

## STANDING FAST

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF O'KANE FDNY RETIRED

Membership application is available on our website  
[www.okanefdnyretirees.com](http://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, 4/21/2026. 7pm,  
 American Legion Paradise Post, New Port Richey, FL.



[okaneclubfdny@icloud.com](mailto:okaneclubfdny@icloud.com)

email us for more info.

### 2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD



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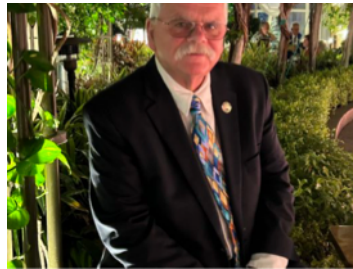
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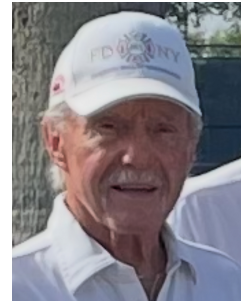


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**PRESIDENT'S  
REPORT -  
MAY 2026**

Dear Members, Family and Friends,

Welcome to the My 2026 issue of "Standing Fast." I want to begin this issue with a quick recap of our April Members Meeting. We had representatives from Lucid Diagnostics who explained to us all about their Esoguard esophageal cancer screening. The testing is free, open to all firefighters and first responders (not only FDNY), and many members have signed up for the tests. The testing will be done on Tuesday, May 12th at the New Port Richey Library. It is a quick procedure that takes about 5 minutes. While appointments have already been set, there may be availability for you to fit in. It is an important screening test for a cancer that has long been overlooked. More information will follow in the Upcoming Events page of this newsletter.

Don't forget that our Spring Picnic is coming up on Saturday, May 2nd, just around the corner. We will have some great Cinco de Mayo treats along with our favorite burgers and franks. Bingo is back and there may be other fun games...you have to be there to find out! See details in the Upcoming Events page.

\*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.

Fraternally Yours,

Kevin Doherty, President

\*Editor's note: Our apologies to Vincent Segretto and James Powers for missing the publication of your boosters. It was a computer filing error and we will have your messages run through to January 2027. Thank you for your support.

***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, 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](http://www.okanefdnyretirees.com) or in our monthly newsletter

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.**

# UPCOMING EVENTS AND INFO



## IT’S SPRING PICNIC TIME!

**DATE: SATURDAY, 5/2/26**  
**TIME: 12NOON**  
**LOCATION: FRED HOWARD PARK, TARPON SPRINGS, FL.**

Join us for our **Spring Picnic**. We’re adding a little extra spice this time around celebrating Cinco De Mayo. Great food and fun guaranteed. **Cost is \$10.00 per person.**

**Bingo is back! \$2.00 per card. There will be 3 games with fun prizes.**

**PLEASE CONTACT LOUIS KIKIS - 727-946-2933 IF YOU MISSED THE PAYMENT DEADLINE. DON’T FORGET THAT FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE ALL WELCOME.**

Checking for abnormalities in your esophagus takes just five-minutes in your doctor's office.

**5** minutes

EsoCheck  
vitamin  
Daily vitamin  
Capsule

EsoCheck with Collect+Protect™ Technology is a vitamin pill-sized capsule containing a small inflatable balloon attached to a thin catheter.

**Lucid**

INDICATIONS FOR USE: The EsoCheck Gel Capsule device is indicated for the primary prevention of early-stage esophageal adenocarcinoma in the general population of adults 50 years of age and older.

ESOPHAGUS

**A convenient five-minute procedure to collect cells from your esophagus**

Your doctor needs to collect cells from your lower esophagus for testing — here's what you can expect.

**EsoCheck**  
Cell Collection Device

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LUCID.COM

### ESOGUARD screening test:

Tuesday, May 12, 2026.

Location: New Port Richey Public Library, 5939 Main Street, New Port Richey, FL.

Time: Testing begins at 10:00am. Ending by 2:00pm. Members are assigned appointment groups and times. If you are interested in participating, we may be able to fit you in. Please contact **Victoria Kikis (727)-946-2934**. She will check to see if there is till availability. This is an important step in taking pro-active steps to your good health. You won't want to miss this.

**UPCOMING EVENTS CONTINUED**

The Tunnel to Towers Foundation is bringing its "Steel Across America" tour to the Tampa Bay area on **May 17, 2026**, featuring a 16,000-pound beam from the World Trade Center South Tower. The exhibit, which commemorates the 25th anniversary of 9/11, will be at the Let Us Do Good Village in Land O' Lakes, FL, at 11:00 AM.

**PLEASE RSVP VIA EMAIL TO:** [Steel25@t2t.org](mailto:Steel25@t2t.org) **TO CONFIRM HEAD COUNT.**

This year marks 25 years since the attacks of September 11, 2001, a day that changed our nation forever.

