



LA SOTTO VOCE

The Official Newsletter of the *Columbia Association*

Fire Department, City of New York

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2006 SCHOLARSHIP DINNER DANCE HONOREES **JOHN J. PERUGGIA** **MAN OF THE YEAR**

As an Assistant Chief with the Fire Department of New York (FDNY), Chief John Peruggia is currently designated as the Chief of the EMS Command, where he is the ranking officer in charge of the department's EMS Command.

Peruggia started his career as an emergency medical technician with the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) in 1983. In 1985, he was selected to attend paramedic training at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Jacobi Hospital. After six years of duty in the field, he was promoted to Lieutenant in 1989. Following the 1996 merger of EMS into the FDNY, he was promoted to Captain. In 1999, Captain Peruggia was promoted to Deputy Chief where he served as the Executive Manager for Planning. In 2001, he was again promoted, this time to the position of Division Chief, and put in charge of the Operations Planning unit. In 2003, he received a promotion to Deputy Assistant Chief. In July 2004, he received his last promotion, to Assistant Chief, designated as Chief of EMS Command.



Throughout his tenure with EMS/FDNY, Peruggia's assignments have been balanced between field and administrative areas, allowing him to demonstrate his knowledge, competency and commitment to public safety as well as to establish himself as an experienced and informed leader. He has been responsible for developing and implementing several successful initiatives within the FDNY, including the Fire and EMS Periodical Medical Examination program, the Annual Fire Education Day program, the Event Action Plan for Special and Major events, as well as significant improvements to the EMS dispatching system.

In January 2004, Chief Peruggia completed the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer program, a four-year program aimed to develop leaders in the field of Fire Service. He is the first member of the FDNY to earn such a distinction. In June 2004, Chief Peruggia graduated from the FDNY Fire Officer Management Institute (FOMI) and has recently completed the FDNY Counter-Terrorism Leadership program. Aside from holding an Associate Degree from the City University of New York, Peruggia is currently seeking to expand his educational horizons, and is currently enrolled in the Thomas Edison State College of New Jersey where he is pursuing his Bachelor Degree in Science and Emergency Disaster Management.

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All Proceeds Benefit The Columbia Association Scholarship Fund.
www.fdnycolumbia.com



2006 SCHOLARSHIP DINNER DANCE HONOREES

OUR HUMANITARIAN AWARD WILL BE PRESENTED TO JOSEPH E. HIGGINS, JR. DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF FIRE COMMUNICATIONS FDNY

Born and raised in "Da Bronx" Joe lived a block from Engine 81/Ladder 46 and there is where his love for the fire service began, over 52 years ago. Joe was appointed a Fire Alarm Dispatcher in September 1967 and was appointed to the Manhattan Central Office. In 1975 he transferred to the Bronx Central Office and remained there until 1982. In 1982 was assigned to the Computer Assistance Dispatch Unit (CADO Unit) and was designated Office Manager. In December 1984 Joe was promoted to Supervising Fire Alarm Dispatched and was assigned to the Bronx Central Office. Joe remained in the Bronx until March 1990 at which time he was promoted to Chief Dispatcher assigned to the Queens Central Office. In 1996 Joe was promoted to Deputy Director of Fire Communications and remains in that position today. He is responsible for the overall day-to-day operations of the Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens Central offices. In November 1998 Joe was appointed a Fire Commissioner Liaison. In this Position, Joe responds to all greater alarms, high-rise fires, building collapses or any other serious incident that occur. Joe, along with the other five Fire Commissioner's Liaisons, is responsible to notify and continue to update the Fire Commissioner on any life threatening injuries to members and the progress of operations at major INCIDENTS.



His interaction with the commanders of FDNY is legendary. Joe Higgins has been an Honorary Member of the Fire Chiefs Association for over thirty years. In April 1997 Joe was appointed Honorary Member Advisor to the Executive Board of the Fire Chiefs Association. Joe and his family co-endow the Fire Chief's Association and the Arthur J. Laufer Medals since 1981. In addition, Joe and his family proudly contribute to the Columbia Association Scholarship Award in memory of his mother, Rosina Tornetta Higgins. Joe became the President of the Fire Bell Club in 1997 and

continues in this capacity today. In 2002 Joe was presented the New England Fire Chiefs Award. In 2003 he was presented with the NYFD Honor Legion Award. July 2003 Joe assisted in the formulating the NYFD Battalion Firefighters Course. This had never been undertaken before. Joe began personally conducting Training Courses at the Bureau of Training for Battalion Firefighters in order to better prepare them for Communications Operations of the Fire Ground.

