

STANDING FAST
THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF O'KANE FDNY RETIRED
9/11/2001 - 25 Years Later We Shall Never Forget

Membership application is available on our website
www.okanefdnynretirees.com.

WELCOME to
 "Standing Fast." The
 official newsletter of the
 Gene O'Kane Division of
 FDNY Retired, the first
 and oldest FDNY retirees
 organization in the U.S.
 We have been chartered
 in the state of Florida
 since 1979.
 Postal Address: FDNY
 Retired, 2053 Blue Beech
 Ct., Trinity, FL 34655



Who Are We?

We are an organization of retired New York City Firefighters living on the west coast of Florida in the areas of Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Pinellas, Hillsborough counties.

Although now retired, we share the bond of having had the privilege of protecting lives and property of the residents of the City of New York as members of the greatest fire department in the world, the FDNY. As retirees of the FDNY, in 1978 we banded together to form the first chapter of the FDNY RETIRED, received a charter from the state of Florida and named our organization after our founder, Gene O'Kane. Thus we are "THE GENE O'KANE DIVISION OF FDNY RETIRED." Our division is the oldest of all the divisions of FDNY Retired, one of nine divisions located in Florida and one of twenty six divisions scattered across the United States. We are also a member of the the URFA, the United Retired Firefighters Assn. We welcome all FDNY retirees, of all ranks, retired volunteer firefighters from all other municipalities, and non-firefighters to join us in friendship and brotherhood as members of our proud organization.

Membership and Meetings: Membership in the Gene O'Kane Division of FDNY Retired is open to all FDNY retirees of all ranks, paid and volunteer firefighters from all cities across the U.S.A., also non-firefighters are accepted as "Associate Members." Applications for membership can be obtained by completing the application located on our website and mailing it in as directed. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month with the exception of June, July and August, at 7 p.m. at the America Legion "Paradise Post" located on Veterans Drive in New Port Richey, FL 34654.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 9/15/2026. 7pm,
 American Legion Paradise Post, New Port Richey, FL.



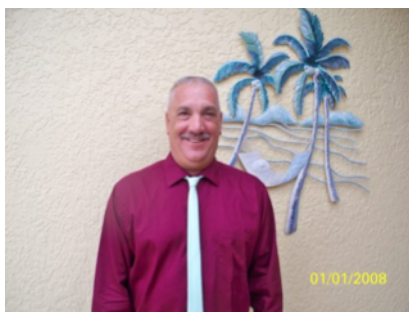
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email us for more info.

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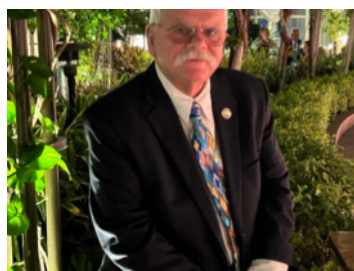
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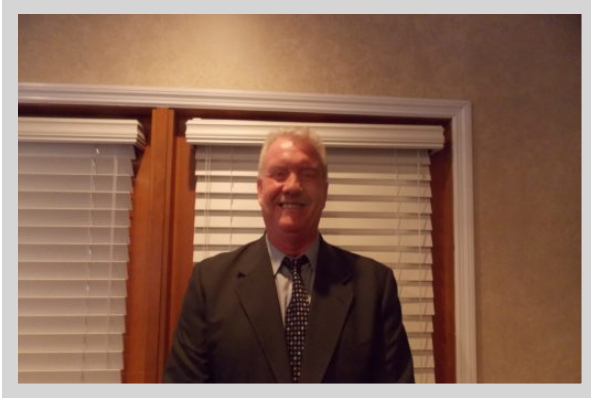
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**PRESIDENT'S
REPORT -
SEPTEMBER 2026**

Dear Members, Family and Friends,

Welcome back. I hope you all enjoyed a great summer break. It was a wonderful summer as we celebrated our nation's 250th Anniversary.

September is a big month as we prepare to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Terrorist Attacks of September 11th, 2001. We will never forget and our club takes an active part in ensuring that others do so as well. Several of our members serve on planning committees for 2 major events in our area and also play pivotal parts in them. A complete summary of these events follows in this newsletter. Please plan to attend if you can and show your support.

