposium. The request for consideration of candidacy shall include a brief statement as to why they want to hold the office they are seeking.

1. If the **Secretary Executive Director** only receives requests for consideration of candidacy from one candidate for each position up for vote, then the **Secretary Executive Director** shall not be required to send absentee ballots to the membership.
2. In that case, the **Secretary Executive Director** shall, at the annual FARA International Training Symposium, declare that the nominee is elected by acclamation, and no vote of the membership will be necessary.

F. Voting may be either in person at the annual International Training Symposium or by absentee ballots, except as provided above in Section 3(B)(1)(2). Absentee ballots must be sent to the **Secretary Executive Director** and postmarked no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the commencement of the annual FARA International Training Symposium during which the election is to take place. Absentee ballots shall be opened only during the general membership meeting during the election process.

H. The ~~Board of Directors~~ **Executive Director** shall appoint a person or persons to assist the ~~Secretary or Vice President – Fire Alarms, as appropriate,~~ **Executive Director to** count all written ballots for each election.

Section 4. Term of Office:

B. In the event that no member in good standing submits to the **Secretary Executive Director** a request for consideration of candidacy as provided in these Bylaws for any Officer or Director position, then the incumbent may submit a request for consideration of candidacy without regard to the term limits provided in Section 4(A).

Section 7. Duties and Functions of the Officers:

B. The Vice Presidents shall:

1. Serve on as many standing committees as is feasible.
2. Promote all of the objectives of the Association nationwide.
3. Perform such duties as assigned by the President and the Board of Directors to whom they shall report.
- ~~4. The Vice President – Fire Alarms shall serve as the Election Official for the election of the Secretary.~~
- ~~5~~ **4**. In case the President cannot attend the meeting, the Vice President with the longest tenure on the board shall serve as President Pro Tempore for the session.

C. The Secretary shall:

1. Call the roll of voting members at the annual meeting.
2. Prepare and present accurate minutes of the proceedings at the Annual Meeting and all meetings of the Board of Directors.
- ~~3. Serve as the Election Official for all votes taken by the membership and the Board of Directors by secret ballot other than the election of the Secretary.~~
- ~~4~~ **3**. Announce all meetings of the General Membership and the bi-annual meetings of the Board of Directors.

Change #2

Objective: To specify that new board members take office at the conclusion of the training symposium in which they are elected.

Text: Section 4. Term of Office:

E. Officers and Directors shall begin their terms at the conclusion of the training symposium in which they are elected or, in the case of a vacancy, at the conclusion of the meeting when the appointment is ratified by the Board of Directors.

Change #3

Objective: To change to the Associate membership to reflect that up to three associate representatives may join under one membership.

Text: ARTICLE 5. MEMBERSHIP

Section 3. Associate Members: Associate memberships shall be open to individuals, associations or companies. The associate member may designate one or more representatives as FARA members, for a maximum of three (3) per associate member. Associate members are generally entitled to all benefits and rights offered by the association with the exception that associate members may not vote on any issue before the association other than to vote for the Associate Board Members. Each associate member is allowed only one vote, regardless of the number of representatives contained within each associate membership. Associate membership shall be open to any individual who shall meet the following requirements:

- A. Does not meet the requirements for public safety membership but has a vested interest in advancing the purposes of the association.
- B. Willing and agrees to conduct themselves in accordance with the bylaws of the FARA for the purpose of advancing the purposes of the association.
- C. Submitted an application to the FARA which was accepted and approved under procedures established by the Board of Directors as meeting the criteria for associate membership set forth in these bylaws.

Board Seats Up For Election in Denver

During the 2009 training symposium, FARA members will elect a Vice President-Electronic Security, Secretary, Two At-Large Directors, and the Electronic Security Associate Director.

Any FARA member who has been in good standing for at least one year; and attended at least one FARA Annual Conference; and served on one or more FARA committees, can be elected to any of the offices.

Members, who are interested in seeking a position as an officer or member of the Board, must submit a written request for consideration of candidacy for the particular office they are seeking **along with a biographical resume to FARA's** Executive Director Brad Shipp at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com no later than January 27, 2009.

The request for consideration of candidacy must include a brief statement as to why the member wants to hold the office being sought. All members, who fit the criteria, are encouraged to consider serving on the Board.

