



# InfoLink

Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

## FARA InfoLink Special Annual Training Symposium Issue May, 2008

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### 12<sup>th</sup> Annual FARA Training Symposium Held

The False Alarm Reduction Association completed its 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Training Symposium in Charleston, South Carolina, which ran from April 21 to April 25, 2008. The training symposium was a huge success and many thanks go out to Natasha Pitts, Spartanburg Public Safety Department and Chair of FARA's Conference Committee, for putting together an excellent week-long event.

This training symposium included representation from law enforcement, fire officials, alarm industry, alarm users and vendors interested in promoting the message of false alarm prevention. 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 the South Carolina Alarm Association, as well as from alarm company representatives from the Charleston area. Alarm industry representatives sat on panel discussions, provided training on understanding burglar and fire alarm systems, and generally 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 the beautiful mountains of Denver, Colorado from April 27 through May 1, 2009! We will be staying at the Four Points Sheraton, which has spectacular views and is close to outdoor events, shopping,



the Denver Zoo and the Aquarium, among other things. 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.

## 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:

- ADS Security – Silver Sponsorship
- Brinks Home Security – Gold Sponsorship
- Charleston County Sheriff's Office – Bronze Sponsorship
- Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC) – Grants – Platinum Sponsorship
- South Carolina Alarm Association – Matching Funds for Charleston 9 Tribute – Platinum Sponsorship
- Spartanburg Public Safety Department – Bronze Sponsorship
- Vector Security, Inc. – Gold Sponsorship

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 attendance grants, 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, Robbie Hanson and Margaret Patterson, who so graciously donated so much of their time to manning the registration desk, answering questions, selling raffle tickets and generally keeping the symposium running smoothly. Your dedication and efforts to assist the membership is greatly appreciated by all!

## Charleston 9 Tribute

During the opening session of the training symposium, attendees viewed a video regarding the horrific fire at a Charleston sofa warehouse that occurred in June 2007 in which nine Charleston fire fighters lost their lives battling the blaze. FARA held a "Fill the Boot" campaign during the symposium soliciting donations to help the families of the "Charleston 9". To kick off the effort, the first four to donate to the fund were offered Charleston 9 T-shirts. Mildred Carson from Prince George's County, Maryland, immediately became the first FARA member to donate to the fund. The interest was so great, that we had to start taking orders for shirts, as we purchased every XL Charleston 9 shirt in Charleston! Showing just how generous they could be, FARA attendees dug deep into their pockets and donated close to \$2000 to the cause. The South Carolina Alarm Association donated all of their \$3000 in matching funds to the families.