Other dates to remember are our first monthly meeting after the break: Tuesday, 9/15/26 at 7pm. It will be great to see everyone. Our fall picnic is coming up in October (Sat., 10/24/26) at Fred Howard Park. Mark your calendars and we hope to see you all there.

Stay safe and be well.

Fraternally Yours,

Kevin Doherty, President

Note: Booster Reminder: It's never too late to start being a Club Booster. Boosters are open to anyone, including your spouses, family and friends - so take a look at the Booster pages coming up in this newsletter and think about showing your support. Every Booster runs for 1 year and we greatly appreciate each one.

OKANE BOOSTERS: reminder...if your number is a 4 it's time to renew! Boosters run for 12 months. The number following your name indicates when your booster will expire.

Thank you for your support. Anyone can be a booster. Family members, friends, etc.
(Rev. 4/26)

Byrnes, Brian 1 Lt. Gene Sullivan, E39
 Byrnes, Brian 1 Firefighter James Byrnes 1824. Batt 21
 Byrnes, Brian 1 BC Carlo Andersen 456. Safety Batt
 Byrnes, Brian 1 Firefighter Marty Celic Murdered 7/2/77 13108. T.L.18
 Chichester, Dan10 Members of E275 1963-1987
 Chichester, Dan10 Members of L126 1963-1987
 Chichester, Dan10 Members of E234 1963-1987
 Dunscomb Jim11 Honoring all members of E82
 Dunscomb, Jim 1 Always in our hearts, E82
 D'Andrea, Jack10 Members of Ladder 126
 Incarnato, Charles10 Rockapulco - E268, L137 - Best on the Beach
 Incarnato, Charles10 On The Edge - E314 Members LOL
 Incarnato, Charles10 Never A Dull Moment E72, For Sure
 Incarnato, Charles10 Mid-town High Rise E8,L2, Batt8
 Incarnato, Charles10 The Bronx, must I say more? Great Memories
 Incarnato, Charles10 In memory of John Askin, E48, my friend and brother
 Kikis, Louis1 E22/ L13 "The Yorkville Nine"
 Kikis, Louis1 343 Never Forget
 Kikis, Victoria7Honoring the memory or those who gave their all. 343 Never forget.
 Kikis, Victoria7 RIP John Braunagel Jr.
 McCarren, Charles 1 BC Richard De Prima. Batt 49
 McCarren, Charles 1 Lt. James McCarren E48
 McCarren, Charles 1 Lt. Charles McCarren III FDNY Safety Command
 McCarren, Charles 1 Lt. Daniel McCarren E298
 McCarthy, William11 Members of L25, 9/11 Never Forget
 Martinsen, Ron1 Mem BC Tom Neary L134
 Martinsen, Ron1 Mem BC Chris Scalone E332
 Miccio, Rich6 Tom Gambino L163 - 9/11/01 - RIP
 Miccio, Rich6 L163/E325 - Woodside Warriors*Nilsson Mike1 L 126
 Nilsson, Mike1 Remembering members of E303, L126
 Nilsson, Mike1 September 11, 2001. 343 - Never Forget
 Powers, Jim1 Honoring members of E35
 Ragusso, Rob11 Honoring all members of E289

Boosters continue on next page.....

BOOSTERS CONTINUED.....

Savarese Jim11 The Tin House Gang E-232/L176 BMA
Savarese Jim11 Watkins St. E-231/L-120/44BN
Savarese Jim11 Briggs Ave E79/L37/27BN
Savarese Jim11 RIP Ron Quartuccio
Segreto, Vincent1 DC T. Campbell
Segreto, Vincent1 All the members of FDNY who died on 9/11
Segreto, Vincent1 All the members of FDNY who have died since 9/11
Segreto, Vincent1 In honor of all FDNY members
Tarantino Ron1 In Memory of Louis Tarantino

**BY SENDING IN YOUR BOOSTER!
YOUR MESSAGE COULD BE HERE. SHOW YOUR SUPPORT**

Becoming a Booster is simple. Just enter the name of your honoree and the message as you want it to appear. Each message is \$5.00 and runs for 1 year.