Help FARA Grow and Help Yourself with the FARA Membership Contest

The FARA member who gets the most new members to join between now and April 24th will be awarded \$100. The winner will be announced at the Membership Meeting on April 29th in Denver. **The FARA member's name must be included in the "Who recommended you to us?" box on the application form.** In the event of a tie between two members, each will receive \$100. In the event of tie between more than two members, \$300 will be divided equally among the winners. Any member, who brings on a new member, will be listed in the FARA newsletter.

So act now and send an application to a prospective member. For an application visit our web site- http://www.faraonline.org/FARA_Application_2008.pdf

Leadership Grant Program Created

The uncertainty of our economy has led many localities to restrict funding for travel. So we are asking for help to continue our progress toward reducing false alarms. FARA has established the FARA Leadership Grant Program to help make it possible for government alarm professionals to attend our training symposium. More detailed information regarding the Leadership Grant Program is available on our web site at http://www.faraonline.org/html/leadership_grants.asp.

Every contribution is sincerely appreciated and will be acknowledged with a thank you letter, recognition at the training symposium **and in FARA's Email** newsletter (the InfoLink), via a press release to trade press and on the Training Symposium page of the FARA web site.

If you know of anyone who might be able to make a contribution, please forward the letter and program description to them as soon as possible.

Leadership Grants are restricted to employees of Public Safety Agencies who are members in good standing of FARA and actively participate on the FARA Board of Directors and/or FARA Committees. Applicants must submit a letter from their agency stating that the agency supports **the applicant's attendance at the FARA** training symposium, but that it does not have the funds for the trip.

Grants will be awarded based on leadership points earned by each individual applying for the Grant. Points will be issued according to the criteria set out for Certified Alarm Manager (CAM) **Continuing Education Units (CEU's) and/or for other contributions deemed appropriate** by the FARA Board. **Applicants need not be CAM's to participate.**

Maryland Prepares for Summer Sales Season

The Maryland Burglar & Fire Alarm Association (MDBFAA) has formed a joint committee with the **Maryland chapter of FARA to prepare for next year's** onslaught of salesmen from out of state, who are often unlicensed and also practice unethical techniques, including implying that they represent the alarm users existing alarm company.

The committee has developed bill stuffers and flyers for use by agencies and companies to distribute to alarm companies. Efforts are also underway to educate consumer agencies and to seek press coverage to get the word out before consumers are confronted again next year.

Affiliates of the National Electronic Security Alliance (NESA) including: Texas Burglar & Fire Alarm Association, Oklahoma Burglar & Fire Alarm Association and Kansas Electronic Security Alliance have begun similar efforts.

For more information on the effort visit <http://www.faraonline.org/alarmsales/>

Nominations for FARA Achievement Awards Needed!

FARA is dedicated to honoring those in our profession, who have shown exemplary commitment to the reduction of false alarms and to establishing and maintaining positive working relationships among all parties involved. Are you proud of your alarm management program? Do you have a terrific success story to share? Do you want the world to know about it? If so, then tell us! Too often, the wonderful work done in False Alarm Reduction Units throughout North America goes unnoticed. We want to recognize your efforts and provide you with a wonderful plaque you can display in your office to show others how significant your accomplishments are. How would you like to be able to return from Denver with a coveted Achievement Award that you can share with your Chief or Sheriff? (***Attendance at the training symposium is not required for nominations to be considered.***) Let us help you advertise your success.

Please send in your nominations for FARA's False Alarm Reduction Achievement Awards. Feel free to nominate your own agency/company or others. Both public safety and associate members can submit nominations for any category listed below. All submitted nominations will be provided to the attendees in Denver. All attendees will then cast a vote on who their favorite is in each category. As such, your nomination should contain sufficient information to allow those voting to understand what the accomplishment is and how you were able to achieve it. You may use narrative, charts, graphs or any combination of the three. Please limit your nomination to no more than two (2) pages in length. The Achievement Awards will be presented during the Denver training symposium.

- **Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:** This award is presented to the public safety agency that has an alarm management program, which has shown meaningful or significant reduction in the number of false alarms over a 3 to 5 year period.
- **Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:** This award is presented to an individual alarm company that has implemented and sustained an alarm management program, which has shown meaningful or significant reduction in the number of false alarms over a 3 to 5 year period.
- **FARA Achievement Award:** This award is presented to an individual, company or association that has demonstrated significant or meaningful contributions toward the FARA mission.

