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What's Inside:



2023 Cherokee, NC International Training Conference Review



Welcome President Chris Van Vleet

NORTH CAROLINA Cherokee 2023 APRIL 23-28



A new vision of an innovative multi-country chapter

By: Andreas Melinato, PE, MCSFS, MIAAI, MIET
President CE-AFI Chapter

The Central European Association of Fire Investigators (CE-AFI), Chapter 81 of the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI), was formed in 2019 based on the experience and success of the United Kingdom Association of Fire Investigators, Chapter 67 of the IAAI.

The Chapter now has over 150 members based in 28 Countries, representing experts working both within the European Union and out of the Union system. All members have to be active IAAI members and can join our chapter for no additional cost.

The initial drive to create a unique association, joining together fire investigators based throughout Europe, started several years ago when it was recognized that many chapters set up in individual European countries were not able to attract enough members, and therefore became inactive by not generating events and opportunities, and not interacting with each other. Europe represents a particular challenge as it comprises not only different countries, but different and rooted cultures, different languages, different needs, different identities and jurisdictions, often with high levels of competition, and contrast.

This CE-AFI wants to continue to develop that is able to overcome the previously mentioned challenges forward collectively to increase fire investigation standards, mainly based on the contribution of our members and the fire investigative community through the CE-AFI. European countries have developed different procedures, research, and guides relevant to their countries able to provide a high level of expertise to their individual members.



Washington Wire and Governmental Relations Update

Advocacy of The Fire Caucus

Washington Wire

Past President Roger Krupp
Chair of Governmental Relations

Steve Au
Director of
Affairs

Hope this finds you all well. If you are interested in helping promote legislative initiatives through grass roots work, please contact the Government Relations Committee. Throughout the year, we work with our fire service and insurance industry partners in seeking support on important issues such as funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Act (AFA). When needed, we ask our committee members to contact their local Representative and Senator to let them know why a particular piece of legislation is important for the fire service, law enforcement or insurance industry. Your support in passing the legislation. When we ask for committee assistance, we provide talking points and a letter to your local Representative and Senators. If you would like to be a member of the team, please contact us at rkrupp@clarendonthills.us.

Following as an overview of some of the key initiatives taking place and the IAAI's involvement in these areas:

National Fire Services Institute (CFSI)
The CFSI National Advisory Committee (NAC) is currently reviewing the Resolution in Support of the Public Safety Officers' Benefit Act (PSOBA), which would provide for the inclusion of fire survivors, disability, and Educational Assistance Grants (EAGs) under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Related Occupational Cancers Act (PSOBA-ROCA). The IAAI worked with the NFR as it was being designed and has fire investigators included. The IAAI is a written supporter of the NFR.

AFG Grants
We continue to provide grant reviewers and thank those who have volunteered for this year's round of grant reviews. This year's grants were reviewed in a hybrid system. FEMA utilized a combination of in-person, at the National Fire Academy, and virtual grant reviews. We anticipate this hybrid system to continue in the future.

Legislation creating and sustaining the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program specifically tasks the IAAI with providing not only assistance in promulgating the rules for the program but also providing panelists to peer review the applications submitted by the fire service and other eligible organizations. We participate in the Fire Grant Criteria meetings, and we submit grant review panelists that can best make impartial decisions. Our goal is to ensure that the process is fair and equitable.

FISC Bulletin Board

IAAI Fire Investigation Standards Committee (FISC)

A Timeline of Significant Events in Fire Investigation Standards

by Terry-Dawn Hewitt, Esq. Chair & Wayne J. McKenna, Esq.