Subsequently, Joe Higgins is now conducting Training courses at the Bureau of Training for the Captains' Development Course and the Chiefs' Command Course: the scope of which deals with Fire Communications both on the Fire Ground and in the Dispatch Central Offices. In 2004 Joe Higgins received the Chief Thomas P. O'Brien Award for his judgment, resourcefulness and initiative during the World Trade Center Operations 9/11/01. In 2005 Joe was awarded the Fire Chiefs association "In Command Award." Joe is known throughout the job as a "go to" guy who will help any member at anytime. He has cultivated hundreds of friendships in his forty plus year career. The "voice of the Bronx" continues to promote the health and welfare of all members in the fire services and simply loves what he does.

Our Special Recognition Award will be awarded to Columbus Citizens Foundation Inc.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Foundation has always been to provide funding in quest of enrichment. This has taken the form of educational grants and of contributions to help those in challenged circumstances. Three educational foundations create opportunities for individuals to fulfill their potential-to discover, to create, to contribute to their world-despite circumstances that may otherwise have been roadblocks on their path to achievement. Because education is the primary focus of the Foundation's philanthropic activity, all monies raised through our annual solicitation are allocated to our scholarship funds.

OUR HISTORY

More than 60 years after its establishment, the Columbus Citizens Foundation remains guided by the vision-and the generous spirit-of its founders, Generoso Pope and Judge S. Samuel Di Falco. The Foundation maintains its commitment to preserving the rich Italian-American heritage and supporting a range of philanthropic causes. Determined to make a difference, the Foundation has seized opportunities throughout its history to improve the lives of individuals, to enrich society, and to celebrate the contributions of Italian-Americans to this country.



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

This year we received new donors to our scholarship fund; they are Morgan Stanley & Co., the Alice I. Sullivan Foundation, and the Columbus Citizens Foundation. The Alice I. Sullivan Foundation is part of the Collete Vacations Group, the Columbia Association's official travel agency. This year we will be honoring two people who spent their entire life helping others, mainly the members of the NYC Fire Department Chief John Peruggia and Director Joseph Higgins, along with a special group that does its all for Italian-Americans, the Columbus Citizens Foundation, organizers of the annual Columbus Day Parade.

Last year has been another banner year for the Columbia Association, and I would like to thank all of our members and friends who support us in our many activities. Our mission is to our Italian heritage and to our scholarship fund, we continue to maintain our 3000 plus members, and with the help of our EMS Trustee Grace Cacciola we now have over 250 EMS members. Take time and read our newsletters, visit our website at www.fdnycolumbia.com, and sign our guestbook. Remember, this is your association.

Retirees' Corner

by Dennis DiTucci

Spring is here, time to plant new seedlings for the future. If you really want to see something bloom right away, join us in helping the Community Mayor's group by spending a day with a group of very special children. Come join us and spend some time that you won't regret. Dates and locations will follow.

It is with deep regret that we announce the passing of John Evangelista. He was a member of our organization for over 30 years, served on the Executive Board for over 25 years and was in charge of the Annual Scholarship Dinner for many years.

Submitted by:
Dennis DiTucci

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Levittown, NY 11746



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2006 COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

AWARD FOR COLLEGE

Gerard Barbara Scholarship

NAME	AWARD	MEMBER	CO.
Michael Vastola*	\$2700.00	Donald	BFI
Christopher Mandala	\$1500.00	Vincent	Div 11

*Rosina Higgins Award (Highest SAT score)

Il Vero Cuore Di Venezia Scholarship

NAME	AWARD	MEMBER	CO.
Kelly Koeth	\$2500.00	James	Eng 163
Davia Palmeri	\$1500.00	Salvatore	Batt 33

AWARD FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Vincenzo, Suzy & Ilaria Marra Scholarship

NAME	AWARD	MEMBER	CO.
Julia Leone **	\$1600.00	Carl	L 87
John Entrieri	\$1400.00	Charles D.	E250

Columbus Citizens Foundation & Alice Sullivan Scholarship

Michelle Lamberta	\$1200.00	David	Fleet Maint
John Lodispoto	\$1200.00	James	E326

Triolo Family Scholarship

Valerie LaFata	\$1000.00	Richard	Retired
James Belmonte	\$1000.00	Salvatore	Batt 35

**Marcello-Murphy Award (Highest STS Score)

Each award will be presented at our 2006 Scholarship Dinner Dance
on June 15, 2006 at Russo's on the Bay.