We know that great things are being done by public safety and alarm industry alike to combat false alarms. Tell us what you have done and let us help you get the recognition you deserve with an Achievement Award. Nominations must be submitted on or before April 1, 2009 to be considered. Please submit your nominations to FARA c/o Brad Shipp at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com or via fax at 301/519-9508.

Nominations Needed for FARA Members of the Year!

The FARA Norma C. Beaubien Public Safety and W. Rex Bell Associate Member of the Year Awards are the highest honor FARA gives to deserving individuals, who demonstrate a significant commitment and contribute the most to their department or company, the community and to FARA. Do you know anyone who fits this bill? Please tell us and let us honor them with these coveted awards. Once again, both public safety and associate members can submit nominations for either category. Past winners can be viewed at http://www.faraonline.org/html/success_stories.asp. Please submit your written nomination detailing the reasons you believe the individual nominated deserves such an award. Please limit your nomination to one (1) page or less. Nominations must be submitted on or before March 15, 2009 to be considered. Please submit your nominations to FARA c/o Brad Shipp at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com or via fax at 301/519-9508.

Featured Bulletin – Holidays

Don't let your Holiday Season be ruined by false alarms! There are simple steps you can take to avoid what could be costly mistakes, while at the same time creating a lovely Holiday atmosphere in your home or business.

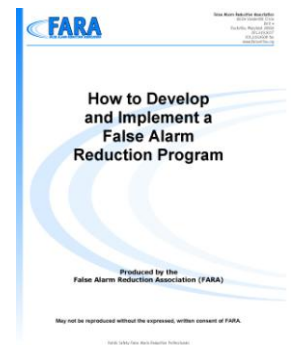
The full list of bulletins, which have been approved by the board, can be accessed on our web site at http://www.faraonline.org/html/consumer_tips.html.

We encourage you to use these informational bulletins as bill stuffers, hand outs at meetings or to send to individual problem alarm users.



Featured Manual – Developing a False Alarm Reduction Program

The FARA Communications Committee recently updated one of FARA's original manuals – How to Develop and Implement a False Alarm Reduction Program. The purpose of this manual is to provide guidelines to assist jurisdictions in developing and implementing a successful false alarm reduction program. Not every guideline in this manual will be appropriate for your municipality, given its own unique politics, demographics, scope, and economic considerations. However, the guidelines will give a good idea of an effective approach to finally dealing with and reducing false alarms.



The full list of manuals, which have been approved by the board, can be accessed on our web site at <http://www.faraonline.org/html/publications.asp>. Copies of manuals can be downloaded from the member's only site.

False Alarm Updates

- **New system sought to limit number of false alarms**- 12.17.08 - Star News, MN - Elk River
Every year police respond to more than 1,000 false alarm trips. In 2007, police responded to 1,044 false alarms, which was up from 1,025 in 2006. The 2008 number is estimated to top out around 1,100. In order to reduce the police response to faulty trips, the city of Elk River Minnesota recently passed an ordinance that requires a two-call system from alarm companies.
- **Penalty false alarm calls could rise in Lakewood, WA**- 12.9.08 - TheNewsTribune.com, WA
To save money and hold alarm companies accountable, the Lakewood City Council is considering raising the fees it charges when police respond to false alarms. Under the proposed ordinance the false alarm fee charged to residential system owners would increase to \$100. If police respond to a false alarm for a robbery alarm at a business, it would cost \$200. The rules also would require owners to pay an annual permit fee that's set by the city manager. Owners could also get their first false alarm fee waived if they take an alarm user awareness class. Residents are now allowed two free responses, then are charged \$65 after each instance. They also pay only a one-time, \$15 permit fee. The proposal would require companies to verify what's setting off an alarm — either by witness, audio-visual confirmation or if two detectors are set off in close sequence — before dispatching a sheriff's deputy. Alarm companies would also have to pay more in annual fees. They would get fined \$100 for not verifying their alarm signals, or \$200 for knowingly making false statements about the inspection of an alarm or its performance.

