



InfoLink

Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

FARA InfoLink Special Annual Training Symposium Issue May, 2007

- 11th Annual International FARA Training Symposium Held
- Thanks!
- FARA Jeopardy
- Specialized Training
 - New and Existing Member Sessions
 - Understanding Alarms
 - Creating Regional Meetings
 - Professional Certification Exam Prep Class
 - Success Stories – Learn What's Possible
 - Using Industry Associations as a Resource
 - Third Party Administration / From Soup to Nuts
 - Monitoring Center and Dallas 9-1-1 Center Tours
 - What Have You Done For Me Lately?
 - Civil Mock Trial
 - Put Some Fire in Your Program
 - What Are Alarm Companies Doing to Manage Alarms
 - Emerging Security Technologies, Devices and Techniques
 - Verified Response – To Be or Not To Be?
- Vendor Show and Exposition
- Professional Certification Program
- 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 Awards
 - Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award
 - Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award
 - False Alarm Reduction Association Achievement Award
- Special Recognition Certificate
- General Membership Meeting
- Board of Directors Meetings
- Extras!
- Please Share Your Newsletters and Tips with Us
- FARA Mission Statement
- Contact Us

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11th Annual FARA Training Symposium Held

The False Alarm Reduction Association successfully completed its 11th Annual International Training Symposium in Dallas, Texas, which ran from April 23 to April 27, 2007. Testimonials from just some of the people who attended include, "This is the best conference I have ever attended," "Thanks to the entire Board for all their efforts," "You included just the right amount of training and entertainment," and "Great classes, great food, great people!"



This training symposium boasted the highest attendance to date (up to 120 people) and included representation from law enforcement, fire officials, alarm industry and even alarm users. There was terrific exchange of ideas throughout the week-long symposium. There were also a vast array of classes, seminars, workshops, panels and interactive discussions. Plenty of time was afforded for networking outside of structured class time, and the hospitality suite was another huge success.

We were privileged to have wonderful participation from both the Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association (TBFAA) and the North Texas Alarm Association (NTAA), as well as from alarm company representatives from the Dallas area. Chip Bird and Chris Russell, Presidents of the TBFAA and NTAA respectively, participated on panel discussions, attended other sessions, and assisted in the planning of the training symposium.

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 in beautiful, historic Charleston, South Carolina from April 21 through April 25, 2008! We will be staying at the Francis Marion Hotel, right in the heart of downtown Charleston – an absolutely can't miss city! The Training and Certification Committee's Conference Subcommittee will begin, in the very near future, to plan the training courses and other events to be held. 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.

Visit http://www.faraonline.org/html/2007_pictures.asp for more symposium photos.

Thanks!

The FARA Board of Directors extends a huge thank you to all of our sponsors, who so generously contributed to the success of the FARA Training Symposium:

- Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC) – Grants
- Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association – Tour Buses
- North Texas Alarm Association – Tour Buses
- Brinks Home Security – Membership and Awards Lunch
- ADS Security – Networking Lunch
- Vector Security, Inc. – Networking Lunch
- Protection One - Breaks
- Public Safety Corp. Crywolf – Breaks
- Siemens - Breaks

We are very grateful to all of our sponsors, who help FARA provide symposium attendees with grant funds to attend, 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!

A very special thank you also goes out to Betty Lou Bell and Robbie Hanson, who so graciously donated so much of their time to manning the registration desk, answering questions, selling raffle tickets and FARA memorabilia and generally keeping the symposium running smoothly. Your dedication and efforts to assist the membership is greatly appreciated by all!

FARA Jeopardy

The FARA Conference Subcommittee constantly looks for ways to provide innovative and exciting training to its members. FARA Jeopardy, and other alarm management games that have been played at previous training symposiums, such as FARA Feud and FARA Wheel of Fortune, spawned from the understanding that training should include at least two things; i.e., it should be interactive and should be fun to promote learning.



Rick Moore of Public Safety Corp. Crywolf and past Treasurer of FARA once again served as Master of Ceremonies and hosted a very competitive game of FARA Jeopardy, which served to teach attendees about alarm management issues in a fun atmosphere. Four teams, who named themselves the False Alarm Reduction Team (FART), False Alarm Exterminators (FAX), False Alarm Reduction of Texas (FAROTS), and the Wolf Pack, vied for the prize, with the Wolf Pack coming out on top. Wolf Pack team members each received a gift certificate from giftcertificates.com. The interactive nature of FARA Jeopardy also helped to develop camaraderie among teammates and provided a forum for all attendees to get to know each other a little better. FARA Jeopardy was deemed a huge success and fun was definitely had by all!

Specialized Training

The annual FARA Training Symposium is designed to provide courses and interactive discussion panels, which will give alarm management professionals the tools they need to develop, implement and maintain successful false alarm reduction programs. At the Dallas training symposium, FARA members were exposed to a wide variety of topics and training formats; everything from creating regional meetings to emerging technologies. We had a great group of instructors and panelists this year, and owe each one of them a debt of gratitude for taking time out of their busy schedules to help us all learn more about alarm management programs.

