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"The Club with a Heart"

Addressee or Current Resident

# THE Hundred Call

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## THE Hundred Call

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### Danbury Police Officer Killed

The Danbury Police had gone more than a half-century—since 1955—without losing an officer in the line of duty. Its streak of good fortune ended early this June.

Officer Donald J. Hassiak was struck and killed by a car on Danbury Road (Route 7) in New Milford, at around 10:30 PM on June 3. The 41-year-old officer was bicycling, *en route* from his home in New Milford to Danbury, where his shift was to begin at midnight. He was struck from behind. The driver did not stop.

Hassiak leaves behind his wife of 13 years, Kimberly (Kim) Hassiak, and three young boys: Matthew (now 8), Luke (7) and D.J. (4).

The following day, Danbury Police HQ was draped in black bunting, and officers wore a black ribbon across their badge. The Department "is in a state of shock," Chief Alan

Baker said. "We lost a very valued, very respected, very well-liked member of our department." Hassiak had served in the Danbury force for 16 years.



"Tragedy is the only word you can use," said Police Lieutenant Paul Krupinsky. "He was a genuinely good guy who was devoted to his family. . . . I don't know how a family recovers from this."

A friend remembered Hassiak as "a gentle giant" who loved physical play with his three sons. "He was amazing

with his boys," another friend observed. "He loved his kids to death," said a third.

Kim Hassiak's career in project management requires an occasional week away from home. Don would save up his leave time and then

happily and ably spend it playing "Mister Mom," she recalls.

He was active in Cub Scouts, youth baseball, and a martial arts (Tang Soo Do) federation. An obituary describes him as "a Northwestern hockey dad." Friends and colleagues said that he also loved cars, *Star Wars*, comic books, and pizza.

But Kim Hassiak recalls his intellectual and serious side. "He was a reader," she said. "He knew at least a little about everything." She

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### Save the Date

The annual luncheon meeting of The Hundred Club of Connecticut will be held on **October 25** at the Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill (100 Capital Blvd, Rocky Hill), from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM. **The registration form is in this newsletter.** Hope to see you there!



## Annual Ceremony Honors Fallen LEOs

**“Never Forget”** is the motto of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation. For more than two decades, the foundation has worked hard to ensure citizens *don't* forget.

On May 19, the foundation conducted its 22nd annual memorial ceremony at the Connecticut Police Academy, in Meriden. The ceremony honored Connecticut law enforcement officers—local, state, and federal—killed in the line of duty.

The threat of rain moved the ceremony



An honor guard connected the Academy with the Police Memorial.

indoors this year. The auditorium was well-filled with state and local officers, Academy trainees, dignitaries, and adult relatives

### Officer Killed *Continued From Page 1*

recalls him watching the *Tour de France* with the children and explaining to them the complex and changing strategies the teams were using, and the temporary alliances that the competing racers were making.

Friends and family remember him as a bicycle enthusiast who often commuted to work on two wheels. At the peak of the season, he could make the 16-mile commute in 45 minutes, Kim reports. In winter, he trained on rollers indoors. Chief Baker noted that, on the night he was killed, Hassiak had taken “all the necessary precautions. . . . He wore a helmet.



After the indoor ceremony, families, colleagues, and officials paid respects at the Police Memorial.

of the fallen.

Several heads of law-enforcement agencies, current and retired, gave brief addresses—as did Lieutenant Governor Michael Fidele and State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal.

Afterwards, the Roll of Honor was read: the names and affiliations of the 109 officers killed in the line of duty since 1855, in chronological order. New Haven Police Department had the unhappy distinction of being both first and last on the list, having lost Officer Thomas Cummins (1855) and Sgt. Dario Aponte (2008)—plus another 17 officers in the years in-between. The Honor Roll appeared also in the ceremony's printed program.

Finally, a procession, with family members at the front, walked to the Connecticut Law Enforcement Memorial, on the Academy's grounds, to pay their respects again. The granite monument was dedicated in 1989. ■

He had a light on [his] helmet. He had a light on his bicycle. He dressed in fluorescent green.”

“Hundreds” attended Hassiak's funeral on June 9, including hundreds of uniformed police officers as well as Lieutenant Governor Michael Fidele, and Danbury Mayor Mark Broughton.

Hours after the collision that claimed Hassiak's life, New Milford police questioned a “person of interest.” The man was arrested at a later date. On July 21, he was arraigned on charges including misconduct with a motor vehicle and evading responsibility. The Bethel resident, who did not enter a plea, is being held in lieu of \$200,000 bail. ■

## Snapshot of the Past

Longtime member Walter J. Hushak contributed this interesting photograph and an equally interesting note. The car was Southington's sole police cruiser: a nearly new 1941 two-door Chevrolet.

Hushak's father, Walter S., served as a police officer in Southington from the early 1930s until 1962. Young Walter, just out of high school, took the photo in August 1941, using a Baby Brownie camera. He points out the siren and red light on the roof; the spotlight on the driver's side, controlled from within the car; and the marker plate.

The plate shows “S” over “P” followed by the numerals 408. The letters stood for “Southington Police,” Hushak says, and “408” was the complete phone number of the police station. Callers spoke the number to a live operator, who then made the connection.