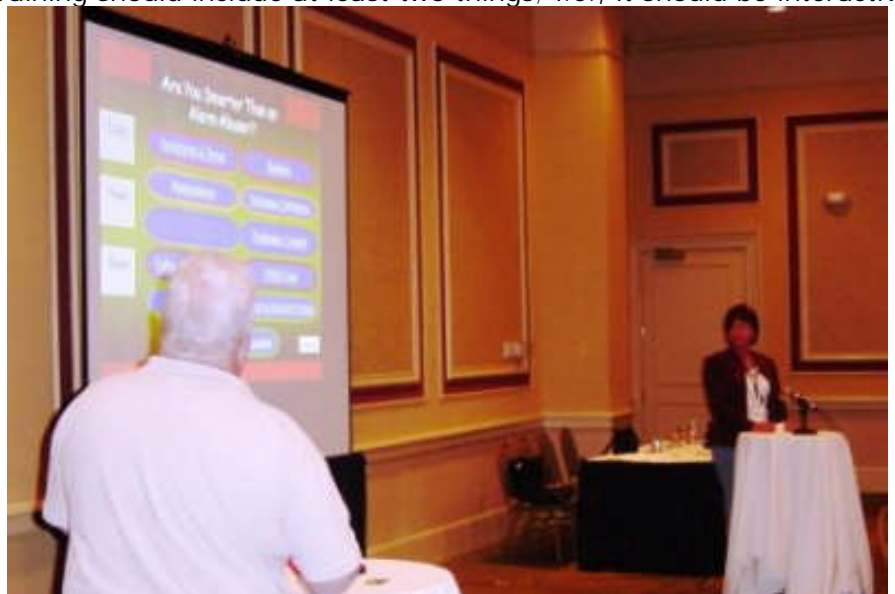


The donations were presented to Chief Thomas of the Charleston Fire Department at a luncheon honoring the fallen fire fighters on Thursday, April 24, 2008. Richard C. Davis, a very dear friend of Chief Thomas, and owner of Trademark Properties, provided the keynote address during the luncheon. Mr. Davis, better known from his television show Flip This House, gave a very moving, uplifting speech about persevering through hardship. A tremendous thank you goes out to all who so generously donated of their time and money for this wonderful cause.

## Are You Smarter Than an Alarm Abuser?



The FARA Conference Committee constantly looks for ways to provide innovative and exciting training to its members. "Are You Smarter Than an Alarm Abuser?" and other alarm management games that have been played at previous training symposiums, such as FARA Jeopardy, 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.

FARA's Executive Director Brad Shipp served as Master of Ceremonies and hosted a very competitive game of Are You Smarter Than an Alarm Abuser, which served to teach attendees about alarm management issues in a fun atmosphere. After much debate on the rules of the game (because a more competitive group of people does not exist anywhere!), four teams vied for the prize, with the winners receiving gift certificates from giftcertificates.com. The interactive nature of the game also helped to develop camaraderie among teammates and provided a forum for all attendees to get to know each other a little better. "Are You Smarter Than an Alarm Abuser?" was deemed a huge success and fun was definitely had by all – well by all those who didn't have to stand up at the end and admit that they were NOT smarter than an alarm abuser!

## Specialized Training

The annual FARA Training Symposium is designed to provide courses and interactive discussions, which will give alarm management professionals the tools they need to develop, implement and maintain successful false

alarm reduction programs. At the Charleston training symposium, FARA members were exposed to a wide variety of topics and training formats; everything from making alarm schools effective to understanding burglar and fire alarms were discussed. 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 the members an opportunity to hear about new initiatives in FARA including bringing more fire departments into false alarm reduction and the continuing need for member participation on FARA committees. Most of the real work of FARA is done in the committees and we are always looking for fresh perspectives and new ideas. Kathleen stressed that FARA is like any other thing that you do in life; the more you put into the relationship, the more you get out of it."

## **Understanding Burglar Alarms and Understanding Fire Alarms**

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.



Don Childers and Cathy McBride of Security Central in Statesville, North Carolina, provided a wonderful hands-on class dealing with burglar alarm systems. Don went over the different types of sensors and how they work to detect intrusion and he explained how they can produce false alarms if not used correctly. Cathy brought to us her experience as a central station manager and how reveling it was for her to visit a public safety 911 center and realize how alarm dispatch requests looked at for the other side of the phone call. Her portion of the session showed the importance of communication between public safety and the security industry and how that communication can solve problems and help us all provide better service to our customers and citizens."



Jim Kapparos of System Sensor provided a fabulous class on fire alarm systems and explained how they are different from burglar alarm systems and the various regulations, standards and ordinances that must be followed when installing and using fire alarm systems. We learned about addressable vs. conventional panels, photo electric vs. ionization smoke alarms, and the various types of notification appliances that are available.

### **Professional Certification Exam Prep Class**

As a result of suggestions made at previous training symposiums, 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 Sue Clark, Montgomery County Police Department, Maryland, who is currently a Certified Alarm Manager through FARA's Professional Certification Program. Sue explained how the exam was organized, what types of questions to expect and how much time was provided for each section. Sue 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.

### **Dealing with Alarm User Complaints**

Janet Nalley of the Prince George's County Police Department in Maryland moderated this interactive class about how to handle complaints from alarm users. She described common complaints and how to respond to each. This class was held in an open forum style with attendees sharing complaints they have received and how they were dealt with. Some also asked about how to handle specific types of complaints and received suggestions from those present. Mildred Carson, also from the Prince George's County Police Department, along with Sue Clark of the Montgomery County Police Department in Maryland, acted out a skit describing an appeal that went to trial on a unique set of circumstances.