To honor the Heroes we lost, the Tunnel to Towers Foundation is launching Steel Across America; a national journey carrying a steel beam recovered from the World Trade Center.

At the heart of our commemoration is Steel Across America, an unprecedented nationwide tour that will transport an authentic steel beam from the World Trade Center to communities across the United States. From May through September 2026, this powerful symbol of reverence and resilience will visit landmark locations, sporting events, and town squares, creating moments of connection for those who lived through 9/11 and educational opportunities for those too young to remember.



**DATE: SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026**

**TIME: 11:00AM**

**LOCATION: LET US DO GOOD VILLAGE, LAND O LAKES, FL 34639**

**FEATURES: AN AUTHENTIC WTC STEEL BEAM ALONG SIDE THE 9/11 NEVER FORGET MOBILE EXHIBIT**

## FDNY PROPOSES EMS PRICE HIKES FOR AMBULANCE RIDES AND TREATMENTS



The FDNY wants to raise the price of ambulance and emergency medical treatment. The cost of normal or a “basic life support” ambulance ride would increase approximately 29% from \$1,385 to \$1,793, while “treatment in place” service would jump approximately 42% from \$630 to \$896. Fees for Advanced Life Support Ambulance Treatment in Place, or facilitation on Treatment in Place, would go up more than 50% from \$1,050 to \$1,598.

The FDNY blames increased operating costs and says it also aims to reduce the burden on taxpayers by raising the price of EMS treatment and transport services.

Oren Barzilay, President of the EMS Local 2507 is pushing back, saying, “We’re going from \$1,300 to \$1,700, which most people can’t afford, even at the current rate.” A spokesperson for the FDNY says, “The rates are based on the total cost of operating EMS, including payroll costs and supplies, as well as support and capital costs.”

The FDNY will conduct a virtual public hearing on Microsoft Teams at 11am on May 15, 2026. People can comment on the proposed rules on the FDNY’s website.

The last time there was an increase in medical transport fees was in 2023.

## INTERNATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS' DAY, MAY



**International Firefighters' (IFFD)** is observed annually on May 4th. This day honors the courage, dedication, and sacrifices made by firefighters worldwide. The red and blue ribbon symbolize fire and water.

This day was established in 1999 following the tragic death of five firefighters in an Australian bushfire.

Fire is a powerful force and has a reputation of being destructive, but there is so much more to fire than that. It gives energy in the form of heat, and light that is critical to our survival; however, when this element is out of control, it can be disastrous. It's important to remember though, that FIRE IS ONLY AS DANGEROUS AS THE PERSON WHO WEILDS IT.

**International Firefighters' Day raises awareness of the importance and safe use of fire.**

Interesting Fire Facts...How Many Do You Know?

1. What is the fire triangle? The fire triangle is made up of 3 elements: Oxygen, heat, and fuel.
2. How many types of fire are there? There are 5 types of fire. Class A - "Ordinary" fires, Class B - Liquids and gasses, Class c - Electrical, Class D - Metallic fires, and Class K - Grease or cooking fires.
3. Who invented the fire hydrant? The patent for the fire hydrant was destroyed in 1836 so no one knows for sure who invented it; however, Frederick Graff, Sr., is widely credited with developing it.
4. Fire burns only on Earth! The Earth is the only planet with the ability to burn fire as there is not enough oxygen any where else for a fire to start.



## **TIMES SQUARE BALL DROP IN JULY CLOSED TO PUBLIC**

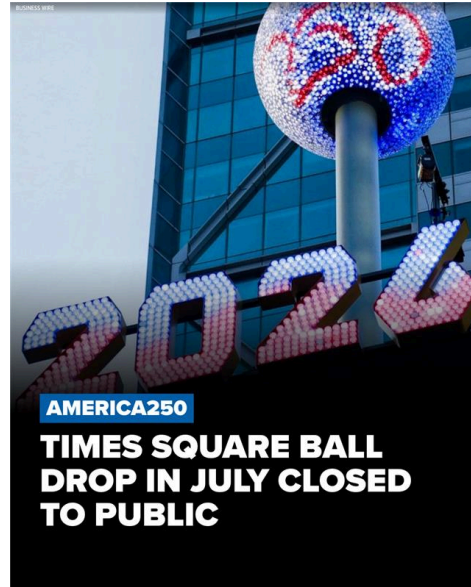
*Officials restricted new large events during a busy World Cup period, forcing organizers to scale back the July 3 event.*

New York City's planned July 3 Times Square ball drop for America's 250th anniversary will no longer be open to the public, after officials moved to restrict new large-scale events during a busy summer tied to the FIFA World Cup. Organizers said the historic event will still take place, but without crowds in the plaza. Instead, it will be broadcast live, with a limited, ticketed experience inside One Times Square.