DATE	EVENT
1984	NFPA technical committee begins work on NFPA 921. <i>Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations</i> . In addition to being a basic instruction manual on the procedures and methodology for conducting fire investigations, it tackles head-on, bad science and misconceptions then prevalent in the fire investigation field.
1987	NFPA publishes the first edition of <i>NFPA 1033 Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigators</i> . Whereas the intent of NFPA 921 is to provide recommended procedures and methodology for conducting fire investigations, NFPA 1033 is a mandatory standard addressing requirements to be qualified to perform the job of a fire investigator.
1988	NFPA publishes the first edition of <i>NFPA 906 Guide for Fire Incident Field Notes</i> , which in addition to recommending procedures for fire investigations, NFPA 921 cites relevant ASTM standards. ³
1992	After approximately eight years of work, NFPA publishes the first edition of <i>NFPA 921</i> . In this edition, the fire investigator is explained. NFPA 1033 is now based on specific job performance requirements (JPR) for the job of fire investigator. Requisite skills and requisite knowledge are identified for each JPR.
1993	NFPA publishes <i>NFPA 1033</i> , 1993 ed. This edition marks a major change in the way the job of fire investigator is explained. NFPA 1033 is now based on specific job performance requirements (JPR) for the job of fire investigator. Requisite skills and requisite knowledge are identified for each JPR.
1993	<i>Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc.</i> ⁴ United States Supreme Court overrules <i>Frye</i> and interprets Federal Rules of Evidence (FRE) Rule 702. The trial judge is a gatekeeper to ensure scientific expert evidence is admitted only if: A) the expert is qualified, B) the expert's evidence is relevant and fits the case, and; C) the expert evidence is reliable, measured by 5 non-definitive tests of 1) testing, 2) peer review and publication, 3) standards, 4) general acceptance, and 5) error rate.
1995	NFPA publishes <i>NFPA 921</i> , 1995 ed. <i>NFPA 907M Manual for the Determination of Electrical Fire Causes</i> (originally published in 1983) is withdrawn and incorporated into NFPA 921 as a separate chapter on "Electricity and Fire."
1996	Fire investigations are brought under <i>Daubert</i> scrutiny in <i>Michigan Millers Mutual Ins. Corp. v. Benfield</i> , ⁵ which demonstrates how NFPA 921 can be an effective tool in cross-examination to have a fire investigation expert's testimony excluded under <i>Daubert</i> . The 11 th Circuit upheld this decision on appeal. ⁶ This case signals an eventual onslaught of <i>Daubert</i> challenges to fire investigation expert testimony.
1998	NFPA publishes <i>NFPA 921</i> , 1998 ed. A new chapter is added on fuel gas systems in its 16 years of operation, <i>T/SWGFFX</i> modules for training.
1998	The Technical and Scientific Working Group for Fires and Explosions (TSWGFFX) is formed. Its members are experts in the fields of fire debris analysis, fire dynamics, and fire investigation.

1. Introduction

The Fire Investigation Standards Committee (FISC) was originally formed in 1994 to report to the IAAI about developments in NFPA 921 *Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations* (NFPA 921) and NFPA 1033 *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator* (NFPA 1033).¹ Since then, FISC's mission has broadened, and we are now charged with informing the IAAI more broadly about changes in the standards world that affect fire and explosion investigators. In this article we use the term "standard" to refer to a document, established by a

membership committee



Dixon Robin
IAAI-CFI, IAAI-CI, MIAAI

As our membership continues to grow and thrive around the globe, the IAAI looks for new and innovative ways to ensure a great relationship with its members. We recognize that benefits in one region may not have as much impact as benefits in another. By understanding and highlighting our global reach, we can be in better tune with our members and their needs. In this column, we are highlighting the New South Wales Chapter based in Australia – a big thank you to NSW Chapter Board Members Sonia Kwasnycia and Michael Forbes for building this informative profile!

Chapter 47 – New South Wales, Australia

The New South Wales (NSW) Chapter is Chapter 47 of the International Association of Arson Investigators. It was formed as an IAAI Chapter on 28 March 1985. We are one of only three Chapters in Australia with Victoria and Queensland, and together with the New Zealand Chapter we collectively form the Australasian Association of Fire Investigators (AAFI).

The NSW Chapter currently has approximately 150 members who are primarily from within the state of NSW. However, we also have interstate members from other parts of Australia. The membership consists of a wide variety of people within the public and private sectors; most are employed as fire investigators. However, we also have members involved in insurance assessing, fire safety/protection, engineering, factual investigation, policing/crime scene, forensic science, and occupational hygiene.

Our Committee (Board of Directors) consists of 14 people involved in various aspects of fire investigation. The Executive consists of:

- President: Michael Forbes – Fire Investigator & Team Leader Research at Fire & Rescue NSW
- President: Mark Pellegrino – Fire Investigator with Firensics
- President: NSW Police Force

