

inFIRE .. A SHORT HISTORY

by

**Nora H. Jason
Building and Fire Research Laboratory
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, MD 20899 USA**

**Reprinted from the Fire Information in the New Millennium: Challenges and Opportunities.
inFIRE (international network for Fire Information and Reference Exchange) Conference
2000. Proceedings. May 9-12, 2000, Ottawa, Canada, 1-74 pp, 2000.**

**NOTE: This paper is a contribution of the National Institute of Standards and
Technology and is not subject to copyright.**



NIST

National Institute of Standards and Technology
Technology Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

inFIRE .. A SHORT HISTORY

Nora H. Jason
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, MD USA

ABSTRACT:

As inFIRE (international network of Fire and Information Reference Exchange) enters the 21st Century, it is interesting to see how it evolved late in the 20th Century. From its humble, indirect beginnings at the first Annual Conference on Fire Research at the National Bureau of Standards (now National Institute of Standards and Technology), inFIRE is now a truly international community of fire information specialists and fire information users. Photographs and antidotes are used to illustrate the evolutionary process.

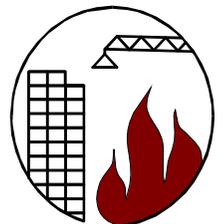
JOAN COLLINS NRCC/IRC 1989-1995



inFIRE ... A SHORT HISTORY

Nora H. Jason

Fire Research Information Services
Building & Fire Research Laboratory
National Institute of Standards &
Technology
Gaithersburg, MD USA



THE BEGINNING

- CONCEPT: NBS/CFR FIRE RESEARCH STRATEGIES CONF., JULY 1985
- NBS/NIST, JANUARY 7, 1986
- UNIVERSAL FIRE LIBRARY SYSTEM
- NFPA'S FIRE PROTECTION HANDBOOK, 12TH EDITION

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

- NFPA, JUNE 6, 1986
- COLLECTION ARRANGEMENT
- NAME SELECTED: inFIRE
- international network for Fire and Information Reference Exchange
- D. PETER LUND, SFPE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Liaison to inFIRE

ATTENDEES

- IRENE BILAS, ROLF JENSEN & ASSOC.
- RICHARD L. P. CUSTER, WPI
- NORA H. JASON, NBS/CFR
- ANDREA KIENE, ROLF JENSEN
- FLORICE MADDEN, FMRC
- SCOTT MELLON, IRC/NRCC
- MARTHA M. PETTIROSSI, FIREPRO
- ARLENE BARHNART (NEE PORT),
NFPA

4/30-5/1/1987, NRCC, Ottawa

- CISTI TOUR
- CAN/OLE DEMO
- THREE PAPERS PRESENTED
- inFIRE UNION LIST OF SERIALS
- SFPE PRINTED LIST
- 11 MEMBERS



NETC, Emmitsburg, MD

April 28-29, 1988

- Reagan administration tries to privatize National Technical Information Service (NTIS)
- Three papers presented:
 - The time trap
 - Microcomputer-based fire materials at WPI
 - CENDI & other Federal information activities

WPI, Worcester, MA

April 27-28, 1989

- Papers Presented
 - Expert Systems in Small Libraries
 - No proceedings created
- Tour of WPI Library

Hartford, CT, June 1989

- SFPE appointed the inFIRE pro tem organizing committee
- Present:
 - Arlene Barnhart, Ann Kelly (nee Swing) [IAFC], Nora Jason, Helen Shuster (WPI), Jack Watts
 - Appointed, but could not attend: Cecile Grant (UC Berkeley), Ingrid Roberts (SFPA)
 - Pam Powell, SFPE Liaison to inFIRE

1989

- SFPE Board appoints Jack Watts to chair committee; will inFIRE be part of SFPE?

Deerfield, IL, April 26-27, 1990

- Hosts: Rolf Jensen & Associates and Schirmer Engineering
- Tom Castino, President, UL: Role of Information Decision-making
- Four papers (ICHIEFS Network pilot)
- inFIRE Roundtable
- Tours: RJA & Schirmer Libraries

1990

- SFPE officially adopted inFIRE on February 10, 1990
- SFPE made appointments on June 14, 1990
- Nora H. Jason selected as inFIRE Advisory Committee Chair
- Arlene Barnhart (NFPA), Andrea Kiene (Jensen), Ann Kelly (IAFC), Jack Watts (Fire Safety Institute), Committee members

1991, April 25-26, UC Berkeley

- Five papers presented
- inFIRE Accession Lists, Serials List
- Survey results...a selection
 - Computerize inFIRE library network
 - Shared online (or CD-ROM) catalog
 - Yearly proceedings needed
 - Vendor presentations
 - Communicate “online”

1991 Conference Activities

- Libraries of University of California at Berkeley tour
- Disaster Response and Recovery Plan for Library Materials presentation & tour
- Fire Test Demonstration at Richmond Field Station ... the FIRST