### **The Answer To Your Problem is FARA**

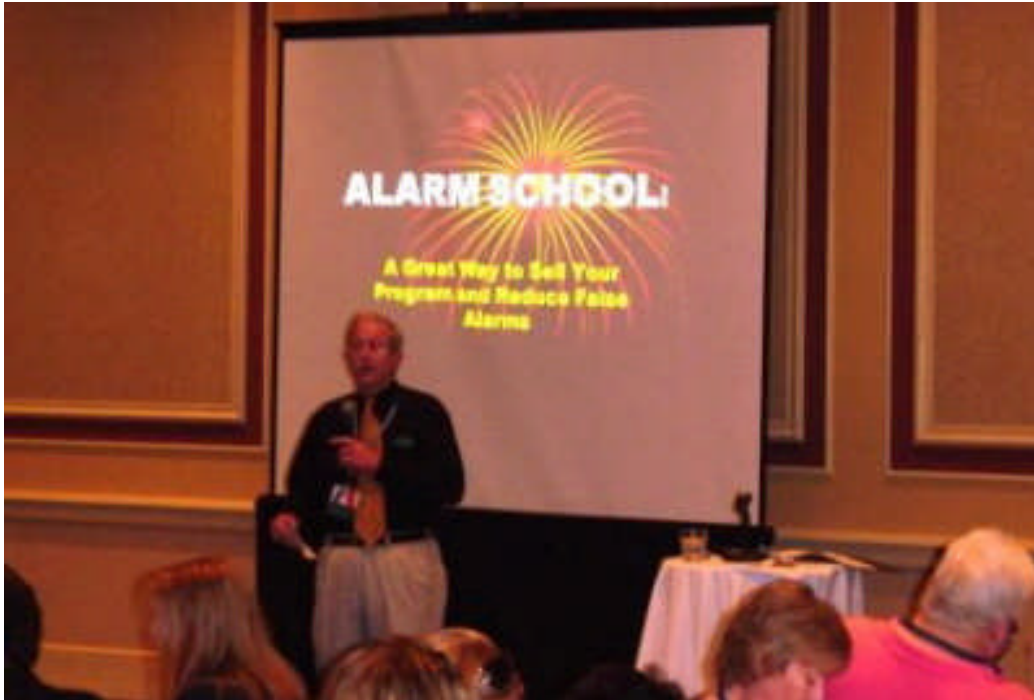
In this open question and answer workshop, Steve Heggemann, Baltimore County Alarm Reduction Team, Maryland, moderated a session designed to facilitate the free exchange of ideas and show the wealth of information fellow members and FARA have to offer.



Excellent questions were asked, issues regarding how others handle certain situations or circumstances were discussed, and everyone was given an opportunity to discuss what they did well and what they needed help with. This was a terrifically successful workshop that further developed working relationships and allowed people to shine.

## Making Alarm Schools Effective

Instructor Jim Cogswell, Leawood Police Department, Kansas, described how alarm school is held in Leawood, and the issues we face when deciding whether or not to hold alarm schools.



Jim discussed the merits of holding alarm schools, what you need in terms of the presentation, meeting place, and hand outs, who can help provide instruction during the class and who should attend. The main purpose of this class was to show how to set up an alarm user awareness school, whether it is provided for in your ordinance or not, and what the benefits of holding such a class are. Jim also provided wonderful take-home materials with sample written documents and a CD of his program.

## False Alarm Causes and Solutions for Alarm Users

Immediately following the class on why to hold an alarm user awareness school, Mary Galloway, President, Alarm Association of Florida, conducted a class on what to include in a comprehensive alarm user awareness school. She showed an abbreviated version of the AAF's awareness school presentation and talked about key points that should be included.

In the course, Mary encourages everyone to talk about what brought people to the class in the first place; i.e., why they were having false alarms, which gives an opportunity to deal with specific false alarm issues many may be experiencing. She also details the various components of an alarm system and how they operate, suggesting that new technologies exist, which may help avoid false alarms. Mary provided attendees with a CD of the course, which was created as a joint effort between the AAF and the Florida Police Chiefs Association.