- **Killeen TX Considers charge for false fire alarms-** [12.9.08 - Killeen Daily Herald, TX](#)
The Killeen City Council is considering an amendment to its fire response ordinance that would allow the city to charge for false-alarm calls. Killeen Fire Chief Jerry Gardner said he recommended that fines be issued to building owners who are repeat violators of false alarms. Gardner said the proposal would include a grace period for the first two fire alarms, but a third false alarm would incur a \$100 fine. After five alarms, the penalty would be \$200; after 10 false alarms, fines reach \$500 each.
- **Seattle WA police to enforce alarm verification law-** [12.11.08- SecurityInfoWatch, IL](#)
On January 1, 2009 Seattle will begin enforcing the law that has been on the books since 2004, mandating alarm monitoring companies to place two verification calls to customers before contacting police. Also, beginning January 1, the City will enforce the requirement for alarm companies doing business in Seattle to be licensed with the city.
- **Unpaid false alarm fines could lead to loss of utilities-** [12.10.08- Security Systems News, NY](#)
Cordele, Ga.--City commissioners voted to adopt a new ordinance that will tie false alarm fines to end users' public utilities, including water, sewage, gas and garbage collection. The unique move stems from concerns that false alarms generated by alarm systems in city residences and businesses often lead to a misallocation of police manpower.
- **New Florida Alarm Ordinance Fines Homeowners-** [12.11.08 - Security Sales & Integration- Kissimmee, FL](#)
City commissioners in Kissimmee, Fla., have unanimously voted to pass an alarm ordinance that imposes heavier fines for home and business owners who have repeated false alarms. Homeowners will also be required to get a permit to have an alarm. Under the new ordinance, state officials will stop responding if there are six or more false alarms in one year.
- **Cracking down on false alarms-** [12.12.08- Access North Georgia, GA](#)
Jefferson, GA - The City of Jefferson is cracking down on false alarms. City officials have released a draft of an ordinance that would impose fines ranging from \$50 to \$500 for three or more false alarms a year. They hope this will reduce the number of such instances, which they say are placing an undue burden on the Jefferson Police Department. Under the proposal, three or more false alarms within a calendar year are declared "excessive, constitutes a public nuisance and shall be unlawful." The ordinance goes on to say "civil penalties may be assessed against an alarm user" using the follow scale:
 - Third, fourth and fifth false alarm - \$50
 - Sixth and seventh false alarm - \$100
 - Eighth and ninth false alarm - \$250
 - Tenth or more false alarms - \$500

Crime News Briefs

- **Holidays Spell Danger for Law Officers-** [12.7.08- from National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund](#)
12.7.08- from National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund- A review of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) records shows that the Christmas and New Year's holiday season can be one of the most dangerous times of the year for law enforcement. Just consider that, throughout history, the chances of an officer being killed on New Year's Eve is 30 percent higher (65 total deaths) than the average day (50 total deaths), and on Christmas the number of line of duty deaths is 56 percent higher (78 total deaths) than normal.
- **Alarm prompts thief to reconsider-** [12.5.08 - News Courier, AL](#)
A would-be thief reconsidered his descent into the L&S Food Market in Ardmore Wednesday night after triggering the store's alarm, an official said. A thief scaled the roof of the store at 29970 Ardmore Ave. about 1:45 a.m., cut a hole in the roof, entered the store, tripped the alarm and then fled, said Limestone County Sheriff's Chief Investigator Stanley McNatt.
- **2 Suspected in Many Burglaries Are Arrested-** [12-7.08 - The Ledger, FL](#)
The two explained to deputies that the two always use a crowbar to enter the homes. The

two also use binoculars to determine whether or not the alarm systems in each home are activated. If the green lights are on, the suspects know that the alarms will not sound, the report said. The suspects are said to be linked to 17 burglaries and involved in at least 50 other burglaries through Polk, Osceola, Orange and Lake counties, according to authorities.

- **Police: Tot breaks into Beaumont variety store-** [12.15.08 - Associated Press](#)

Child Protective Services claimed oversight of a 4-year-old boy found at a Beaumont discount store, playing with toys, as police responded to a burglar alarm. Police say store surveillance video showed the unidentified boy tried one of the front doors to a Family Dollar store about 3 a.m. Monday, only to find it locked. But the second door was unlocked and the child went inside. That triggered the silent alarm. Detective Randy Stevens said the child apparently unlocked a door at his nearby home, got out, then crossed a multilane street to reach the store. A canvass of the neighborhood turned up a family member searching for the child. CPS spokeswoman Shari Pulliam says the agency has taken oversight of the child during a review of the incident. She says the boy will be allowed to stay with other relatives, not the parents, during the CPS review period.

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.