Example:

Your name and address

Your booster message:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

**Send your Booster. (\$5.00 per message) to:
Mike Doyle, Financial Secretary
5157 Silent Loop. Condo #314
New Port Richey, FL 34652**

You may also find booster applications on our website:
www.okanefdnyretirees.com.

Boosters run for 12 months. The number following your name indicates when your Booster will expire. Thank you for your support. **Anyone can be a booster. Family members, friends, etc.**

**REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH. WE PREPARE TO COMMEMORATE
THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY****A MESSAGE FROM THE 9/11 MEMORIAL & MUSEUM**

A quarter of a century after the September 11, 2001 attacks, 100 million Americans are too young to remember the day that changed our nation forever. It is our shared promise - made 25 years ago - to never forget so those born after 9/11 learn its significance and enduring legacy. As we commemorate this anniversary, a new generation will learn about the unimaginable loss we experienced and the inspiring stories of bravery, compassion, unity, and service that we witnessed, and have rippled through the decades.

Twenty-five years later, we invite you to remember, reflect, and learn with us.

The memorial.museum is offering multiple ways for Americans to commemorate the 25th anniversary of 9/11. For those who can't visit in person, it's published online educational programs and a downloadable 25th anniversary toolkit.

The memorial consists of grounds that cover the World Trade Center complex, including two memorial pools constructed in the footprint of where each tower once stood. The names of those who were killed are inscribed into bronze parapets that surround the pools.

The North Pool memorialized 1,470 people killed in the North Tower and 87 killed on Flight 11 on 9/11. It also includes the names of 6 people killed on Feb. 26, 1993.

The South Pool memorializes the 695 people killed in the South Tower, 60 killed on Flight 175, 441 First Responders, 59 killed on Flight 77, 40 killed on Flight 93 and 125 killed at the Pentagon on 9/11.

visit the official website - 9/11 Ground Zero Museum at www.911groundzero.com

**Commemorating The 25th
Anniversary of September
11th - List of Area Events**

The Gene O'Kane Division of FDNY Retired is dedicated to ensuring the WE NEVER FORGET. The following is a list of area events that we actively participate in and hope that you will be able to join us.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

**10:00AM MEMORIAL WREATH PRESENTATION CEREMONY
GEORGE STEINBRENNER FIELD MAIN GATE PROMENADE
1 STEINBRENNER DRIVE
TAMPA, FL 33614**

Service begins at 10am. Duration 1 hour (water and restrooms available).

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 AND FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

8:00PM - 10:00PM

**TOWER OF LIGHTS MEMORIAL
CURLEW HILLS MEMORY GARDENS
1750 CURLEW RD., PALM HARBOR, FL 34683**

Twin beams of light are projected into the night sky. This is a drive-by event, or you may opt to park and visit the monuments and eternal flame.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

**10:00AM CURLEW HILLS SEPTEMBER 11TH MEMORIAL SERVICE
CURLEW HILLS MEMORY GARDENS
1750 CURLEW RD., PALM HARBOR, FL 34683**

Service begins at 10am. Arrive early for parking and to view our club display of memorabilia and artifacts from 9/11. Club members actively participate in this event. Water and seating provided. Duration 1 hour.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

**6:30PM CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY SEPTEMBER 11TH MEMORIAL SERVICE
SIMMS PARK
6431 BANK ST., NEW PORT RICHEY, FL 33609**

Arrive early for best seating. Pre-service viewing on big screen of 9/11 video. Club members actively participate in this event. Service starts at 7pm. Duration 1 hour. Water and seating provided.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

**8:00PM CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY SEPTEMBER 11TH MUSICAL TRIBUTE
SIMMS PARK
6431 BANK ST., NEW PORT RICHEY, FL 33609**

Program immediately follows the 9/11 Memorial service. Duration 1 hour. Water and seating provided.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH27 HOURS, THE STORY OF THE LAST SURVIVOR RESCUED FROM THE RUBBLE

On September 11, 2001, Genelle Guzman-McMillan was working in her office in the World Trade Center when she heard a terrible noise outside. She raced down the stairs and felt the building collapse around her. 27 hours later, she would be the final living person rescued from the rubble. She was completely covered by the rubble.

