

STANDING FAST

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF O'KANE FDNY RETIRED

Membership application is available on our website
www.okanefdnyretirees.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.



okaneclubfdny@icloud.com

email us for more info.

2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD



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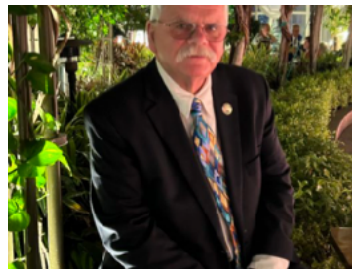
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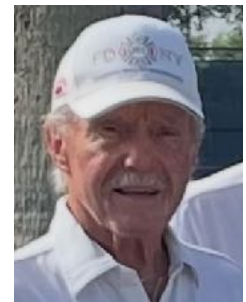


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**PRESIDENT'S
REPORT -
JUNE 2026**

Dear Members, Family and Friends,

Welcome to the June edition of "Standing Fast." This month marks the start of our summer hiatus. We officially take a break from monthly meetings resuming in September when our many "snow bird" members return from their months up north and beyond.

At our last meeting on May 19th we had some good feedback from events that took place during the month. Our spring picnic was a great success (even though Mother Nature shut us down unexpectedly), and I am pleased to report that nearly 20 of our members turned out for the free esophageal cancer screening day on Tuesday, May 12th at the New Port Richey Public Library. Screening was done by Lucid Technologies and participants will be informed of results via email or phone.

We will spend the next few months preparing for the upcoming 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. Our club has a board members on the Curlew Hills memorial service as well as the New Port Richey event. Updates on these and other events will be listed in this newsletter and on our website.

In closing I wish safe travels to those members heading up north and all the best to those of us who remain here in the Sunshine State. 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 you 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
Dunscumb Jim11 Honoring all members of E82
Dunscumb, 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, Victoria6 Honoring the memory or those who gave their all. 343 Never forget.
Kikis, Victoria6 RIP Jeff Giordano - 9/11/01
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.....

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.**

HERE’S TO YOUR HEALTH...more on next pg.



HAVE YOU HAD YOUR RSV VACCINE YET?

What is it and who should get it? Read on for the important details.....

- RSV vaccines protect vulnerable populations such as infants and seniors from severe lower tract respiratory tract disease. The vaccine is recommended for all adults ages 75 and older, and all adults ages 50 - 74 who are at risk for severe disease (such as asthma, heart/lung disease or diabetes).
- RSV is a **ONE AND DONE (no need to get a new shot each year)** vaccine and is available at all Publix pharmacies and most other major chains such as CVS and Walgreens and your primary care provider. The are no-cost to those with insurance. For others without insurance local community and state health departments often proved them at no cost to you.
- *With summer vacation plans ahead which include travel for many of us, it's a good idea to take this important step to protect yourself with this vaccine. Proactive health care means a better, fuller future for you and your families.*

MAJOR CATASTROPHIC INSURANCE REMINDER

Catastrophic Insurance policies were available to UFA and UFOA members prior to April 1, 2011. NO NEW POLICIES WERE ISSUED AFTER THAT DATE.

It is very important to make sure that premiums for these policies are made when due. When premiums are missed (for whatever reason) your policy may be cancelled. If you have a policy and have questions, contact **AMBA at 800-503-9230**. Remember that once \$10,000 is paid for medical expenses (YOUR OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS - NOT WHAT YOUR INSURANCE PAYS)for an individual for a 12 month period, that person can be reimbursed for additional medical expenses for three years. Call the AMBA to request a claims application

OFFICE OF LABOR RELATIONS RETIREE CLIENT SERVICE CENTER
 Retirees who have health plan related questions can speak with a Client Services Representative Monday thru Frida (except holidays) from 10am - 4pm, Call: 212-513-0470.

Their Walk-In Center is open on Wednesdays BY APPT. ONLY. Call 212-513-0470 to schedule an appointment.

HERE’S TO YOUR HEALTH....continued

O’KANE MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN ESOGUARD CANCER SCREENING

On Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at the New Port Richey Public Library 20 members of the O’Kane FDNY Retirees participated in the **Esoguard** esophageal DNA test. The Esoguard test assesses genes from cells collected non-invasively from the esophagus, in one quick visit. The results give medical practitioners the ability to detect the disease BEFORE it progresses to cancer.

Did you miss the testing and want to set up an appointment?

Did you get our results and need retesting?