1991

- Membership: 28
- Advisory Committee selects criteria
- \$25 membership application fee instituted
- Advisory Committee: Nora H. Jason (Chair), Arlene Barnhart, Andrea Kiene, Ann Kelly, Jack Watts



Dottie Sherman, ANI, in a Castle outside of Edinburgh



IFIC, 1992

- International Fire Information Conference, Moreton-in-Marsh, UK, April 27-May 1, 1992
- FIG, UK (Fire Information Group, UK) and inFIRE hosts
- First proceedings, edited by Janet B. Green and Nora H. Jason

IFIC ACTIVITIES

- Fire Service College
Fireground; College
Library
- Fire Research Station
(FRS) Cardington
- FRS Borehamwood;
Loss Prevention
Council
- London Fire Brigade



TOPICS COVERED

- Electronic data exchange; health, safety & fire info
- Statistics; FINDS; SHE-INFO; VIDEOTEXT
- Library fire protection
- Nuclear power plants
- Gateways; info transfer



IFIC Attendees 1992 Moreton-in-Marsh



Nina McPherson, MFBM, Emmitsburg, MD



Nora Jason and Nina McPherson Library of Congress, DC



1993, April 28-30, Norwood, FMRC

- NFPA and FMRC Libraries tours
- FMRC Test Center
- Taste of the Town
- Clambake
- Proceedings editors:
Arlene Barnhart and
Ann Swing



Rack Storage (right) Sprinkler Activation (left)



CONFERENCE PAPERS

- Fire investigations; information retrieval with librarian and firefighter
- Japanese corporate libraries
- Fire detection; protecting libraries
- Australia's NFIRS; networking among Australian fire service librarians
- US Information System
- Information Resources Panel; Round Table

1993 attendees at FMRC



1994 ACTIVITIES

- SFPE votes on February 1994 to assess each inFIRE organization
- Membership fee: \$250.00.
- Membership polled: 32 letters; 30 responses
 - 22 Yes, continue membership
 - 8 No
 - 2 no response

SFPE/inFIRE

- Cost savings instituted:
 - Greater usage of Internet; ca. 50% membership had access
 - Eliminate postage for accession list mailings
 - Printing of Biannual Union List of Series done by a member
 - Annual conference proceedings printed by a member

RESPONSE

- June 1994, counterproposal made to SFPE Board
 - Cost savings initiated could reduce membership fee to \$175.00.
 - Proposal accepted

1994, May 11-13, Fairfax, VA, IAFC

- Fairfax County F&R Training Academy and burn building, suppression
- Ashburn VFD demo and dinner
- Library of Congress
- White House
- Proceedings editors: Jean Chong and Janet Green



CONFERENCE PAPERS

- European fire protection; fire protection for libraries
- Electronic & information resources in US, UK, USDA, fire training
- Challenging the fire service; Congressional Fire Service Institute
- Internet panel discussion

In the Bucket View of the Aerial Ladder



Firefighters Mobile Canteen



1994 Attendees, Fairfax, VA



1995

- Advisory Committee (AC): Martha Gunnarson (WPI) replaces Jack Watts
- Arlene Barnhart continues Union List
- Annual Conference cancelled
- Martha Gunnarson initiates Home Page
- AC initiates conferences calls + meetings
- Gillian Bullock assumes List Serve
- *Newsletter* has rotating editors

1996

- Ann Kelly, new Advisory Committee Chair
- Members: Arlene Barnhart, Janet Green, Martha Gunnarson, Andrea Kiene, Michael Kroll, Nora H. Jason
- Membership: 29 organizations
- Membership fee: \$175.00
- Members state East Coast meetings are location of choice
- 1996 Proceedings editor: Michael Kroll

1996, June 5-7, Worcester, MA

WPI

- Tours: Worcester Polytechnic Institute Center for Firesafety Studies, Gordon Library, Boston Fire Museum
- Internet hands-on workshop and information exchange by Jonathan H. Barnett and Nora H. Jason
- inFIRE organizational profiles
- Annual business meeting

WPI Library



CONFERENCE PAPERS

- Safety sense
- Full scale fire test program; computer modeling; performance-based design
- Arcing on residential electrical conductors
- Print vs. electronic literature
- inFIRE planning, a facilitated discussion

Speakers in Action



PLANNING, SELECTED CONCLUSIONS

- What is different now from 3-5 years ago?
 - Electronic communications
 - Globalization
 - Fees = different expectations
 - Met limited member needs, not diverse needs
 - Decrease in members presenting papers
 - Decrease in volunteer participation
 - Communicating more about reference not needs
 - Larger membership but few (same ones) active
 - Changes in entire fire field

What will be different in the next 3-5 years?