The change comes after New York City enacted an emergency rule allowing officials to deny permits for certain new events between June 11 and July 19, citing the need to manage police resources and ensure public safety during overlapping World Cup events and Fourth of July celebrations.

"To more effectively deploy city resources and control overtime costs, the Parks department may deny certain permit applications for new events between June 11, 2026, and July 19, 2026," NYC Parks [said](#).

**info regarding tickets will follow as the date draws near.**



Reaction to the change in the special event is varied and comes from local citizens and law enforcement. sparked significant criticism, with fears that it will create a "crowd-control nightmare" for the NYPD, as visitors may still show up. The event will now be a limited, ticketed experience rather than a public, open-plaza celebration.

Public Confusion and Frustration: Social media reactions on platforms like [Facebook](#) showed a mix of confusion regarding the change from the traditional New Year's Eve event and frustration at the restriction of public.

*The July 3, 2026, Times Square ball drop for America's 250th anniversary is not open to the general public for in-person viewing. Ticket access for the exclusive, limited experience inside One Times Square is prioritized for "America's Heroes," including first responders, hospital workers, military service members, and veterans.*

## A SIMPLET TWIST OF FATE.....TITANIC EXHIBIT “SINKS”

A powerful round of storms left a suburban Chicago museum with an eerie situation: its Titanic exhibit flooded overnight, on the anniversary of the disaster, April 15, 2026.

The Titanic exhibit at suburban Chicago’s Volvo Museum was ironically flooded on the 114th anniversary of the ship’s tragic sinking; the damages to the exhibit echoing the terrible tragedy of the iconic ship’s demise.

April 15, 1912 was the fateful day of the ship’s sinking. On April 15, 2026, Chicago experienced an overnight deluge of 243 inches of rain marking it the rainiest April day since 2013.



***THE YOUNGEST SURVIVOR  
OF THE TITANIC WAS  
MILVINA DEAN. SHE WAS  
JUST 9 WEEKS OLD WHEN  
SHE BORDDED. SHE  
PASSED AWAY AT AGE 97***

The RMS Titanic sunk into the frigid depths of the North Atlantic Ocean just 4 days after setting sail from Southhampton, England, bound for New York City. It was billed as “unsinkable.”

More than 2,000 people were on board when the vessel hit an iceberg resulting in the death of as many as 1,635 passengers.

Among its victims were the co-owner of Macy’s, an aide to President William Taft, and the richest passenger, who was a member of the Astor family.

.....**SOME SURVIVED.....WHILE OTHERS DID NOT.....**

\***John Jacob Astor III** was the richest passenger to die in the Titanic. His young bride, Madeleine Astor (who was pregnant with their first child, John Jacob Astor IV, survived. While John Jacob Astor got his wife into a lifeboat, (Lifeboat #4) there are many stories and theories as to why he did not. Astor’s body was found 7 days later on April 22nd.

\***Benjamin Gugenheim** was a mining magnate traveling with his valet and his mistress, French singer Leontine Aubart. After getting dressed and helping Ms. Aubart into a life boat (Lifeboat #9) he assured her all would be well. Upon realizing there were no more lifeboats available and there would be no rescue, he and his valet, Victor Giglio returned to their cabin, and dressed in their evening wear. It is reported that they entered the Grand Staircase area and remarked, “We’re dressed up in our best and prepared to go down like gentlemen.” Their bodies were never recovered.

\***Molly Brown** was an American socialite whose husband struck it rich in mining. She was known for her flashy hats and vibrant personality, she spent her life advocating for the rights of women and children and the importance of education. she was to become known to the world as “**The Unsinkable Molly Brown**” for her bravery admit the Titanic disaster. Brown helped board survivors and later helped steer her own. (Lifeboat #6).

\***Dorothy Gibson** was a 22 year old American actress traveling home to New Jersey with her mother. The two survived on Lifeboat #7 after plugging a leak with a variety of survivor’s clothing. She was jailed during WWII in a Milan prison as an anti-fascist agitator. She lived through two of history’s worst tragedies, which took its toll on her passing away at age 56.

## FDNY HELLENIC SOCIETY MARCHES IN GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE



Members of the FDNY Hellenic Society march every year in the New York City Greek Independence Day Parade on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan to celebrate Greek heritage, culture, and descent. The group, consisting of active uniformed members, typically marches in dress uniform alongside other community organizations, law enforcement, and the Greek Presidential Guard.



Sunday, April 26, 2026 marked the 87th Annual celebration. The FDNY Hellenic Society represents over 50 active uniformed members within the department

The parade features traditional music, dancing, and the elite Greek Presidential Guard (Evzones), celebrating the anniversary of Greek Independence.

The event is one off the largest celebrations of Greek culture outside of Greece.



See you next issue!

Do you have something you want to share? Just let us know. Email us at:  
[okaneclubfdny@icloud.com](mailto:okaneclubfdny@icloud.com).