Genelle spent the long night moving in and out of consciousness. She woke on September 12, 2001 in terrible darkness, unable to move. Her head was wedged between broken slabs of concrete and her legs were pinned beneath something she could not see. She was aware that her workplace, the World Trade Center had collapsed and she was buried alive.

She found that she could move her left arm which enabled her to clear off the dust that coated her eyes and face. In the darkness she could not see her watch so had no way of knowing how much time had passed.

Outside, a full day had passed and Americans were absorbing the shock of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. In the vast debris field where the World Trade Center once stood, firefighters and rescue workers had long since rescued all those found alive that they could. **Now it was time to bring in the K-9 recovery teams, beginning their grim work sniffing through rubble piles less than 100 feet from where Genelle lay entombed.**

Guzman could hear nothing of the world above her. She kept her mind busy inventorying her injuries and praying.

After lying for hours in the tiny cavity, she became aware of sounds from above - a truck that was backing up somewhere, and then a voice yelling something.

Genelle summoned up all her strength yelling back, "Please help me!"

As she had done many times during her ordeal, she used her good hand to claw away at the loose rubble between the cement slabs. Some debris gave way and she continued digging until she finally could get her hand through it.

From the other side, another voice said, "I've got you."

It took more than an hour to remove the steel beams that pinned her legs. She found herself being placed in a basket-like stretcher and being lifted out to cheers and roars from her rescuers.

27 hours after being buried alive, Genelle Guzman-McMillan became the last person rescued alive from Ground Zero.

Genelle sustained numerous injuries and endured many hospitalizations following her rescue. Thanks to the work of the rescue teams, and especially to the K-9 teams, Genelle has gone on to lead a successful life as a motivational speaker, recounting her harrowing story to others all over the world.



Genelle Guzman-McMillan will be the keynote speaker at the 9/11 Memorial Service at Curlew Hills Memory gardens, Palm Harbor, FL, 9/11/26.

Remembering September 11th. The Story of Lolita Jackson, Survivor of both the 1993 and 2001 Terrorist Attacks

Lolita Jackson has the unique experience of being a survivor of both the 1993 and 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center.

On February 25, 1993, while sitting at her desk on the 72nd floor in the Morgan Stanley Dean Witter office in the South Tower, Lolita heard a loud boom and noticed smoke entering the office through elevator shafts. She and her colleagues quickly began evacuation the building down the smoke-filled stair wells. It took her 2 hours to exit the building with the smoke completely blinding her at times.

Although that attack was frightening, Ms. Jackson credits her survival on 9/11 to her experience in 1993.

On September 11, 2001, Jackson was in a conference room on the 70th floor of the South Tower when she witnessed Flight 11 crash into the North Tower. Jackson and her colleagues (many of whom had survived the 1993 attack) immediately began to evacuate the building, taking care to implement safety and evacuation procedures that they learned in the aftermath of the 1993 bombing.

She took the elevator down to the 59th floor, where a colleague decided to find an empty office to call his wife. She continued without him to the 44th floor sky lobby. She continued her evacuation on foot down the stairs and safely exited the South Tower.

Little did she know that the decision to continue on was one that would save her life. Her colleague boarded an elevator about 5 minutes after leaving Jackson and would be killed when Flight 175 struck the South Tower at 9:03am.

After surviving both attacks, Jackson adopted the philosophy that "if you can die at your job, you better love it." She changed careers and is currently Executive Director of Communications and Sustainable Energy for a London-based firm investing in renewable energy.



*REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH...MARK BINGHAM, UNITED AIRLINES
FLIGHT 93*



Mark Kendall Bingham was an American public relations executive who founded his own company, the Bingham Group. During the September 11 attacks in 2001, he was a passenger on board United Airlines Flight 93

On September 11, 2001, 31 year old Mark Bingham overslept. He had to call a friend to rush him to the airport and was the last passenger to board United Airlines Flight 93. In a final call to his friend he said, "Thanks for driving so crazy and getting me here. I'm in first class and drinking a glass of orange juice."

About 45 minutes later, al-Qaeda terrorists broke through the cockpit of the plane and the hijacking ensued.