Following is a synopsis of the training provided, as well as the instructors and panelists, who provided the training:

New and Existing Member Sessions



FARA members, both public safety and associate, who were new to FARA training symposiums or to alarm management issues in general, attended a workshop, given by FARA President Norma Beaubien, to better prepare them for what to expect from the training symposium. Attendees were provided with some history on the creation of FARA, its structure, philosophy, bylaws, committees and certification program. The workshop also outlined various alarm industry groups that could be used as a resource, how they worked and how to begin a dialogue if one

did not already exist. Attendees also learned about what to expect from the training symposium and how to get the most out of each class. There was wonderful participation from those in attendance and many, many great questions were asked and answered.

All those not attending the new member session attended an existing FARA member session, moderated by Associate Director-Electronic Security Kathleen Schraufnagel. This session gave attendees an opportunity to raise issues of concern in an informal setting. Participants were asked to share what they needed from FARA and to describe what else FARA could do for them. Short descriptions of the training sessions scheduled for the week were discussed. A long conversation was held about FARA's efforts to get more multi-jurisdictional national company alarm users to join the association, and how both the association and the companies would benefit from such a partnership. Finally, all of the opportunities for networking throughout the week were discussed. Members were advised that if they were having a particular problem, there was a good chance that they would find others with the same issue and to talk with as many people as possible.



Understanding Alarms



We cannot effectively deal with false alarms unless we have a basic understanding of the equipment involved, how it works and how it is designed, installed and used. Geoffrey Stoliker, Regional Sales Manager for equipment manufacturer and supplier DSC, provided this wonderful hands-on class, in which he described the difference between an "alarm" system and a "security" system, described the various alarm components in use today, how they work and how they can prevent false alarms.

We learned about control panels, various perimeter and interior protection devices, life safety systems, and what happens when an alarm activates. Geoffrey also explained how strides made in the manufacturing of equipment has helped to reduce false alarms.

Creating Regional Meetings

FARA is a strong believer in the many benefits derived from holding regional meetings among public safety and alarm industry professionals. In this tag-team approach, three FARA members from around North America described how having regional meetings in their locales has helped to educate all parties, reduce false alarms, and bring major issues to the forefront.

Amy Lobdell, Portland Police Bureau, Oregon, described how to get started and specifically how regional meetings worked in Portland.





Janet Nalley, Prince George's County Police Department, Maryland, provided a comprehensive list of possible meeting topics and which ones were successful in Maryland.

Gerry Miller, Peel Regional Police, Brampton, Ontario, Canada, discussed what regional meetings could do for you, the importance of developing good, strong working relationships, and who should attend regional meetings and why. Participants were encouraged to review FARA's manual on How to Create Regional Meetings, which details why, how, who, when and much more.



Professional Certification Exam Prep Class

As a result of suggestions made at the San Francisco training symposium in 2006, FARA created a Professional Certification Exam prep class, which was open to all those who were planning to take the exam on Friday, as well as those who felt they might want to take the exam in the future. There was a good turn-out for instructor Kerri McDonald, Riverside Police Department, California, who successfully completed the exam last year. Kerri explained how the exam was organized, what types of questions to expect and how much time was provided for each section. Participants received and took a practice exam, which better prepared them to take the real thing. Kerri also provided insider tips on how to prepare for the exam and even provided attendees with highlighters and post it notes of various sizes and colors to mark their written materials prior to the exam.



Success Stories – Learn What's Possible

Everyone wants to tell when they have done something well. In this interactive training experience, participants broke into small groups and shared the many successes that each jurisdiction had with relation to false alarm reduction. Every attendee was given an opportunity to tell a success story. We learned of successful initiatives such as the creation of a Burglar Alarm Response Squad within the Miami-Dade Police Department, which is funded through grant money, to pay for officers to specifically respond to burglar alarm activations, which frees up other patrol resources to respond to emergency calls.



The New Orleans Police Department stresses education for alarm users and has created and aired false alarm prevention videos on their open cable channel. The Plano Police Department (Texas) takes community policing seriously, and officers hand out false alarm prevention packets in person. Vector Security was successful in dealing with a special needs customer through the use of technology. These are but a few of the wonderful success stories that were shared with the group and reflect that creativity in alarm management is a great thing!

Using Industry Associations as a Resource

This three member panel, comprised of Chris Russell, President of the North Texas Alarm Association, Christine Van Geest, Alarm Program Administrator for the Hamilton Police Service in Ontario, Canada, and Steve Heggemann, Alarm Coordinator for the Baltimore County Alarm Reduction Team in Maryland,

discussed the ways in which cooperative public safety/alarm industry relations assist in the reduction of false alarms.

Chris Russell described ways in which the NTAA works with municipalities to enhance communication among the groups. He explained that the NTAA strives to recognize the best interests of the alarm *industry* rather than the best interests of the alarm *company*.



Chris Van Geest shared how powerful her working relationship is with CANASA (Canadian Alarm Association), and how they provide assistance whenever it is needed. CANASA assisted in the modification of Hamilton's alarm bylaw and sat side by side with them during the process. CANASA also provides Level 1 and Level 2 technician training to public safety, provides automatic membership in CANASA to public safety agencies, and allows for free subscriptions to trade magazines. Finally, Chris said the greatest benefit of the association is in helping to foster better relationships with the alarm user.