## Alarm Industry False Alarm Reduction Efforts

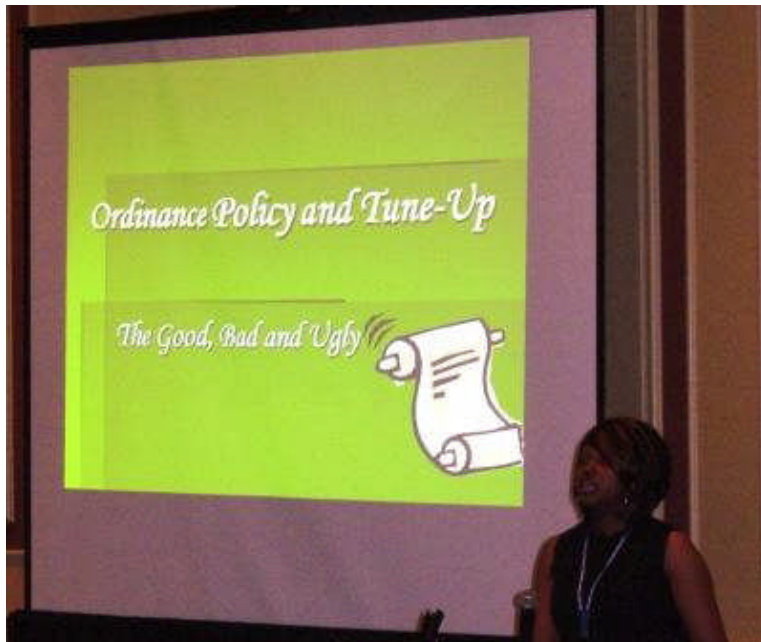
In this panel discussion, three local South Carolina alarm industry professionals described how they are dealing with false alarms. Peter Norman, Priority One Security; Scott Clausen, Control Systems; and Tim Cooney, Falcon Fire Systems, talked about initiatives developed within their own companies to combat false alarms.



Discussion was also held on how the South Carolina Alarm Association, through the dedication of committed industry professionals, worked with the Police Chiefs Association to develop a model burglar alarm ordinance for the state, which can be modified by individual jurisdictions to better suit their needs. Attendees also learned about how the same issues are present for false burglar and false fire alarms, but that otherwise burglar and fire alarm systems, and the regulation of those systems and the companies that install them, are completely different.

## Ordinance and Policy Tune Up

In this interactive class discussion, moderator Natasha Pitts, Spartanburg Public Safety Department, South Carolina, raised issues we should think about when reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of our ordinances and policies.



Natasha discussed setting fees and fines, how to collect monies billed and asked the audience to relay to the group what they do when considering updates to their programs. There was great sharing of various methods utilized for collection of outstanding fees/fines due. We all learned that when we grow up, we want to be Ron Beardsley with the Cincinnati Police Department, who garnishes the wages of those recalcitrant alarm users who won't pay their bills. This is just one example of the information shared during this excellent "give and



take" class.

## How to Sell Your Ideas

At one time or another, we are all faced with having a great idea we want to implement, but we don't follow through because we don't know how to sell the idea to our command staff.



Dave Simon, Senior Manager of Government, Community and Industry Relations with Brink's Home Security, discussed how to get an audience with the decision makers, what to include in the package, and how to use your powers of persuasion to get what you want. We learned various methods available – everything from a professional written package to using the gossip mill around the coffee machine – to advertise our issue and get the ball rolling. Dave's enthusiasm and audience participation made this class especially effective.

## How to Set Up Your Program and Keep it Fresh

Regardless of whether your program is in its infancy or whether it has been around for many years, it will constantly need tweaking to deal with new issues that arise.



Pam Steiger, Louisville Metro Police Department, Kentucky, served as instructor for this wonderful class on how to implement new ideas without necessarily amending your actual alarm ordinance. She suggested starting with small projects that will give you the most bang for your buck, like working with top offenders to determine why they are having false alarms and suggesting solutions. Pam also discussed utilizing innovative methods for education such as city/county cable stations, which can air false alarm prevention materials, creation of alarm user awareness schools, and utilizing FARA bulletins and brochures. Pam's best advice to all is to get involved with FARA!