Although we will never really know the details of what happened on that plane, recording devices in the plane documented Bingham's heroic final moments. It was clear that Bingham had hatched a plan with fellow passengers Todd Beamer, Tom Burnett and Jeremy Glick, to storm the cockpit and revolt against the hijackers.

Bingham, like other passengers, had made hurried calls to his loved ones. He called his aunt, telling her, "I want to let you guys know that I love you, in case I don't see you again. I'm, on United Airlines Flight 93. It's been hijacked."

In his call to his mother, Alice Hogan, she felt that Mark and other passengers had come up with a plan to revolt against the hijackers. His last recorded words to her were simply, "I love you."

Bingham's family had been invited to listen to the recordings from the plane documenting Bingham's final moments. "It was horrifying but satisfying at the time, we were proud of what he had done," said Bingham's uncle, "He was in there right up front saying, 'Pull it up.' and trying to do something."

The plane crashed in a field in Shanksville, Pa., killing everyone on board. Although the target of the plane was never confirmed, it was widely believed to have been the US Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. The actions of the brave passengers, including Mark Bingham, saved countless lives.

**REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH ...DNA ANALYSIS
BREAKTHROUGH IDENTIFIES VICTIM AFTER NEARLY 25 YEARS**



A breakthrough nearly 25 years in the making just solved a 9/11 mystery. The breakthrough will lead the way toward helping bring closure to the families of the missing.

The identification was made through a collaboration between New York City's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the NYPD.

A victim of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks has been identified nearly 25 years after her death, using a cutting edge forensic method combining DNA analysis and genealogical research. The woman became the first 9/11 victim identified through forensic investigative genetic genealogy - according to NYC officials. This makes a major breakthrough in the decades long effort to identify those killed at the World Trade Center.

The family of the victim has declined to make her identity public at this time. Her's becomes the 1,654th victim other the World Trade Center attack to be identified. At this time some 1,099 victims (about 40% of those who died) remain unidentified.

Despite nearly 25 years having passed, the City's medical examiner has repeatedly pledged to continue the effort indefinitely.

For the families of those 9/11 victims who remain unidentified, the latest breakthrough offers hope that advanced DNA science may continue to provide answers; even a quarter century after the attacks.

Remembering September 11th....Words to Live By

The following is an editorial by Victoria Kikis, Newsletter Contributor

When New Yorkers awoke on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, all went about their usual routines. Everyone will agree it began as one of the most beautiful days with clear, blue skies and glorious sunshine.

Who would have known that just hours after the day began the world, as we knew it, would change forever.

We all could tell you exactly where we were when the Towers fell and news of the attacks spread. Amidst the chaos and horror that ensued, the American people drew themselves up and prepared to face an unfathomable task.

On the morning of September 12th things shifted. Everyone was reaching out to help in any way they could. Everywhere you looked American Flags flew proudly proclaiming in wordless splendor, that we are America-Strong.

In the months that followed, rescue and recovery ended and the funerals and memorials tapered off as we moved on with our lives.

25 years later, there are generations of those with no knowledge of September 11th. or those who give little thought to that fateful day.

For some of us though, every day is September 11th. We go about our daily lives working, building families, enduring sickness and health issues, but we keep going. The constant in our lives is the need to ensure that we do all we can, whenever we can, to help the newer generations and others learn about September 11th and Never Forget.

For many of us, the losses from that day are personal and the wounds run deep. it is our duty, in memory of those who were killed that day, to bring back the spirit of September 12th. We are the ones still here. We need to use our time to do good things, not bad; to reach out, not withdraw; build bridges across personal differences.

Every day we are here is a gift. Open it and share it with all.

Victoria Kikis
May We Never Forget



LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES STILL CAUSING CONCERN FOR FDNY AND FIRST RESPONDERS

Since 2022, New York City has experienced more than 800 fires sparked by Lithium-ion batteries leading to 30 deaths and more than 400 injuries.

Most recently a house fire in Queens was started in a basement kitchen apartment where the occupant was charging his battery. The battery exploded resulting in an all-hands fire. The occupant was trapped in the kitchen but managed to escape through a bedroom window. He was transported to a local hospital for treatment where he passed away from his injuries. He was the first death caused by Lithium-ion batteries in NYC in 2026.