Steve Heggemann described how the Maryland Burglar and Fire Alarm Association presented a united front with law enforcement before the Maryland legislature in a joint effort to get Enhanced Call Verification passed on a statewide level. He stated that the positive working relationships between law enforcement and the MDBFAA, together with developing consensus, results in a greater ability to move forward.

Panel moderator Stan Hanson, Palm Bay Police Department in Florida, also described how the Alarm Association of Florida was instrumental in getting Enhanced Call Verification passed on a state level there.

The message of this panel was that working together, public safety and the alarm industry can achieve great results and do so on a daily basis throughout North America. If you have not yet tapped into these resources (alarm industry for public safety; public safety for alarm industry), you are missing out on a great opportunity to develop public/private partnerships and effect real, substantive change in the false alarm reduction issue.

Third Party Administration / From Soup to Nuts



Many jurisdictions look at developing alarm management programs, but get nowhere because they have no funding to deal with the problem. One way that some have dealt with this issue is to contract with an outsource vendor to handle the day-to-day tasks of permitting, tracking and billing for false alarms. Sgt. Allan Rutledge, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, North Carolina, served as the instructor for this class and rolled out portions of FARA's brand new *Working with Third Party Administration Companies* manual at the same time. Allan described how his department was very successful utilizing an outsource vendor, how it came about, and why it works so well. Allan included

information on considerations prior to outsourcing, what functions can actually be outsourced, benefits and drawbacks, and the significance of the actual contract. We also learned that the Scope of Services portion of the outsource process is the most important, as it contains all of the municipality's expectations and details exactly what the outsource vendor will be required to perform. Most attendees, who completed an evaluation form of the training symposium, listed Allan's class as one of the best they have

ever been to. Kudos to Allan for putting together a presentation that was so well received by the membership.

Monitoring Center and Dallas 9-1-1 Center Tours

All attendees, including public safety, alarm industry, vendor associates, spouses, children, sisters, brothers, and significant others went on one of three incredibly educational tours Wednesday afternoon. Kathleen Schraufnagel of Brink's Home Security and Patricia Novak of Protection One opened up their monitoring centers to public safety personnel, who learned what it is like to work in an alarm monitoring center. They received instruction on how calls are received, what happens when an alarm activates and how monitoring center personnel attempt to filter out false alarms before requesting public safety dispatch. Participants were able to listen in on actual calls being received, which proved to be a real eye-opener for everyone.



All non-public safety attendees received a tour of the Dallas 9-1-1/3-1-1 state-of-the-art communications center. This tour was spearheaded by Roy Williams of the Dallas Fire Department. The tour started out in the fire/rescue dispatch side, where attendees spoke with the lieutenant in charge and learned about how the fire department handles calls for service, and specifically about how false fire alarms are handled. Participants then moved through to the police side and were able to view surveillance cameras placed in and around Dallas and talk with various operators. We viewed the entire 9-1-1/3-1-1 call-take and dispatch floor, where numerous operators were handling calls for service, which we could listen to. The communications center manager discussed all aspects of the center from the number of employees and training required to bring them on board, to the redundancy of backup facilities/locations to handle calls should a catastrophe occur.

All three tours were excellent and incredibly informative. All attendees came away with much greater knowledge about how both public safety and the alarm industry handle areas of concern.

What Have You Done For Me Lately?



What does your membership in FARA mean to you? This course, presented by FARA Communications Committee member Pat Killian of Vector Security, showcased all that FARA has to offer its members. Using a PowerPoint presentation as her guide, Pat elicited from the attendees which FARA documents they used most often and how that helped them educate alarm users and do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. All of FARA's written materials were discussed. We learned that many of FARA's brochures are distributed with new and renewal permit applications, at police stations, and are handed out at senior citizen and other community events. The one-page false alarm prevention bulletins are either used "as is" or are modified slightly to cover specific municipality requirements and are sent with

mailings and given to alarm companies for distribution. Many members discussed how they used the FARA model ordinances to implement their own programs. The group even suggested new bulletins that the Communications Committee can undertake, including reaching out to middle school aged children, hearing and visually impaired alarm users, and senior citizens. FARA members are a creative group, and have used FARA manuals, guides, brochures, and bulletins in many unique ways.

Civil Mock Trial

One highlight of the training symposium was the civil mock trial presented by two area attorneys and heard by a 6-person jury of Dallas area citizens. The scenario given to the attorneys involved a homeowner with 12 false alarms. On a chilly day with seven inches of snow on the ground, a police officer responded to investigate a burglar alarm activation. The officer observed footprints in the snow and found

a kitchen window slightly ajar. While investigating the open window, the officer's leg descended into a window well, which could not be seen due to the snow. She called for an ambulance and backup and was transported to a local hospital. The officer sustained a broken ankle and wrist, both of which required the insertion of pins to stabilize the bones. After several months of physical therapy, the officer had still not regained the full use of her gun hand, and, therefore, could not continue as a police officer.

Jason Sanders, an attorney for Locke Liddell & Sapp, served as counsel for the Plaintiff and represented the police officer. Robert Reagan, of Reagan & McLain, served as counsel for the Defendant and represented the homeowner.