## Alarm Registration 101

Sally Shaffer, Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, Virginia and Dave Wilson, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police

Department, North Carolina, provided a great class on the basics of alarm registration – why it is important, what should be included, where problems may arise, and new methods being utilized by some. In this interactive class, attendees “filled in the blanks” for all of the above issues, with the instructors supplementing as necessary.



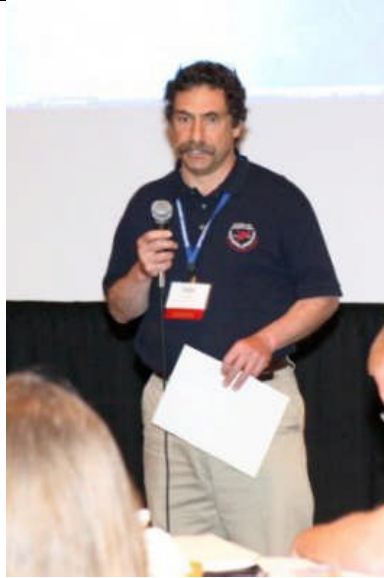
We learned about what areas of registration forms seem to cause the most problems for alarm users, and received take-home materials with sample registration/permit forms from other jurisdictions, as well as FARA's Universal Registration/Permit form. We also learned about electronic data exchange, on-line registration and third-party administration of the registration/permit process. Some jurisdictions are even looking at email notification of false alarms and on-line payment of fees/fines. Getting back to basics with this class proved to be a fantastic way to end a terrific week of training!

## 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/AOT Public Safety Corp., Digital Design Group, Inc., Enable Point, Installation Quality (IQ) Program, PMAM Corporation,** and the **South Carolina Visitor's Bureau**. All of the vendors were given an opportunity to speak to the entire group about their particular service and/or product.



Frank Farren of Enable Point announced a new initiative where he is offering a free database conversion or a free CAD interface to FARA members who purchase the Enable Point software.



Ben Binder of Digital Design Group talked about their market niche, the versatility of their product, and invited attendees to visit him at the expo.



George Robertson of PMAM, described his outsourcing company, their own in-house software utilized to run the program, and how PMAM can assist in the reduction of false alarms.



Ed Chicca of CryWolf/AOT Public Safety announced a new corporate policy whereby CryWolf will cover the initial FARA membership fee for any jurisdiction to whom they sell the CryWolf software product, and will assist in getting those members to their first conference.



Finally, Steve Heggemann in his role as Public Safety Director on the IQ Board of Directors, talked about the IQ program, its complete revamp and how FARA members can provide input on which companies become certified and which do not.

Members spent time at each booth talking with vendors and observing first-hand what each software program could provide.



The South Carolina Visitor's Bureau provided us with information on tours and events our spouses could attend while we were in sessions and then described what was available to us for evening entertainment. 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.

## **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 Charleston 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.

Amy Lowe, Lynchburg Emergency Communications Center, Lynchburg, Virginia and Patricia Ball, Kirkland Police Department, Kirkland, Washington, 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 group of professionals!

## **Scavenger Hunt**

Imagine a bunch of adults running through Charleston, virtually assaulting Citadel cadets, begging for take-out menus, pleading with citizens to take our picture, and generally making a nuisance of ourselves and you have FARA's first ever Scavenger Hunt! Five teams of six to eight people, comprised of new attendees and veterans alike, went from the Francis Marion Hotel, past the old Citadel asking people along the way to explain its significance, on to the market to find out the ingredients of sawgrass baskets, through Bubba Gump's Restaurant, to the pineapple shaped fountain on the waterfront where the entire group had to be photographed in front of the fountain, and down Rainbow Row, all in an effort to learn more about the city and win terrific prizes by being the first team back with all the correct answers! This team-building exercise was great fun, and

allowed participants to view portions of historic Charleston, albeit at a fast pace, and get to know each other better.



Each member of the first-place team won a \$25 Home Depot gift card. The members of the second-place team won portable emergency lights and the third place team won gym bags. Many, many thanks to Sue Clark of the Montgomery County Police Department, Maryland, for working so hard to create this wonderful team-building exercise! Immediately following the scavenger hunt, participants were already scheming to create teams to take the 2009 top prize in Denver!