CONTACT O’KANE VICE PRESIDENT, RICH MICCIO to make any arrangements. EMAIL: knotricky@tampabay.rr.com

Important facts you should note:

Individuals at risk have 3 or more of the following factors:

Chronic acid reflux/heartburn or GERD symptoms

Male

Between 50 and 85 years old

White race

Tobacco smoking

Obesity

Family history of Barrett’s Esophagus in first degree relative

Occupational or environmental exposure (smoke inhalation/fire/chemicals)

YOUR RISK FACTOR: 62% - Firefighters are at higher risk of developing esophageal cancer. 39% increased risk of succumbing to the illness. BE PRO-ACTIVE....GET YOUR TEST!

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION:

UFA Retiree Liaison Marty Tighe: mtighe@ufanyc.org or 646-839-6577

UFOA Retiree Liaison Jake Lemonda: JLemonda@ufoa.org or 212-376-8400

FDNY Counseling Service Unit: 212-570-1693

BHS WTC MEDICAL MONITORING AND TREATMENT: 718-999-1858

BHS WTC PRESCRIPTION ISSUES: 718-999-1937

WTC EXPRESS-SCRIPTS PROGRAM: 800-935-7179

FIRE PENSION FUND: One Battery Park Plaza, 9flr, NY, NY. 929-436-0099

COAST GUARD COMMISSIONS GUAM-BOUND CUTTER NAMED FOR 9/11 HERO

The U.S. Coast Guard has commissioned its newest fast response cutter, one of two bound for Guam this year as the service expands its capabilities near the westernmost U.S. territory. The **USCGC Vincent Danz** — the Coast Guard’s 62nd Sentinel-class fast response cutter — officially entered service Friday, 5/22/26, during a commissioning ceremony in New York City, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam announced in a news release that day.

The cutter is named for **New York City police officer and Coast Guard reservist Vincent Danz**, who died responding to the 9/11 attacks when the World Trade Center collapsed. His family, including his widow, Angela Donahue, attended the ceremony.

“**Vincent Danz’s** legacy will live on not only through his family and his brothers and sisters in the NYPD, but through the Coast Guard crew who will breathe life into this cutter today,” Vice Adm. Thomas Allan, vice commandant of the Coast Guard, said at the ceremony, according to the release.

Danz, a Marine Corps veteran, joined the New York Police Department in 1987 and simultaneously served as a port security specialist with the Coast Guard Reserve. He was working with the department’s Emergency Service Unit when he died and was posthumously awarded the NYPD’s Medal of Honor.

“The Coast Guard Cutter **Vincent Danz** will perform the Coast Guard’s vital work across Oceania — projecting U.S. presence, countering illicit maritime activity, and strengthening our international partnerships,” Allan said.



OFF-DUTY FIREFIGHTER MAKES A FLASH!

On Wednesday, May 20, 2026, off-duty Firefighter Travis Langan, of Crown Heights' Ladder 123, made a heroic rescue on the Jackie Robinson Parkway. The city was engulfed by flash-flooding resulting in abandoned vehicle flooded roadways. Two inches of rain fell in one hour that evening.

Brooklyn public school principal, Carmen Pinto was en route home when she suddenly realized her car, a Tesla Model 3, was emerged in the flooding waters. She tried to open her door, she tried to bring down her windows. She tried calling 911. Luckily a bystander pointed out Pinto (whose face was pushed up against the car's sunroof). The car was almost completely submerged by this time. "I was trying to keep my head as close to the sunroof as possible because the water had come up that far and then I saw Travis," said Pinto.

Firefighter Langan jumped onto the car roof and began punching the sunroof glass. He got a big enough hole and Conti handed him a Yeti cup. He used the cup to bang away and rip the glass open to enable him to pull her out to safety.

At a ceremony on Friday, May 22, Mayor Mamdani and Fire Commissioner Lillian Borsignore honored Firefighter Langan at FDNY headquarters. Pinto finally got a chance to meet her hero fact-to-face to thank him. This time under far more favorable conditions.



In photo on L you can see the Yeti cup Langan used to smash the sunroof glass allowing him to extract Ms. Conti from her vehicle.



L photo shows Conti and Langan with Mayor. R shows entire group at FDNY Headquarters event.

STEEL ACROSS AMERICA STOPS IN LAND-O-LAKES, FL

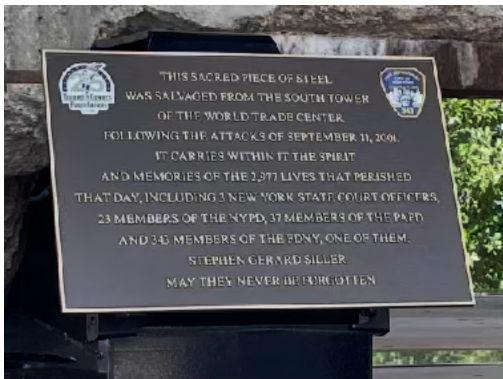


On Sunday, May 17, 2026, Tunnel To Towers Foundation’s “Steel Across America” tour brought a nearly 22 foot steel beam recovered from the World Trade Center’s South Tower to the Do Good Village in Land-O-Lakes, Florida.