Southington's cruiser, 1941

In 1941, Hushak recalls, Southington had 9,000-10,000 residents; 36 square miles; eight to ten regular, full-duty police officers; and one patrol car. At the end of 2009, he calculates, Southington's police department included “just over 40” patrol officers; more than 20 detectives, supervisors, and other sworn personnel; 22 patrol cars; and 20 additional vehicles. ■



## Veteran Firefighter Kevin Swan Dies in Line of Duty

**F**irefighter Kevin J. Swan, of Beacon Falls, died March 10, of a heart attack suffered while responding to a call. The 68-year-old Swan was the town's Captain of Fire Police. This Fire Police unit was a recent creation. For most of his career, Swan held a hose and nozzle.

For 49 years he had served in Beacon Hose Company No. 1—Beacon Falls's sole fire company—including a stint as Assistant Chief in the 1970s. He was active in many civic organizations, especially firefighters' organizations, including the New Haven County Fire Chiefs Association, the Valley Fire Chiefs Association, the Connecticut Fire Police Association, and the Red Knights Motorcycle Club.

When nothing was ablaze, he had worked as a driver and heavy equipment operator for American Brass, Mesa Construction, and a company founded by his son, Swan Excavation.

Swan's gruff exterior earned him the nickname "Grumpy." More than one young firefighter found him intimidating. Colleagues who knew him better testify that behind the gruff facade lay a large heart, much kindness, and a good (if dry) sense of humor.

During an acquaintance of 23 years, Beacon Falls firefighter Jeremy Rodorigo knew Swan from both perspectives. He confesses to feeling intimidated for a number of years. In time, Rodorigo discovered the warmth behind the surface gruffness, he says.

"Kevin cared very deeply about the fire service," Rodorigo told *The Hundred Call*. When you joined the fire department you didn't just become a firefighter, you became part of the family. Kevin made sure you knew that you were part of the family, and he wanted you to know all about

the tradition. He wanted you to know that you were never alone, from this point forwards. Part of his generosity was, once you were taken into the fold, he treated you like family."

Former Beacon Hose Chief Doug Bousquet told a local reporter much the same thing. "There are really no words for Kevin. I got to know him when I first joined the department, and I was a little intimidated by him, but in a



good way. I learned a lot from him. He was a good leader and a good teacher. To me, he was like a father figure."

Colleagues recall Swan's mastery of fire-

fighting equipment, acquired through decades of practical experience. In the early 1990s, after five or six years in the company, Rodorigo was learning to drive and operate fire trucks. "I remember people saying, 'if you want to learn how to drive fire apparatus, if you want to learn to pump these things like an expert, you really need to talk to Kevin Swan. He knows this equipment inside and out, and he will tell you how to pump this equipment.'"

He was "an old-school firefighter," Rodorigo also recalls. "Tough as nails, never afraid"—and one inclined first to grab a hose, not a thermal-imaging camera. "While we [more "technical" firefighters] were busy checking, and making sure our air packs were on just right, and our Nomex hoods were on, and everything's perfect, Kevin was already ten paces in front of you with a hose, getting at the fire."

On March 15, Kevin Swan's life was commemorated at funeral mass in Beacon Falls and finally at the gravesite in Naugatuck. Full fire department honors were bestowed. Firefighters from seven towns participated in the funeral procession. The Connecticut Firefighters Pipes and Drums played. The coffin rode in apparatus of which Swan reportedly was very fond: a 1929 Seagrave pumper.

He is survived by his wife of many years, Sandra Swan; two children—Erin Swan and Brian Swan, both residents of Beacon Falls—two grandchildren; and other relatives. ■

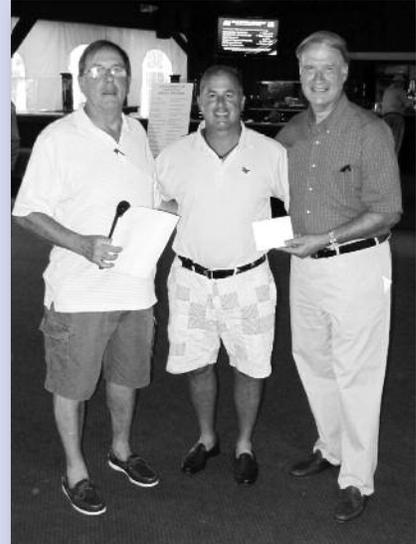


## Golf Outing a Success

The Club's 2010 golf outing on July 27 was the first to carry the name, the Edward J. Funk Memorial Golf Tournament. Ed may or may not have been smiling down upon the participants, but the sun certainly was—following a week of rain and drizzle. Tunxis

Plantation Pro Lou Pandolfi and staff saw to it that everything went off without a hitch—apart from the newsletter editor's making a wrong turn and ending up on an adjacent course (not entirely Pandolfi's fault). The photos show Mrs. Ada Ustjanauskas with

golfer Alex Phibbs, her grandson; first low net winner Ralph Giansanti (hatless); and low gross winner Tim Prete (white cap). Each winner is flanked by Club President Moe McCarthy and past president Paul Young. ■



## Picture from Annual (CLEM) Ceremony ...



Lunch at the course's Snack Shack.