## FARA Member of the Year Award

The Norma C. Beaubien Public Safety Member of the Year Award was presented to **Natasha Pitts**, of the Spartanburg Public Safety Department in Spartanburg, South Carolina for her immeasurable contributions to both FARA and the Spartanburg community.

Natasha was honored for her incredible dedication to FARA, which was evident in her work with the Conference Committee and the outstanding outreach she did, and continues to do, with public safety and the alarm industry throughout North America. She served as Chair of the Conference Committee and provided great leadership, ensuring that all committee members felt valuable by listening to their ideas and incorporating them whenever possible. She had instructors and speakers lined up months in advance, developed an excellent agenda with classes that were helpful to all attendees, and created aggressive attendance goals, which she worked tirelessly to attain.



Natasha volunteered to serve out the remainder of Stan Hanson's Board term as Vice President – Fire on the public safety side, when Stan had to resign last year. She is committed to working false fire alarms as diligently and professionally as she has done with false burglar alarms in Spartanburg. She shows great interest in being a contributing member of FARA, utilizing her membership to the fullest through Assistance Requests, and volunteering to work on any FARA initiative.

In Spartanburg, she established the False Alarm Reduction Program, and worked painstakingly to improve the

alarm ordinance in her community. She regulates both burglar and fire alarms, which can be challenging. She unselfishly gives of her time to make the Spartanburg program one of the best in the nation. Spartanburg experienced a reduction in false alarms due to Natasha's dedication, which allows public safety more time to respond to true emergencies. Natasha is a great asset to both the City of Spartanburg and to the False Alarm Reduction Association.

## FARA Associate Member of the Year Award

The W. Rex Bell FARA Associate Member of the Year Award was presented to **John Tierney**, ADT Security Services for his exceptional contributions to FARA, his company and the communities he serves. John is very active in FARA, and serves on both the Communications and Associate Member Committees. He is a valued and contributing member of both committees, and has taken the lead on numerous FARA projects. He read and provided suggestions, on time and in a professional manner, on every manual, guide, brochure, bulletin and publication reviewed by the Communications Committee in the past year. He has taken the lead on several FARA publications by writing from scratch or being the person who collates all ideas from others and then presents them to the committee. He worked on the subcommittee charged with modifying the False Alarm Strategies White Paper, which was comprised of FARA and NESAs (National Electronic Security Alliance) members. He attended no less than five separate teleconferences to hash out pros and cons for the strategies listed, and did so in a measured and reasonable manner.



In John's position with ADT, he has helped numerous FARA members with issues involving ADT customers and local ADT offices. We could always count on John to jump on requests and if he wasn't the right person to personally handle the issue, he would find out who was and ensure that he/she followed up on our requests. In a company the size of ADT, it is certainly a plus to have someone as dedicated as John to serve as a liaison to public safety. ADT is lucky to have an employee of John's caliber and the False Alarm Reduction Association is likewise fortunate to have him working with us.

## 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](mailto:bradshipp@4yoursolution.com). Congratulations to all of our award winners!

## Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award

The Public Safety False Alarm Achievement Award was presented to the **Spartanburg Public Safety Department** in Spartanburg, South Carolina, for its exceptional efforts and success in reducing false burglar and fire alarms to which public safety respond. Under the direction and leadership of Alarm Administrator Natasha Pitts, the Spartanburg alarm management program resulted in a reduction from 6,975 alarm responses in 2003 to a low of 2,686 alarm responses in 2007.



In the past three years, a total of \$316,220 and 10,582 hours have been saved through the efforts of the Spartanburg Public Safety Department. Staff work with major offenders to determine reasons for false alarm and to suggest solutions. The purpose of the Spartanburg ordinance and false alarm reduction program is to encourage alarm users and alarm businesses to maintain operational reliability and proper use of alarm systems and to reduce false alarm dispatch requests thereby preventing the misuse of police and fire resources. It is clear from the statistical data presented that the ordinance and program are having their intended effect, which makes the City of Spartanburg Public Safety Department the perfect recipient of this award.

### Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award

The Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award was presented to **Priority One Security** of Greenville, South Carolina, in part, for creation of their exceptional Customer Service Department, which consistently goes beyond normal expectations to solve and correct problems that arise.