Given the scenario, attorney Sanders summed up his case for the jury by telling them that the Defendant was John Owens, #81 for the Dallas Cowboys, that he kept an incredibly messy yard, which posed a hazard for any responding officer, that he came home after a night of drinking, realized he had lost his keys, walked around his house until he found the unlocked kitchen window and entered the house in that manner. This occurred in the early morning hours of the day of the incident. He explained that his client was a third-grade teacher with three small children, who also served as a volunteer police officer. His client responded to the Owens house on more than one occasion, and all of the responses were false alarms. He stated the Defendant did nothing to repair his alarm or rectify the cause of the repeated false alarms. Attorney Sanders asked the jury to find the Defendant negligent by a preponderance of the evidence and award his client monetary damages.



Owens' attorney, Robert Reagan, summed up his case by explaining that his client entered the home on the night in question through a different window, that it had snowed earlier in the morning and covered the foot prints, and that because this was a high crime area with burglaries occurring on a regular basis, that the officer had no evidence to the contrary that someone had not tried to enter the home illegally. Attorney Reagan further told the jury that the officer had some responsibility in this matter, and that by becoming a volunteer police

officer, she must assume a certain amount of risk. He stated that the Plaintiff had to prove Owens was negligent and did not exhibit ordinary care, which he stated the Plaintiff had failed to do.

The jury was taken to a separate room to deliberate the case. For purposes of the mock trial, we had a microphone feed into the jury room so we could hear their deliberations, but they could not hear us. This proved to be invaluable and allowed us to follow their thought processes throughout the deliberations. The jury took their job very seriously and deliberated as would any jury – they analyzed the "facts" they were given and discussed how the incident could have happened and whether or not the Defendant bore any responsibility for injuries to the Plaintiff. They even pointed out that no evidence was submitted, which showed that the footprints in the snow did anything but point toward the house and not away from it, indicating that perhaps some criminal activity had occurred. The jury found the Defendant negligent (guilty) and awarded compensatory and punitive damages in the amount of \$600,000 to the Plaintiff.



The mock trial was very entertaining and a great learning experience. FARA offers a special thanks to our jurors; i.e., Dareth Chapa, Darlene Wojiski, Dale Finley, Jacqueline Kelleher, Doug Abbott and Jennifer Patterson.



Put Some Fire in Your Program

This course was put together to kick off FARA's desire to move into the false fire alarm field. The purpose of the class was to educate public safety alarm professionals on the similarities and differences between false fire alarm efforts and false burglar alarm efforts. Mark Redlitz, Texas State Fire Marshal's Office, Licensing Investigation Director; Malcolm Reed, Knight Security; and Brad

Shipp, FARA's Executive Director, served as the subject-matter experts for this interactive panel discussion. The session was moderated by Jim Cogswell who shared his experience on the differences in regulating fire versus burglar alarms. The greatest difference between burglar and fire alarm systems is that alarm users do not generally touch their fire alarm system, but it is on and active 24-hours a day/7 days a week. Burglar alarm users arm and disarm their systems all day long, generally every day, and are much more interactive with their alarm systems. As soon as the human factor comes into play, false alarms are more likely to occur. False fire alarms are generally much more expensive to a municipality than response to false burglar alarm calls, as there are many more pieces of equipment that respond to a fire alarm; i.e., fire trucks with four to six firefighters on board, ambulance with medic(s), and the fire chief in some cases. Burglar alarm response is usually two police vehicles and officers. We already know that billions of dollars a year is wasted in response to false burglar alarm calls, so, with the rise of false fire alarms, the costs will be even more staggering. Mark, Malcolm, Jim and Brad discussed the level of training technicians are required to have, along with the numerous standards that exist to regulate fire alarm systems. This was a great introductory session to begin FARA's fire effort.

What are Alarm Companies Doing to Manage Alarms?

In previous FARA training symposiums we have heard from national companies and alarm associations about what they are doing to reduce false alarms. In this panel discussion, moderated by Amy Lobdell of the Portland Oregon Police Department, four industry professionals representing an installing company, a third-party monitoring center, and two different types of dealer programs shared what they do to reduce false alarms. Rex Adams of American Security Devices informed the group that his installing company receives daily reports on his customer's false alarms and performs follow-up on each and every one of them. He described how this is a costly endeavor, but one that he willingly takes on because it is the right thing to do. Chip Bird of Southwest Dispatch described how his central monitoring station provides all of its 300+ dealers Internet access so they can log in and get information on their particular customer's alarm activity. He stated that Enhanced Call Verification is the standard operating procedure for his company. Stephen Blackwell of Brink's Home Security explained how the Brink's dealer program works and the safeguards and due diligence they undertake to ensure that their dealers are quality sales and installation professionals. Brink's owns the accounts that their 100 nationwide dealers sell, as well as the equipment that they install. They also perform weekly inspections of dealers to ensure they are following proper procedures and policies. Reginald Blakely of Monitronics International, Inc. illustrated how their dealer program is different from that of Brink's. Monitronics has 450 dealers nationwide, all of whom have the option of selling the account to Monitronics after the sale and installation or maintaining it themselves with monitoring only provided by Monitronics. He described the steps they take to hire dealers and the due diligence they perform. Both Brink's and Monitronics said they required all of their dealers to be properly licensed, where required, and will "fire" dealers that do not perform up to their standards. Monitronics also requires at least one technician per dealer to have Level 2 certification. Their top 50 dealers are inspected at a minimum of once per year. This panel enlightened all of us to the various procedures and policies that are in place to reduce false alarms, and there was great input from the attendees.