Unfortunately the trend for the occurrence of these fires has continued to climb, with the department tracking hundreds of fires each year, largely driven by e-bikes and e-scooters.

Fires caused by these fires can spread quickly, even when the batteries are not being charged. In fact records show that fires caused in this manner in 2023 were not even plugged in. in which these fires spread is known as “thermal runaway” which can cause an explosive chain reaction, especially when these devices are stored together.

Public officials remind all to store e-bikes and other mobility devices outside their homes. and apartments.

FDNY SAFETY RULES;

1. Whenever possible charge outside
2. Never block exits
3. Only buy equipment approved by recognized testing labs
4. Do not leave charging batteries unattended or sleep while they charge

For a complete guide to use and storage of lithium-ion batteries visit: **[FDNYsmart.org](https://fdnysmart.org)**

Here's what these batteries can do.....



Lithium-ion blaze in private dwelling. Note that the window was used as means of escape.



A simple little battery, the cause of mounting safety concerns.



Vehicle stored multiple e-bikes in resulting in “thermal runaway” fire. Luckily the fire was contained and no damage to other structures occurred.

Rest In Peace, Dolly Parton... January 19, 1946 - August 25, 2026



Dolly Rebecca Parton, beloved singer, songwriter, actress, philanthropist, and one of the world's most loved persons, passed away on Tuesday, August 28, 2026. She was 80 years old. Dolly was born on January 18, 1946, the 4th of 12 children and grew up in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains.



More than just a country music icon, Dolly was an inspiration to people from all walks of life. During her more than 60 year career she sold over 100 million records and won 11 grammy awards. She starred in several movies and was a beloved author of children's books. Her imagination Library is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting books free of charge to children from birth to age 5. The books are mailed directly to the homes of the children. "When I was growing up in the hills of East Tennessee, I knew my dreams would come true. I know there are children in your community with their own dreams. The seeds of their dreams are often found in books and the seeds you help plant in your community can grown across the world." The library is now in its 31st year and has gifted a total of 332,411,218 books.



Dolly change an entire region of the state of Tennessee by creating the theme park, Dollywood. The park grew to be a star attraction in the Great Smoky Mountains and Gatlinberg. Dollywood is credited with creating 23,000 jobs for the region and an annual economic input of 1.8 billion dollars, becoming the biggest employer in Sevier County and ranked among the best in the country.

In her honor, President Trump ordered the American Flag to be lowered to half-staff across federal buildings, military posts, and U.S. facilities abroad.

Dolly was preceded in death by her husband of nearly 60 years, Carl Thomas Dean, who passed away in March, 2005. Their famously private and enduring marriage remained one of the most cherished parts of her life. Her songs will continue to be sung, her stories will continue to be told, and the kindness she put into the world will continue through generations of lives she touched. Rest in Peace, Dolly.

Celebrating America 250. What did you do? Here are a few photo's of how your Secretary/Treasurer celebrated...a trip to Mt. Rushmore and the Black Hills South Dakota and beyond..



What could be a more iconic symbol of our country than Mt. Rushmore!



The largest ongoing mountain sculpture in the USA, Chief Crazy Horse.



The Black Hills Wild Mustang Sanctuary, Hot Springs, South Dakota



The road less travelled....entering The Badlands and Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

How did you spend your "summer vacation?" We'd love to see your photos. email to: okaneclubfdny@icloud.com



Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument, Crow Agency, Montana

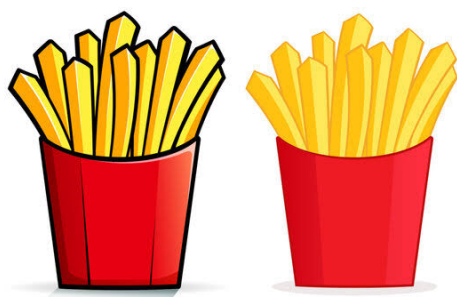
**Caution, the following may cause you to groan out loud!
Read at your own risk...**



**What do you call a pig that does karate?
A PORK CHOP!**



**Why did the coach go to the bank?
TO GET HIS QUARTER BACK!**



**What do French Fries do when they haven't
seen each other in a while?
KETCHUP!**

**That's a wrap...see you next
month.**

Stay safe and be well.