- Increasing membership
- Information will diversify; demands greater
- inFIRE structure will change
- “Burnout” of active members
- More electronic communications
- Annual meetings will not be status quo
- Technology will change access to libraries

Next 3-5 Years (continued)

- More information & journals on Internet
- Increased demands on our services
- BUT ... BUT ... BUT
- Restrictions on who can access resources
- Changes in utilization of media as pricing comes down
- Customers getting smarter ... demand more

1996 Attendees, Worcester, MA





Nora Jason, outgoing Chair, 1996

Presented by D. Peter Lund, SFPE



1997

- D. Peter Lund retired from SFPE in June 1997
- Dr. Kathleen Almand selected as second SFPE Executive Director
- SFPE Headquarters moves from Boston to Bethesda, MD in November 1997
- SFPE relationship changes with inFIRE
- Membership fee = \$100.00

inFIRE in 1997

- Membership: 30 members
- Charter changed for Advisory Committee
 - 5 members; Chair votes in a tie
 - Chair has maximum term of five years
 - Members have one three year term; may renew for a second three year term
 - If committee member leaves in mid-year, replacement finishes term + one 3 year term
 - After 12 month break, possible to rejoin

1997 Advisory Committee and Union List Editor

- Ann Kelly, Chair
- Janet Green, Martha Gunnarson, Michael Kroll, Lian Ruan
- inFIRE Union List of Serials Editor
assumed by Susan Walker (Oklahoma)

1997, May 4-7, NFPA, Quincy, MA

- Tours: NFPA Library, John F. Kennedy Library in Boston
- Papers: Library collaboration in Massachusetts; Global village; Book marketing in Europe; Understanding information; NFPA Fire Investigation Program; Historian in the archives

1997 conference (continued)

- Organizational updates
- Round Table on Networking
- Group Discussion Topics:
 - Identifying trends in the fire field
 - Management issues
 - Alternative sources of information
 - Customer service
 - Marketing the library

1997 Attendees, Quincy, MA



1998 Advisory Committee

- Ann Kelly, Chair
- Janet Green, Martha Gunnarson, Michael Kroll, Lian Ruan

1998 Activities

- SFPE eliminates dues and services as of March 17, 1998
- inFIRE remains a Committee within SFPE

Nina McPherson, MFBM, greets a roo



Nora Jason, NIST, in Alice Springs



1998, May 4-8, Melbourne

Fire Information in the 21st Century

- Melbourne Tours: Melbourne Fire Museum; Static display of fire appliances; Australian Emergency Management Institute; Country Fire Authority Computer Information Center; Tally-Ho Technology Park, Dandenong Ranges National Park
- Sydney Tours: New South Wales Fire Brigade; CSIRO Library, 2000 Olympic Stadium/Village; Australia Code Institute

Melbourne Planning Committee: Anne Pickles, Nina McPherson (Chair), Jo Todd, Jill Don, Nora Jason, Rob Fleming



Conference Topics

- Risk management; people response; fire fatalities; decentralized fire service; CEN Standards; communications; community programs; fire behavior prediction
- Fire service: hot fire training, vehicle-mounted data systems; community partnerships; Thailand high rise fire investigation

Conference Topics (continued)

- Libraries/Information: Knowledge management, EMS library service, CSIRO InfoBuild, preservation and restoration of library materials after a fire
- Panels: Teaching information service skills to EMS personnel; Putting your library on the Internet/Intranet. What are the issues involved?

Conference topics (continued)

- Demonstrations and discussions: FIRE-CD; BFRL Publications, a CD-ROM; AFAC Learning manuals and Australian firefighter competency modules; Internet demonstrations of fire information library catalogs around the world

1998 Attendees, Melbourne, Australia



Gillian Bullock, CSIRO, seeing Sydney Harbor





Sydney 2000 Olympic Site (Previous Slide)

- Hard Hats “workers”:
- Anne Pickles
- Dianna Hand, NSW
- Janet Green
- Nora Jason
- Mike Culhane
- Olympic pool, being tested
- Public pool, with landscaping, next door

1999 Advisory Committee

- Janet Green, Chair
- Michael Culhane (National Research Council of Canada), Martha Gunnarson, Lian Ruan, Gwen Shagrin (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities)

1999, May 5-7, New York State Academy of Fire Science, Montour Falls

- Tours and Demonstrations: Cornell University Libraries; Cornell's High Performance Scanning Project; Alex, the arson sniffer dog; a New York State winery
- Proceedings edited by S. Regina Burgess, Nora H. Jason and Christian M. Dahms.
- This is the first electronic proceedings available on inFIRE web site

Conference Topics

- National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), Archives in Libraries; What is information worth: Fire-safe libraries; Improved customer service; Change management concept; Service for first responders; Future user needs; Consultant and the library; Survey of Illinois firefighters

1999 Attendees, Montour Falls, NY



2000 Advisory Committee

- Janet Green, Chair
- Mike Culhane, Martha Gunnarson, Lian Ruan, Gwen Shagrin

2000 and Beyond

- Future of inFIRE
- What are the expectations
 - Management
 - Members
 - Potential members

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Arlene Barnhart, Regina Burgess,
Dick Custer, Glenn Forney,
Cecile Grant, Janet Green,
Ann Kelly, Mary Jo Kennedy,
Nina McPherson, Rick Peacock,
Pam Powell, Gwen Schagrin,
Jack Watts, Doug Walton