FIRST ANNUAL CIGAR NIGHT

By Keith Tanico

We came close to selling out our first annual Cigar Night at Club Macanudo held on March 24th. Bob Moylan, manager of Club Macanudo, went all out to contact companies to help with our raffle. Several companies he contacted sent us boxes of fine cigars, such as Monte Cristo, Macanudo, Bolivar, Ashton and Indian Tabac. We also raffled off 3 large humidors, the largest was in the shape of the White House, which held well over 100 cigars & also raffled a free night at the Lowell Hotel (estimated at \$600). I thank all who attended and look forward to seeing more of you come next year. When the cigars will be more plentiful and the prizes will be bigger.



Our Columbia Association Logo

Why Purple? "Inquiring minds want to know." I mean, it's a pretty color and all that, but, IT'S PURPLE! Well, here's some information that may explain not only the color but also the logo itself.

The Columbia logo is based on the familiar Maltese Cross of the New York City Fire Department (the greatest in the world, no argument there). The origin of the eight-pointed Maltese Cross, readily recognized worldwide is open to debate. No one seems to know for certain where and when it first appeared. The earliest account on record dates back to 1000-1300 AD when a courageous band of crusaders known as the Knights of St. John fought the Saracens for possession of the Holy Land. It was then that they first encountered a new weapon yet unknown to European warriors. It was a simple but horrible device of war. It brought excruciating pain and agonizing death upon the brave fighters for the cross. This new weapon was fire!

As the crusaders advanced on the walls of the city, they were struck with glass bombs containing naphtha. When they became saturated with the highly flammable liquid, the Muslim forces hurled a flaming tree into their midst.

The Maltese Cross

Hundreds of Knights were burned alive while others risked their lives to save their brothers in arms from dying painful fiery deaths. Thus these brave men became our first firefighters (are you buying this?). Their heroic efforts were recognized by fellow crusaders who awarded each hero a badge of honor, a cross-similar to the one firefighters wear today. The cross was taken from the Flag of the Order, red with an eight-pointed cross in white. The flag received papal approval in 1130 AD.

Each point on the Maltese Cross represents an obligation or virtue to which all knights were sworn. The symbolic code of ethics includes eight pledges to: Live in truth; Have Faith; Repent sins; Be humble; Love justice; Be merciful; Be sincere & Whole hearted and Endure persecution.

The FDNY Emblem

It was General Alexander Shaler, Commanding Officer of the 5th Corp. of the Army of the Potomac (Civil War) who chose the Maltese Cross as the FDNY emblem. When Joe Hooker assumed command of the Army of the Potomac he prescribed that all his corps be identified. The emblems of each Corp. were originally designed by General Dan Butterfield as follows: the 1st Corp's emblem was the Circle, the 6th Corp's emblem was the St. Andrews Cross and the 5th Corp's was the "Maltese Cross."

Due to major fires, which resulted in excessive losses and a rise in insurance rates, the New York Fire Department was reorganized in 1866 under the command of Medal of Honor winner (1863) and, Fire Commissioner (General) Alexander Shaler. Under his military discipline (Oh, the good old days) the department began to realize its full potential and fire losses began to drop. General Shaler brought the emblem of the unit that he commanded in the war and used it as the new department emblem.

The New York Fire Department's connection with the Civil War goes back to 1861 when newly elected President Lincoln petitioned New York to raise an entire regiment of Zouaves for the Union. He called upon Manhattan's Volunteer Firemen, whose physical fitness and intrepid bearing (same as today?) seemingly qualified them as ideal volunteer soldiers. Within days the 11th New York infantry - "Ellsworth's Fire Zouaves" - were mustered, hastily uniformed in a light-weight gray uniform of Ellsworth's design, issued a variety of firearms, and got ready to embark for the defense of the Capital.