Priority One assists public safety on a daily basis in reducing false alarms. In that vein, they participated in a meeting with Community Deputies to explain how alarm systems operate and provided basic hands on training. They work diligently to reduce their company false alarm dispatch rate, always abide by the mandates of the local alarm ordinance, and even step up to pay false alarm response fees/fines for their customer if they believe that the fine was unjust. For their company-wide commitment to false alarm reduction and the pursuit of cordial working relationships with public safety in the communities they serve, Priority One Security is more than worthy of this award.



### FARA Achievement Award

The FARA Achievement Award was presented to the **South Carolina Alarm Association (SCAA)** for their consistent willingness to work with local law enforcement agencies to solve false alarm problems, as well as for their dedication and assistance in helping to ensure that the Charleston training symposium was a success.

They constantly strive to raise the bar for alarm professionals in South Carolina and provide services to help alarm industry professionals succeed. For example, they implemented NTS Level 1 and Level 2 training for alarm installers, created video recording classes to help the industry understand the importance of video recording installation, and held NICET prep classes to ensure that all installers are fully trained and aware of all technology. Additionally, they created and implemented a statewide model ordinance, which has been endorsed by both the SCAA and the South Carolina Police Chiefs Association, and can be used by jurisdictions as a guide when implementing their own local ordinances. SCAA includes public safety in their annual meetings and requested participation by public safety on many of their



committees. Not only do they want to hear what we have to say, they act upon those suggestions whenever possible. By maintaining constant communication and actively pursuing false alarm reduction, the SCAA has been a key player in reducing false alarms throughout the State of South Carolina. The SCAA certainly fosters an environment of cooperation among public safety, the alarm industry and alarm users and is richly deserving of this award.

## General Membership Meeting

The 12<sup>th</sup> annual General Membership Meeting took place on Wednesday, April 23, 2008. President Beaubien called the meeting to order with the playing of the United States and Canadian national anthems. Because FARA Secretary Kerri McDonald was not present, the membership elected Joe Patterson as Secretary Pro Tem to serve in her stead.



In her last President's Report, Norma Beaubien thanked the Board and the entire membership for their tireless support of her and of the association. She iterated how proud she was to be a part of the success of the association, but that she did not do it alone and was grateful for all those who participated in the past and will continue to participate into the future. Norma said it was her honor and privilege to have served and she is happy to turn the reins over to the very capable hands of President Elect Jim Cogswell. FARA honored Beaubien with a personalized keepsake box, Visa gift card, and thank you cards from the attendees. Given her passion for crossword puzzles, FARA developed their own specialized one-of-a-kind FARA crosswords, which were presented to Norma. Finally, ACT (Add Commas Today) bestowed upon Norma the "Royal Order of the Comma" in recognition of her tireless defense of the comma in all FARA documents big and small. Many members of ACT were in attendance and helped to promote the responsible use of commas by wearing ACT signs upon their person. Norma was surprised and delighted to have received such recognition! On a more serious note and in her final comments, Norma said it was an honor to be recognized by the alarm industry, but an even greater accomplishment to be honored by her fellow public safety members. She is humbled by the recognition and will continue to serve FARA in whatever capacity the Board deems appropriate.

Treasurer Steve Heggemann provided the general membership with a report on the financial status of the association, which is strong and continues to grow. Discussion was held on the need to audit FARA's financial records. An Audit Committee was named and approved by the general membership to conduct the audit immediately following the general membership meeting.

All FARA Committee Chairs, or their Board liaisons, provided reports to the membership about their accomplishments over the past year and needs for the future. Without fail, all chairs discussed the need for greater participation from the membership on committees. President Beaubien urged everyone, regardless of how long they had been in the alarm management field, to get involved and provide input on committees. A full, detailed report of committee achievements can be found in the 2007-2008 Annual Report located on FARA's web site at [www.faraonline.org](http://www.faraonline.org).