Emerging Security Technologies, Devices and Techniques



When looking at false alarm reduction, it is important to know what types of systems are being installed, how they work and their false alarm potential. We are generally familiar with devices on the market today, but not with what is coming down the pike with which we might be concerned. Tim Rader of the Brink's Home Security Research and Development section explained various technologies that are being developed or are already being used for both residential and commercial alarm systems. Some manufacturers are trying to reduce false alarms through the elimination of keypads; alarm systems are

armed and disarmed simply by locking or unlocking a deadbolt on the door. Tim explained that while this sounds simple, installation of these devices is very difficult, which can lead to increased false alarms

rather than reduction. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), the process by which consumers use their cable provider or the Internet for telephone service, has caused major problems with communication between the alarm systems and the monitoring stations; i.e., some signals do not get through. He explained the difference between managed and unmanaged systems and how that affects the alarm system's ability to communicate an activation. We also learned that alarm manufacturers were late dealing with the fact that as of February 18, 2008, all analog telephone lines will cease to exist (moving to digital). Alarm systems communicate through analog technology, and many are not equipped to recognize digital technology. They are working furiously to rectify the situation at this time. Self-monitoring of alarm systems is on the rise, where users receive an email notification or a call on their cell phones when the alarm activates, as are nanny cams and whole-house automation integrating energy management with alarm systems in residential settings.

Access control and CCTV systems are the hottest products in the commercial market at this time, with huge strides being made in both. Access control can be Intra or Internet based, which provides remote video access and works with any web browser. Utilizing this technology, it is possible to lock down individual doors or all doors in a facility based on threat level through remote communication. This may be particularly beneficial for facilities such as schools. Numerous new cameras are available, such as wide dynamic, covert and infrared illuminated, which provide far superior pictures; some with the ability to pan, tilt and zoom. Finally, Intelligent Video Analytics is software that actually analyzes the data that the camera sees, which can assist in determining whether public safety assistance is required or not. Some of the equipment, such as the covert cameras (located within other electronic equipment such as clocks and radios), looked like they came right out of a James Bond movie. This course was truly a revelation to many attendees on the technological advancements that have been made.

Verified Response – To Be or Not To Be?



FARA tackled the issue of Verified Response (where public safety does not respond to an alarm activation unless there is on-site, or in some cases audio and/or video, verification that a crime is being committed) with panelists Deputy Chief Mike Genovesi of the Dallas Police Department, and Dick Machlan, Administrative Services Division Manager of the Olympia Police Department in Washington State. Both communities had severe false alarm problems. Both

communities looked at options to address false alarms. Both communities considered Verified Response (VR) as an option. However, both took different final positions on how they were going to manage false alarms. The purpose of this panel was to explore the processes and considerations that led to the decision to either adopt VR or some other type of alarm management program and to look at the results of those decisions.

Chief Genovesi relayed that Dallas had an alarm ordinance in effect, that it was somewhat successful in reducing false alarms, but that the numbers were still staggering and they needed to develop a different approach. They investigated other jurisdictions that had gone to VR and brought that solution to their Council. Public hearings were held, where citizens opposed the plan, but the Council eventually voted by a slim margin to implement VR for commercial alarm users only. Chief Genovesi said that there was a 45% reduction in burglar alarm calls since implementation of commercial VR, and that there was no plan to include residential alarm users. He also stated that they are currently looking at the possibility of allowing audio and video as a form of verification.

Dick Machlan explained that Olympia also had a problem with false alarms, but that there was no program in place, the Council was totally uneducated on the issue, and the relationship between the municipality and the alarm industry was "out of whack." Clearly, there was a lot of work to do. They too investigated VR as an option and discussed the matter with the Council. A workgroup was created comprised of law enforcement, alarm company representatives, schools, government officials, the senior community, those citizens with alarms and those without. They held open houses and open meetings to develop a program that met the guidelines handed down by the Council; i.e. program must not be subsidized by taxpayers (many of whom do not have alarm systems), must be supportive of the alarm industry and the alarm user, create minimal new bureaucracy, be cost neutral, and provide protection for consumers. This 2 1/2 year process culminated in an ordinance that has shown an 80% reduction in false alarms and recovered 94% of officer time.

It is difficult to compare Dallas to Olympia due to the difference in the size of each community. However, the similarities were that they both had false alarm problems and both looked at VR as a solution. One chose to implement while the other did not. This may be the single most divisive issue that faces the law enforcement and alarm industry communities and emotions run high on both sides. Even given that, however, there was great interaction among the panelists and the attendees, and there was a respectful exchange of ideas and philosophies. This panel demonstrated that what works for one community may not work for another and that we each have to look at false alarm reduction in terms of our own politics, demographics, and beliefs.

Vendor Show and Exposition

The FARA Board of Directors would like to extend a very special thank you to our Vendor Show and Exposition participants: **Crywolf-Public Safety Corp., Central Station Alarm Association (CSAA), Digital Design Group, Inc., Enable Point, North Texas Alarm Association, Siemens** and the **Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association**.