Their parade down Broadway on April 29, 1861, was a frenzy of patriotic enthusiasm, and on their arrival in Washington the Fire Zouaves received a personal welcome from Abraham Lincoln. The President's Secretary, Hon Hay, described the Zouaves as "a jolly, gay set of blackguards, who were in a pretty complete state of "don't care a damn", (sound familiar?) modified by an affectionate and respectful deference to their Colonel." In fact, Colonel Ellsworth had his hands full attempting to discipline and train the rowdy, hard-drinking (no AUC 202 back then) and boisterous firemen.

The Columbia Logo

In 1934 the Columbia Association was formed and naturally embraced the Maltese Cross of the FDNY. Of course we made some modifications to the basic design in order to tailor it to our organization.

Within the center ring of the cross are our name "Columbia" and the year of our founding, 1934. "Columbia" is taken from Christopher Columbus. Inside of the center ring is a depiction of the Santa Maria, the flagship of Christopher Columbus' discovery of the New World in 1492. Columbia has come to symbolize the vast number of contributions made to civilization by people of Italian ancestry throughout the years. That's why "Columbia" is the perfect name for our Association. The Hydrant and the Hook and Ladder appear in the body of the cross and represent the two main branches of our profession.

Here is where the "purple" comes in (ready?). The colors gold and purple are taken from the Vatican in Rome. These are the Papal colors, which signify our Italian heritage and our religious faith. Finally the Eagle on top is the symbol of authority and legal power and represents our deep respect for law and order.

Now you know all about "purple" and the "Maltese Cross" (Wow, some trip, from the Crusaders to the Vatican to the Civil War). The next time you see the logo of the FDNY Columbia Association, I hope you will have a better understanding of its meaning. When you have the opportunity to display our logo, display it proudly. Just think about how fortunate we are to be Americans, part of the greatest Fire Department in the world and to top that off, Italian too!

That purple and gold emblem of ours says it all and is second only to the Red, White and Blue.



SCHOLARSHIP FUND RAFFLE

The Columbia Association, FDNY is pleased to announce its annual High School and College Scholarship fund raffle. All proceeds are to benefit the sons and daughters of New York City Firefighters. Founded in 1934, the Columbia Association has proudly served its general membership for over 72 years.

Once again, 2006 will see the occasion of the award of scholarships in time for the fall semester. Nearly 3000 Firefighters & EMS personnel are enrolled as members of the Columbia Association. Raffles are now being sold to benefit the Scholarship Fund. This raffle is the main source of income for program funding. We, in the past few years, have nearly doubled the amount of awards given to our children, thanks to all of our friends and supporters who make this and other events of the Columbia Association so successful. This year, we are offering only 200 tickets to be sold at the cost of \$100. each.

The raffle prizes are: **1st prize = \$10,000 / 2nd prize = \$2,000 / 3rd prize = \$1,000**

The drawing will be held at the general membership on June 14, 2006 in Bronx, (you need not be present) with award presentations to be made at our Annual Dinner Dance scheduled for June 15, 2006 at Russo's on the Bay in Howard Beach, Queens. Everyone is invited to participate. If you would like to "take a chance" or need further information, please contact chairman Keith Tanico at (516) 867-4580 or 917-337-7413. Please make checks payable to Columbia Association, FDNY, Scholarship Fund.

Mail to: Keith Tanico/Columbia Association FDNY, 14 Ivanhoe Drive, Merrick, NY 11566



Weekend Get-A-Way

Buddy Santangelo 1st VP

On January 19, 2006, The Columbia Association had gone on their Annual "Weekend Get-A-Way" to Villa Roma, a resort located in upstate NY that has been around for many years.

It is a trip we always hold in January, one where family and friends are all welcome. It is one of the many events we hold during the year that we promote bringing your FAMILY. It's our chance to get away from the city and have a great time and start our own "New Year". We have many members who always support us come up as usual. We even have retired members that live in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and the New York region that stayed the weekend with us.



As always, we had a great time and with many laughs. The shows on Friday and Saturday night were terrific. The lounge had a good Doo-Wop group that sang songs from the 50's, 60's, and 70's. Our cocktail party was held on Saturday night giving everyone a chance to mingle. The children had so much to do from bowling to skiing they seemed to have enjoyed themselves.