The beam, weighing more than 16 thousand pounds, now serves as a moving tribute to the lives lost and heroes who sacrificed everything on September 11th.

The tour will make 35 stops over 21 states, educating Americans on the tragedy that struck, like for Stephen Siller Jr’s father, a FDNY firefighter, who gave his life for his country on September 11th.

“I want them to understand the gravity of it and also what’s happened in the wake of September 11th. What happened to me was a terrible tragedy, but so much good has come from it.” Siller said. The tour will eventually return to Ground Zero in time for the 25th anniversary of the tragedy.



O'Kane Spring Cinco De Mayo Picnic goes Sink-O!

Saturday, May 2nd started out sunny and beautiful, with a brisk wind blowing off the Gulf of Mexico. O'Kane picnic planners arrived at Fred Howard Park, Shelter #6 bright and early to begin setting things up. Rich Miccio and Louis Kikis started things off by strategizing which way the wind was blowing. Jim Savarese arrived shortly after offering his expert opinion and then the boys got started off-loading all the picnic supplies.



Meanwhile, Victoria Kikis and Sharan Savarese helped out by wiping down all the picnic tables and setting up the serving area. Kathy Miccio and Carol Corby lent their welcome hands wherever needed. Things were moving right along. Kevin Doherty arrived and the O'Kane Grill Masters were ready to get cooking.

This year, the picnic had a Mexican theme with great dishes made by Jeannie Doherty, Sharon Savarese and Victoria Kikis. Folks enjoyed all the usual grill fare plus empanadas, chili, Mexican potato salad and delicious bean dip among others.

As always, there were plenty of desserts including a Cinco-De Mayo pineapple coconut cake and the famous O'Kane Crumb Cake (thank you Ruth Ann Incarnato).

Just in time for coffee, Mother Nature decided to throw us a curve ball. The winds picked up and the Gulf waters turned ugly real fast. Rain started picking up. The O'Kane team turned into picnic heroes by "taking up" in true Firefighter fashion. They got everything packed up and stowed away in no time. We were able to make it to our cars just beating out the heaviest of the rain and wildest winds.

It wasn't the ending we planned for our picnic, but a good time was had by all who came out. We had a great group of over 50 people, including family and friends.

Unfortunately we missed the BINGO games but rest assured BINGO will be back for our fall picnic. By the way...make your calendars, it's Saturday, October 24th. We'll see you there!



We managed to get in the Pledge before those winds kicked up!

A special thanks to all who helped out including Stephen McNally, Charles Incarnato, Earl Corby and so many others. We truly appreciate you.

34 FDNY Members Injured in Explosion During Confined Space Rescue



On May 22, 2026, FDNY responded to a complex incident involving two workers trapped in a confined space (some kind of structure or barge) at a dry dock which was on fire. Early reports were that the fire had been controlled, teams were operating in high levels of CO and were 40 minutes into technical rescue operations when a major explosion occurred in the confined space. 34 firefighters & paramedics were injured, including critical injuries to an FDNY rescue dog handler (K9 is okay). This incident was a 2nd alarm which dispatched almost 50 apparatus and over 250 personnel. Both workers were eventually recovered, one deceased and one in serious but stable condition.

The Massive explosion was determined to be accidental, caused by flammable paint vapors. "Preliminary findings indicate the fire involved the ignition of flammable vapors associated with industrial-grade paint within a confined space," said a social media post.

Authorities said a fire marshal and a firefighter suffered serious injuries, while 29 firefighters sustained minor to moderate injuries and four emergency medical personnel suffered minor injuries. All were taken to area hospitals.

The fire and explosion occurred inside a 150-foot by 150-foot metal structure at the rear of the shipyard. The shipyard was formerly owned by the Bethlehem Steel Company, which built ships for the U.S. Navy during World War II.

continued on next page.....

EXPLOSION CONT’D.... Good News Update

On Thursday morning, May 28, 2026 FDNY members, family and friends gathered for a clap-out ceremony for Fire Marshal Christopher Cuccaro, who was released from Staten Island University Hospital.

Fire Marshall Cuccaro sustained a severe skull fracture and bleeding on the brain after the explosion at the shipyard.