All of the vendors were given an opportunity to speak to the entire group about their particular service and/or product. We had a diverse group of alarm associations and suppliers of false alarm tracking and billing software represented. Members spent time at each booth talking with vendors and observing first-hand what each software program could provide. The Texas and North Texas Alarm Associations provided us with information on efforts they were taking to assist in the reduction of false alarms in Texas. The Central Station Alarm Association provided us with a birds-eye view of the CSAA on-line alarm user training course, which they have graciously enabled public safety members to view free of charge. We thank all of our vendors, who so generously provided information on their specific products or services, which are designed to reduce false alarms or assist in the management and billing of false alarms.

Professional Certification Program

FARA's one-of-a-kind Professional Certification Exam was completely overhauled and reissued this year at the Dallas symposium. New rules and objectives were developed, along with pertinent publication lists and exam questions. Two versions of the new exam were given this year for the first time. 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.

Sgt. April Brown, Lexington Police Department, Kentucky; Roberta Smiley, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, Oregon; Anna Tate, ADS of Nashville, Tennessee; and Penny Hayter, Las Colinas Association of Irving, Texas; 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!

FARA Member of the Year Award

The Norma C. Beaubien Public Safety Member of the Year Award was presented to **Christine Van Geest**, of the Hamilton Police Service in Ontario, Canada, for her immeasurable contributions to both FARA and the Hamilton community.

Christine was honored for her incredible dedication to FARA, which was evident in her work with the Membership Committee and the outstanding outreach she did, and continues to do, with public safety and

the alarm industry throughout North America. She assisted in the development of the FARA mentoring program, which teams up new members with veterans to help acclimate the new member and lend assistance wherever it is needed. She has stepped in and taken minutes of teleconferences, created new forms to grow the mentoring program, and provides invaluable input on issues before the committee. She recently agreed to take over as Committee Chair of the Membership Committee, which will allow Gerry Miller, our former Chair, time to focus on her Board duties. Christine sat for the Professional Certification Exam last year and is a Certified Alarm Manager. She also attended and participated in the regional training course FARA conducted in Brampton, Ontario in May 2006. She was instrumental in getting FARA exposure at the 2006 CANASA conference, where she was able to secure a booth for free and spent time in the booth talking with CANASA members.



Christine is also a member of the CANASA Monitoring Station Symposium Committee and serves as a guest speaker at CANASA events. She has taken and passed both Level 1 and Level 2 technician training through CANASA, and is a certified alarm technician. She attends and actively participates in CANASA trade shows and symposiums each year.

At home in Hamilton, she continually seeks out new and innovative ways to improve her alarm management program. In the past year, she developed a comprehensive marketing campaign to reduce false alarms. Utilizing a public education strategy, she created displays and spent time talking with citizens at local fairs and festivals. She taped radio and television spots recognizing November's False Alarm Prevention Month. She also designed and implemented a program to post false alarm prevention advertising on the backs of city buses. She accomplished all of this while still managing the day-to-day activities involved in running a false alarm reduction unit.

Commenting on her award, FARA President Norma Beaubien stated, "Christine truly embodies everything this award was created to recognize; she is dedicated to the cause of false alarms, is passionate about false alarm reduction, and is active in both public safety and alarm industry efforts alike. She is a fabulous champion of FARA and we are all truly fortunate to have her helping us move the association forward."

FARA Associate Member of the Year Award



The W. Rex Bell FARA Associate Member of the Year Award was presented to **Kelly Maceranka**, Chico's FAS, Inc., for her exceptional contributions to FARA, her company and the communities she serves. Kelly is very active in FARA, and serves on both the Training and Certification and Associate Member Committees. She assisted with creating the agenda for the Dallas training symposium, which was a year-long effort, as well as participated in numerous grueling teleconferences, which are needed to ensure that the training symposium is successful. She researched issues surrounding the gift certificates that were given as door prizes, secured two \$100 Chico's gift cards for the Silent Auction, and provided excellent suggestions and input on the direction of the symposium. Kelly attended her first training symposium in Miami, went on to provide FARA's first ever alarm user class at the San Francisco symposium, and hasn't stopped since. She

attended and participated in the regional training course FARA conducted in Overland Park, Kansas in December, 2006. This turned out to be a real hardship for Kelly, as she lives in sunny southern Florida, and the temperatures in Kansas in December were in the teens! But still she persevered.

Kelly has the unenviable task of managing the registration/permitting process for all 800+ Chico's locations, and keeping track of all of the applicable alarm ordinances in those locations. She works with public safety on a daily basis to ensure that her company obtains the appropriate permits, works within the mandates of the alarm ordinances, and ensures that false alarms are kept to a minimum. Kelly implemented a false alarm reduction program within Chico's and created an instructional training PowerPoint presentation for all employees on the proper procedures to follow in using the alarm systems and their responsibilities for reducing false alarms. Chico's recently purchased a false alarm tracking and billing software program, which they then paid to have customized, so they could get a better handle on any false alarms they may have.

"Kelly has exhibited all that is best about true dedication to managing false alarm issues within her company, as well as working with the security industry and public safety at Chico's locations around the country. She is dedicated to FARA, Chico's and her community, and is incredibly deserving of this award," stated FARA President Norma Beaubien.