In accordance with the bylaws, Secretary Pro Tem Joe Patterson elected by acclamation the following Board members: Jim Cogswell, Leawood Police Department as President; Natasha Pitts, Spartanburg Public Safety Department as Vice President-Fire; Steve Heggemann, Baltimore County Alarm Reduction Team as Treasurer; Gerry Miller, Peel Regional Police as At-Large Director; and Rick Moore, CryWolf/AOT Public Safety Corp. as Vendor Associate Director. Nominations were taken from the floor for the Associate Director-Fire position, and the associate members present elected Kathleen Schraufnagel of Brink's Home Security to fill that position.



Executive Director Brad Shipp described the proposed Bylaw amendment, which would allow for the creation of local FARA chapters. The Bylaw amendment was approved by the general membership. Members were asked for input on the initiatives included in the draft 2008-2009 Strategic Plan. FARA Achievement Awards and the W. Rex Bell Associate Member of the Year and the Norma C. Beaubien Public Safety Member of Year Awards were bestowed on deserving individuals.



## Board of Directors Meetings

The FARA Board of Directors held its bi-annual meeting to kick off the training symposium on Monday, April 21, 2008. The Board met again on Friday, April 25, 2008. Highlights of those two meetings are listed below.

The Board received preliminary reports from Committee Chairs or Board Liaisons about issues and needs. Overarching issue was the need for more participation on committees. Extensive conversation was held on the need to better market FARA and FARA activities. Given the confusion that arose around Presidential duties and responsibilities and who was supposed to do what and when during the training symposium, the Board agreed to recommend a bylaw change so that in the future a new President's term will begin at the conclusion of the training symposium in which the person is elected. This will extend to all officers on the board as well. The Board also discussed requesting the membership approve a Bylaw change next year in Denver that will require the Executive Director to run the election instead of the Secretary. Since the Executive Director will never be running for a position on the Board, it will be less confusing to have him/her conduct the election. Other topics discussed included scavenger hunt prizes, certificates of appreciation, introduction of instructors, and who should have signature authority for the FARA bank accounts.

Friday's Board meeting opened with a report from newly elected President Jim Cogswell on his vision for FARA. He reported that he will give his all and wants and expects to receive a lot of input from all Board members. Executive Director Brad Shipp reported that a preliminary review of attendee evaluation forms revealed that the vast majority of people were incredibly happy with the Charleston training symposium. He will create a spreadsheet on complete results and will provide it to the Board for review on a future teleconference. Treasurer Steve Heggemann reported that the audit went very well with only one question regarding the Money Market account that he will investigate upon his return from Charleston. He also provided his financial report, which was deferred from Monday's Board meeting.

President Cogswell appointed Pat Killian of Vector Security, Inc. to fill out the remainder of Associate Director-Electronic Security Schraufnagel's term, as she was elected to the Associate Director-Fire position at the Wednesday General Membership meeting. The Board welcomed Pat and new Vendor Director Rick Moore. An extensive discussion of fees charged to FARA members for various things, such as dues, certification, training symposium, etc. was held. Executive Director Shipp and Treasurer Heggemann will provide a report and out-year projections to facilitate a further discussion of all FARA fees. Committee chairs and Board liaisons were appointed. Other topics discussed included the PDQ Award ceremony, suggested classes for the Denver training symposium, new items to add to the Strategic Plan, and the selection process for symposium sites. The Board closed out its final meeting with discussions on regulation of self-installed alarm systems, marketing of FARA, garnering Achievement Award nominations for future symposiums, creating a Board task list, and voting to approve the Maryland Chapter as the first official FARA chapter.

## Extras!

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. 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.

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](http://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 50/50 raffle earned \$350, with \$175 going back to ticket holders in three separate drawings.



The Silent Auction was a fantastic success this year! 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. The Silent auction earned \$1,584 for FARA, which will be used to benefit the membership through written publications and further training opportunities. FARA members were extremely generous this year, as the \$1759 collected for FARA was **in addition** to the money collected to support the families of the Charleston 9. The FARA Board of Directors is deeply grateful to everyone, who was so considerate in their giving this year.

### Training Symposium Presentations On-Line

All PowerPoint presentations that were given at the Charleston 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](mailto:bradshipp@4yoursolution.com). You can also see a full library of photographs from the symposium, the AAF Alarm User School, the Charleston 9 Tribute video, and any other information that was given to FARA in electronic format.

### 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](mailto: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

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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](mailto: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.