As always I would like to thank those that came on the trip with us. I would like to thank Sam Pepper and Duke Snyder who brought groups with them. A very special thanks to one of the nicest chiefs I had worked with in the 33 Battalion, Joe Smithwick, who brought the entire family with him (33 people) - a true show of the word family. I hope to see more family and friends next year.

The Board would like to congratulate Esmeralda Gonzales (daughter of Sam and Agnes Pepper) who was promoted to Lieutenant in EMS on that Friday and made it up to Villa Roma with us.

Thanks again and we hope to see you next year!

Should you be interested in any of our trips or learn more about the Association come visit our web site at www.fdnycolumbia.com, and please, sign our guest book. Thanks!



NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS Memorial Weekend 2006

Come join us on October 6th to the 8th at the National Fire Academy, Emmitsburg, MD to honor America's fallen firefighters for 2005 (including NYC members killed LOD in 2005). The Columbia Association has its own honor guard attending this weekend. Anyone wishing to attend with us or reserve a room please contact Vinny Tummino or Craig Silvino (718)448-1170.

We will leave NY on Saturday, 8:00 am and arrive at the National Fire Academy by 1:00 pm. We return Sunday immediately following the memorial service and should arrive back in Staten Island by 6:00 pm.

Our host hotel is the Hampton Inn in Gettysburg, PA (717) 338-9121. We have limited amount of rooms @ government rates of \$110 + tax (one night only).



Check out the details at www.fdnycolumbia.com
and go to calendar/events or www.firehero.org



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LA SOTTO VOCE

The Newsletter of the FDNY

Columbia Association

La Sotto Voce is published
four times annually.

Columbia Association: Executive Board & Committee Members

Executive Board:

Board President	Vincent A. Tummino	Battalion 22
1st Vice President	Bernard Santangelo	Bureau of Fire Investigations
2nd Vice President	Craig Silvino	Division 13
3rd Vice President	Dennis DiTucci	Retired
Treasurer	Eugene D'Auria	Division 3
Financial Secretary	Joseph Smithwick	Division 13
Recording Secretary	Keith Tanico	Division 13
Sergeant-At-Arms	Sal Belmonte	Battalion 35
Manhattan Trustee	Joseph Triolo	Division 1
Queens Trustee	Sal Mirra	Engine 289
Staten Island Trustee	Teddy Forlenza	Ladder 83
Brooklyn Trustee	Steve Forlenza	Ladder 79
Bronx Trustee	Chris Reginella	Engine 92
EMS Trustee	Grace Cacciola	EMS Headquarters
Chaplain	Msgr. Marc Filacchione	Archdiocese of N.Y.
Legal Council	Stuart Salles, Esq.	

Committee Chairs:

		Home Phone:	Work Phone:
Membership:	Joseph Smithwick	516-796-0975	
Lottery:	Keith Tanico	516-867-4580	917-337-7413
Parade:	Joe Triolo	718-383-6429	
Winter Weekend & Italy Trip:	Buddy Santangelo	718-376-8388	
Good & Welfare:	Dennis DiTucci	516-794-7669	Retired
Scholarships & Dinner Dance:	Craig Silvino	631-271-2928	516-286-1796
Hershey Park:	Chris Reginella	914-277-6044	718-430-0292
Souvenir Journal:	Vincent A. Tummino	718-448-1170	718-494-4289

❖ Visit our website: www.fdnycolumbia.com

❖ E-mail the Columbia Association:
vat22italy@yahoo.com

2006 Columbia Association Borough Meetings

Bronx
Jan 10, 2006 & June 13, 2006
Guiding Star Council Hall,
3243 Ampere Ave.

Brooklyn
Feb 14, 2006 & Sept 12, 2006
VFW Post, 2414 Garrison Ave.

Queens
March 14, 2006 & Oct 10, 2006
VFW Post, 19-12
149th St. (between 19th & 20th)
Whitestone, NY 11357
(718) 746-0540

Staten Island
Apr. 11, 2006 & Nov. 14, 2006
Hillside Swim Club
151 Sign Rd.

Long Island
May 9, 2006
American Legion
250 Franklin Ave
Malverne, LI

Christmas Party
Dec. (date to be announced)

All Borough Meetings Are Held on the SECOND TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH. There are no meetings in July & August. Meetings Begin at 8:00 p.m. Food & Refreshments are always served.