False Alarm Reduction Achievement Awards

Three awards were given this year to deserving recipients, which seek to recognize law enforcement and alarm industry initiatives that have shown meaningful or significant reduction in the number of false alarms over a three to five year period or which embody the FARA mission. We received many wonderful submissions this year for all three award categories. Attendees at the training symposium reviewed all of the nominations and voted for their favorite. FARA will continue to bestow these awards on an annual basis and will have symposium attendees select the winners. If you have or know of a program that you would like to nominate for next year, please forward your written nomination to FARA's Executive Director Brad Shipp at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com.

Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award

The Public Safety False Alarm Achievement Award was presented to the **Kansas City Police Department** in Missouri for its exceptional efforts and success in reducing false burglar alarms to which officers



respond. Under the direction and leadership of Alarm Administrator Mike Thoeke, the Kansas City alarm management program resulted in a 59% reduction in the number of false alarm dispatches between 2000 and 2006, even though registered alarm users rose by 45% during the same time period. This remarkable reduction is further evidenced by the reduction in dispatch rates from a high of 3.56 in 1997 to a low of .64 in 2005. Mike attributes the success of the Kansas City program, even in view of a less than ideal ordinance, to adequate staffing of the Alarm Section, identification and immediate focus on false alarm problems as they arise, personal contact with alarm users by Alarm Section staff, public education through the Alarm User Awareness School, and partnerships with the alarm industry.

FARA's Vice President-Electronic Security Jim Cogswell, will bestow the award during the Kansas City Police Department Commissioner's meeting on May 22, 2007.

Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award

The Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award was presented to **Guardian Protection Services, Inc.** of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for their exceptional dedication company-wide to ensuring their customers receive the public safety response they expect. Guardian Protection was nominated by Sue Clark of the Montgomery County Police Department in Maryland. Sue works with Guardian Protection on a daily basis to ensure that all of their customers obtain the required alarm user registration, without which, the MCPD will not respond. Two individuals, Eugene Kaminski and Christine Collier-Davies were singled out as being particularly dedicated in their efforts



to check the status of registrations for both new and takeover accounts. Christine routinely sends letters to new customers reminding them of their alarm registration responsibilities. Eugene, who is the customer service team leader for Montgomery County accounts, requests customer lists on a routine basis to ensure that all of Guardian's customers are properly registered. Eugene even checks the Maryland State Property Tax records to keep his client list up to date. Staff at the Montgomery County Police Department will give the award to staff at the local office in Maryland.

FARA Achievement Award

The FARA Achievement Award was presented to the **Maryland Burglar and Fire Alarm Association (MDBFAA)** for their consistent willingness to work with local law enforcement agencies to solve false alarm problems, as well as for their assistance and leadership in attempts to have statewide ECV enacted. Alarm coordinators in the State of Maryland meet regularly to discuss issues of concern and to develop initiatives that will reduce false alarms. As a result of one of those meetings, it was suggested that we try to implement Enhanced Call Verification on a statewide level. The Maryland Burglar and Fire Alarm Association was contacted to solicit their support, which they immediately and wholeheartedly gave.



The MDBFAA was instrumental in getting the issue before the General Assembly in Maryland two years running, testified alongside law enforcement, worked to get face-to-face meetings with the Committee Chair, and solicited support from individual alarm companies in the state. The MDBFAA has also been working for the past couple years to enact minimum training standards for alarm technicians in the state. They introduced a bill, which was fully supported by local law enforcement agencies, in an attempt to ensure that alarm technicians are qualified to install, repair and maintain alarm equipment. The MDBFAA was also influential in helping FARA get its regional training program off the ground. They provided the beta test site, sponsored the class so that no one had to pay to attend, and had some of their members attend and offer suggestions. The MDBFAA certainly fosters an environment of cooperation among public safety, the alarm industry and alarm users. Alarm coordinators in Maryland will present the award to leadership in the MDBFAA at their June meeting.

Special Recognition Certificate

A special recognition certificate was awarded to John Moorhouse, Alachua County Sheriff's Office, Gainesville, Florida, who served as FARA's Secretary for many years, and who recently left the alarm unit and had to resign his position on the Board. John also served on the Communications Committee and was an active member, who reviewed and provided input on all of FARA's written materials. He was an active and participating member of the Board of Directors, took the Minutes for all meetings and ran the election of officers and directors at the annual general membership meetings. John fostered fabulous working relationships with the alarm industry in Florida, and served as the public safety representative on the Alarm Association of Florida's Board of Directors. As a small token of our appreciation for his many years of dedicated service to the False Alarm Reduction Association, John was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation. Although he was not present in Dallas to receive the award, the Board wanted to recognize him for his service.

General Membership Meeting



The 11th annual General Membership Meeting took place on Wednesday, April 25, 2006. President Beaubien advised that her President's Report was contained within the registration notebook, which members could read at a later date. (To review a copy of the full annual report, please visit the web site, www.faraonline.org, under the "About Us" section.) President Beaubien announced to the general membership that this would be her last year serving as President. She stated that she was honored and privileged to serve as President of this wonderful association, but that 12 years was long enough, and it was time for new blood. She thanked everyone for their support of her and her efforts to grow the association, and said she could not have done it alone. She also stated that next year she would move into the Immediate Past President position on the Board of Directors, a position that has existed since FARA was created, but that has never been filled, because there was no immediate past president. Beaubien received a standing ovation.