Fire Commissioner Lillian Bonsignore, along with other department officials held a public briefing at Staten Island University Hospital giving a complete update on Fire Marshall Cuccaro’s condition.

Fire Marshall Cuccaro spoke expressing thanks to all who helped him through to his release from the hospital and is working toward his recovery and rehabilitation.



A "HAPPY" FAREWELL.....ADORED PACHYDERM DIES AT AGE 55

Those of you who have visited the Bronx Zoo over the years have, no doubt, had the pleasure of visiting with Happy. The beloved Asian elephant was put to sleep at age 55 due to complications of a variety of illnesses. She was adored by all and had many unusual "quirks" such as storing away her favorite snacks in her ears to eat later! She was the first elephant to recognize her own image in a mirror, a skill demonstrating self-awareness and prompting a controversial movement to have her declared a person.

Happy brought years of joy to thousands of visitors. "She died peacefully surrounded by the keepers, curators and veterinarians who have cared for her. Their long standing relationships were invaluable to her throughout her life." Craig Piper, Interim Bronx Zoo Director and Executive Vice President for Wildlife Conservation Society Zoos and Aquarium, said.

With the death Happy, there is only one remaining elephant at the Bronx Zoo, Patty. She will probably be the last elephant the zoo will ever have as the Wildlife Conservation Society decided 20 years ago to stop acquiring pachyderms.

Rest in peace, Happy...Thanks for the memories.

Adored Bronx Zoo elephant dies at 55

MOURNING HAPPY

By KATHERINE DONLEVY

Happy the elephant, the beloved Bronx Zoo icon who proved the incredible intelligence of her species and was the center of a "human" rights case, was euthanized Tuesday.

The 55-year-old Asian elephant was put to sleep at the Bronx Zoo, where she lived for almost half a century, following a rapid decline in her health in recent weeks.

"She died peacefully surrounded by the keepers, curators and veterinarians who have cared for her, some for more than 40 years. Their long-standing, deep relationships were invaluable to Happy throughout her life," Craig Piper, Interim Bronx Zoo Director and Executive Vice President for Wildlife Conservation Society Zoos and Aquarium, said Thursday.

"Making the decision to euthanize an animal is one of the hardest and most heartbreaking responsibilities in animal care, requiring immense compassion and love for the animal."

Zoo officials say Happy's age-related conditions accelerated in recent weeks, as she showed signs of a falloff in kidney and liver function.

A necropsy performed Wednesday showed the pachyderm had been living with several large, inoperable uterine tumors and arthritis.

The elephant had been living in the zoo's hospice care for nearly a month, which meant she was given free rein of the elephant barn and outdoor yard spaces, which she previously had to share with other elephants at different times.

Happy first came to the Bronx Zoo in 1977.

She was born in the wild of Thailand in 1971 and captured along with six other calves — each of which was named for the dwarves in Snow White — and sold to the now-defunct Lion Country Safari in California.

She lived with other elephants at the zoo until her last partner died in 2006.

Happy continued to share the outdoor exhibit with elephants Patty and Maxine, but was separated by a barrier for the last two decades because Happy and Patty did not get along.

The trio was still able to touch, smell and hear each other as they moved from space to space as they chose.

History-making Happy

Happy was a beloved fixture at the zoo and was known for stashing watermelon and strawberries inside her ear to save for later, and for raising her trunk as a greeting to her keepers, the zoo said.

Happy made history in 2005 when she proved to researchers that elephants can recognize themselves in a mirror — a sign of self-awareness seen in only a few other species.

The storied intelligence placed her in the center of a 2018 lawsuit by animal activists who tried to have Happy declared a "person."

The lawsuit by the Nonhuman Rights Project, which claimed Happy was not being properly cared for nor had adequate space at the Bronx Zoo, was shot down by New York's top court in 2021, but the activists continued to rally against Happy's conditions in the final years of her life.

In a statement Thursday, the Nonhuman Rights Project alleged that the "Bronx Zoo and the Wildlife Conservation Society failed Happy."

With the death of Happy and Maxine in 2018, 57-year-old Asian elephant Patty is the last remaining at the Bronx Zoo, and probably the last elephant the zoo will ever have.

The Wildlife Conservation Society decided 20 years ago to stop acquiring pachyderms.

The Nonhuman Rights Project has called for Patty to be released to an elephant sanctuary.

ALONG LIFE

Happy the elephant euthanized this week at 55 after a rapid decline in her health at the Bronx Zoo, proved in 2005 that elephants can recognize themselves in a mirror (left).

Arrived in 1977

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New York Post, Friday, May 29, 2025 nypost.com