



TOWN OF CANTON VOLUNTEER Fire & EMS Department

Valuing Life...at a Moment's Notice



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Distribution

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Canton Volunteer Fire & EMS Department Looks Back to the Future Former Fire Cadets Take Center Stage at Annual Awards Ceremony

Canton, CT“Tonight,” began Town of Canton Volunteer Fire & EMS Department Chief Richard Hutchings, “we acknowledge another 1,000 emergency calls responded towhere everyone came home. We take a moment to stop and recognize our volunteer firefighters and EMTs: our newest members; veterans who retired in 2008; and other valued staff who left the Department to pursue other opportunities. And, as always, we thank our families who spent the last year waiting for the safe return home of Canton’s bravest.”

So began the Department’s 2008 Awards Ceremony which provided the opportunity to look forward without ever leaving the past too far behind.

Fire Department Safety Officer and MC, David Leff recalled joining the Department twenty-one years ago, just after a volunteer Fire Police member lost his life in the line of duty. Leff invoked a biblical verse from Proverbs, “the memory of the righteous is a blessing,” as he asked for a moment of silence, “to keep faith with our brothers and sisters who are no longer with us, but who never forgot their duty or lost their courage.”

“In the fire service,” continued Hutchings, “tradition is indelibly written upon the script of the future. It’s what drives people in their 30’s, 40’s and 50’s to keep serving Canton at this extraordinary level for a decade or more. And it’s what inspires young Fire Cadets to become volunteer firefighters and EMTs as soon as they are of age. 2008 was the year where Canton’s former and current Fire Cadets demonstrated the exceptional skills and commitment to be acknowledged as some of the best.....the future of the Department.”

Officer of the Year: Colin Narducci, EMS Captain

Narducci joined the Fire Cadet program in 2001 at age 14 and joined the Department when he turned 18 in 2005. He is currently certified in Firefighter I, EMT-Intermediate, Wilderness EMT, Rescue Diver and is employed as an EMT for Vintech Management Services. He was recognized for “working tirelessly to ensure that the EMS Division of the Department is always mission ready.”

EMT of the Year: John Bunnell

Bunnell was a Fire Cadet for 3 years and has been a volunteer firefighter for two. Certified as an EMT-Intermediate, Firefighter I and Swift Water Rescue, he is currently a full time student at CCSU, majoring in Bimolecular Science. He also works part time for American Medical Response as an EMT covering the North end and West Hartford. John was recognized for his “commitment to doing whatever it takes to get the job done.”

Fire Fighter of the Year: Juan Gonzalez

Gonzalez began his fire career overseas in Guayaquil, Ecuador and joined the Department just 3 years ago. He is Executive Director at Integral Linguistic Services, LLC. Juan was recognized for his “dedication to responding to emergency calls, especially during daytime hours when resources are especially stretched and his skills are critically needed.”

Fire Cadet of the Year: Chris Melite

Melite joined the Fire Cadet program in 2006 at age 15. He plans to join the Department when he turns 18 and to major in fire science at University of New Haven. Melite was recognized for his Senior Project at Canton High School which exposed the need for an Automated External Defibrillator in public town spaces. Melite wrote and presented a proposal to the Canton Lions Club, who in turn generously donated a \$2,200.00 AED.

As the Awards Ceremony came to a close, First Selectman Dick Barlow thanked the volunteers on behalf of Canton residents and businesses. “Over the past year, I have come to more fully appreciate how much time, professional skill and knowledge is required to be good enough to volunteer in this Department.” Barlow concluded by saying that he had been amazed to learn about the depth and breath of work done by the Department on behalf of the community. “Canton’s volunteer firefighters and EMTs have a critical place in the running of this town and the management of our budget and for that we thank you.”

Highlights: 2008 Town of Canton Volunteer Fire & EMS Department Awards Ceremony

Volunteers of the Year:

EMT of the Year	John Bunnell
Firefighter of the Year	Juan Gonzales
Officer of the Year	Colin Narducci
Fire Cadet of the Year	Chris Melite

Certifications:

EMS Instructor:	Bruce Lockwood
EMT Intermediate	John Bunnell
EMT Basic	Dan Volovski, JT Lederman, Matt Bilts

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Service Award:

New Members	Marty Halle, JT Lederman, Brandon Shilosky
5 yrs	Kathy Donaldson, Mike Kadis, Dan Lucarz
10 yrs	Heath Doran, Craig Robbins
15 yrs	Dan Ege
25 yrs	Jim Juhl, Mike Zimmerman
35 yrs	Charles Hammond (retiring)

Award of Appreciation: Artistic Images of Canton and Canton Life

Chief's Award: Heath Doran for work as Assistant Chief of Fire
Adam Libros for Fire Dept software consultation

Special Recognition: Fire Cadet Advisors: Matt Bilts and Steve LaPointe

Items for the Awards Ceremony raffle were generously donated by: Adams IGA, Carol and Company, Chatterley's, Hinmans, Jonathan Edwards Winery, Dan Lucarz, Max Restaurant Group, Monarch Jewelers, Riverside Nursery, Saybrook Fish House, Scotty's Package store, Stonington Vineyard, Village Café & Bistro.

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