Treasurer Steve Heggemann provided the general membership with a report on the financial status of the association, which is strong and continues to grow. He explained the Board approved the budget for 2007, which will show a small surplus.

Secretary Kerri McDonald elected by acclamation the following Board members: Jim Cogswell, Leawood Police Department as Vice President-Electronic Security; Kerri McDonald, Riverside Police Department as Secretary; Sally Shaffer, Loudoun County Sheriff's Office as an At-Large Director; Joe Patterson, Greenville County Sheriff's Office as an At-Large Director; and Kathleen Schraufnagel, Brink's Home Security as Associate Director.

Executive Director Brad Shipp described the proposed Bylaw amendments, which were approved by the general membership. Members were asked for input on the initiatives included in the draft 2007-2008 Strategic Plan. President Beaubien urged everyone, regardless of how long they had been in the alarm management field, to get involved and provide input on committees.

Board of Directors Meetings

The FARA Board of Directors held its bi-annual meeting to kick off the training symposium on Monday, April 23, 2007. The Board met again on Friday, April 27, 2007. Highlights of those two meetings are listed below.

The Board reviewed and approved the 2007 budget. Discussions were held on finalizing credit card processing for membership dues and training symposiums, a new policy on document retention, distribution of flash drives to new members instead of new membership books, and possible FARA resolutions regarding cancel and abort signals and



recommending use of the CP-01 standard. Committee Chairs provided reports on activities undertaken the previous year. Discussion was also held on a new DeWalt GPS device that is currently being used by the construction trade in an attempt to reduce thefts from construction sites. A recommendation was made by Christine Van Geest to explore the feasibility of creating a FARA plaque for members, who have more than five years of continuous membership in FARA, much like the one that CANASA uses. A long conversation was held on the fact that most committee chairs are current Board members and that the work is just too much. President Beaubien requested all current committee chairs to find a replacement and make a recommendation to her within the next 30 days so that Board members can focus on Board responsibilities and Committee Chairs can run the committees. At-Large Director Gerry Miller discussed the work done by the Membership Committee on growing the mentoring program and asked for approval on numerous new forms the committee wished to use.

FARA's fire effort was the subject of most of the April 27, 2007 Board meeting. Roy Williams of the Dallas Fire Department, Natasha Pitts of the Spartanburg Police Department and Malcolm Reed of Knight Security were guests involved in the fire issue. Discussion was held on how to develop a fire section within FARA. A Fire Committee was formed, with a chair to be named later. The committee's first project will be to create a one-page recruitment flyer for those public safety and industry professionals concerned with fire in an effort to grow the fire membership and receive more input on fire related issues. FARA will look at its current bulletins and determine whether they can be adapted for fire. The Communications Committee was charged with recruiting people with fire experience to work on the committee and provide ideas for written materials. FARA's involvement in the PDQ Award program was also discussed, with Steve Heggemann volunteering to take over responsibility for the local award presentation, wherever that may be. Other topics discussed include mobile security devices, SIAC grant process, deadlines for contacting new members, board member responsibilities, and costs for vendor booths at training symposiums. The Board also reiterated its position that it would not show favoritism to any particular vendor or product, and agreed that no Board member or Committee Chair would be permitted to wear clothes that have a vendor logo at any time during FARA events. The board considered several options presented in the central time zone for the 2011 Annual Symposium and agreed to hold it in Chicago, Illinois. The Board closed out its final meeting with discussions on providing guest speakers at the CANASA conference, update on the regional training promotional DVD, dialogue with the National Food Service Security Council, and the need to lock down meeting room needs for the Charleston training symposium.

Extras!

For the second year running, FARA held a nightly hospitality suite for attendees 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. Jim Cogswell proved to be an excellent host, with huge numbers of people crashing his suite on a nightly basis. Many thanks to him for serving in this capacity.

We all know that FARA members are great! We learned, however, that some of us actually have talents outside of our alarm management lives. Roland Waits of the Georgetown Police Department is a wonderful musician, and he serenaded us through lunch and at one of the hospitality nights. Since members couldn't get enough of him, some held a sing-along in the hotel restaurant on Thursday night, which was enjoyed by all. Thanks to Roland for sharing his gift with us. We expect more wonderful music next year in Charleston!



Ways and Means Chairman Rex Bell, once again sold raffle tickets and held drawings for door prizes at many of the individual sessions throughout the week. This year, each door prize winner received a certificate from giftcertificates.com, which enables them to select from about 200 different retailers and claim whatever prize they want. Retailers include restaurants, sporting goods stores, department stores, health and beauty, books and music, jewelry, specialty stores, travel and many more.



The Silent Auction was a fantastic success this year! Kathleen Schraufnagel from our host city of Dallas created fabulous theme baskets, which contained wares from all throughout Texas. Everything from wine produced locally to sauces hot enough to burn your mouth were showcased. Attendees really outdid themselves this year with the auction items they donated, and there was certainly something for everyone to enjoy!



Bidding was fast and furious right until the end. FARA earned over \$1,200, which will be used to benefit the membership through written publications and further training opportunities. FARA thanks everyone, who so generously donated items to this incredibly successful fundraising endeavor.

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 managers 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

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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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