

BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICER

LOCAL 964

--STAFF--

STEPHAN G. FUGATE -- TOM NOSEK

By and For the Professional Fire Officer

IN UNION
THERE IS STRENGTH

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From the Desk of the President

By Stephan G. Fugate

FPA Racheal Wilson

In spite of all else going on, I feel compelled to start with the killing of FPA Racheal Wilson on February 9th as that tragedy also seems to have been the catalyst for so much of what's happened since. Note that, unlike our benevolent Department officials, I do not refer to Wilson's having "collapsed", but KILLED and suffice it to say that my choice of words is as intentional as was theirs. Until some five weeks later, when it was topped by the Chief himself, the most disgusting public comment I've ever heard from this crew was that Wilson "collapsed" during training.

Perhaps understandable in the chaotic early minutes of the incident, you didn't need to be a trauma surgeon to realize very quickly that Wilson didn't simply "collapse" in training. Yet with the full knowledge of the devastating, very clearly causal injuries suffered by Wilson, the mantra continued for the days to follow that she "collapsed" during a training exercise. The terminology was not without intent, and it was merely the beginning of the ongoing and continuing effort to mislead, misrepresent and cover up. Once the Medical Examiner announced the cause of death, however, the term "collapsed" vanished from the story line and there was one less lie to cover.

A much quicker demise came of another of the infamous early "revelations" of the incident being that "all NFPA

Standards were complied with", quickly followed by "all but two NFPA Standards....". Ultimately, it was revealed in a preliminary report that there were at least thirty-six violations of the *Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions*, some of which were actually created by previous training activities in the same structure intentionally burned on February 9th. A troubling feature common to both public disclosures was that the version that would seem to absolve the Department of culpability was trumpeted time and again, yet the uncomfortable truth yielded to silence.

While those two very deliberate and calculated lies were fabricated to deflect responsibility from the Department, they did not propose to blame others unlike the BIG LIE that was to come. There were indeed veteran members of our Department both involved in and merely observing the training exercise that day and with obvious prompting from our Chief, the Mayor would soon announce that those "Nineteen members" essentially stood idly by and allowed what they knew to be a tragedy in the making to evolve. Implicit in the observation concocted and advanced by OUR Chief was that those "Nineteen members" were, individually and collectively, accessory to the killing of Wilson, they could have prevented it, and that they might not escape responsibility.

That the highest elected official in the City was being SO misled by OUR Chief is simply mind-boggling but that would not be the only example. In a closed-door meeting with the Mayor, City Solicitor (George Nilson), the Mayor's Chief of Staff (Otis Rolley), Rick Schluderberg, myself and a few others, OUR Chief stated that the Chief Safety Officer had, via e-mail, denied Ken Hyde

permission to proceed with the "live burn" on February 9th, essentially providing "proof" that Hyde was acting in direct violation of written Safety Office disapproval that tragic day. Having been VERY critical of the Chief Safety Officer's lack of oversight and control of the activities of February 9th, I was now to understand that the Safety Officer did indeed attempt to intervene in a preventive manner but was simply ignored by Hyde. That new "fact" convinced me to agree to the penalty our two members would suffer for their role in the tragedy and refrain from publicly demanding accountability by the Chief Safety Officer and Acting Chief of Department.

Like most lies of significance, it doesn't take long for the truth to come out and after the press conference and release of the preliminary investigation on February 23rd, when asked directly (twice) about the alleged e-mail to Hyde, the Chief Safety Officer denied any knowledge of such an exchange. So what we have is OUR Chief advising the Mayor that "nineteen members" should and/or could have intervened to prevent the killing of Wilson, then telling both her and her legal counsel, City Solicitor Nilson, that the Chief Safety Officer denied permission to conduct the live-burn on February 9th via e-mail. Though I would characterize the first as a deliberate misrepresentation with "lie" being a matter of perspective, there's NO DOUBT that the second is a clear and blatant LIE.

To make matters worse, if that's at all possible, there has been a constant very thinly-veiled threat that if the Unions persist in calls for full-disclosure and an open and transparent investigation, our members are likely to suffer the conse-

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From the President's Desk....

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quences. On the one hand, using the "Nineteen member" theory, any number of officers at Calverton Road might be subject to Departmental sanctions or worse and on the other hand, the Macon Street incident might also result in similar action. Yes, you read it correctly; if the Union doesn't "back-off", our members on Macon Street might pay a price as well.

There are few things that could be more disappointing than our Department's "leadership" and handling of Wilson's death, but there are at least two worthy of consideration. First, the several investigations into the tragedy are being conducted WITHOUT the direct involvement and participation of the Union Locals. That's troubling on its face but more so in light of the Macon Street investigation where the Union Locals are represented and active participants. Let's see, what difference could there possibly be between the death of Allan Roberts and the killing of Racheal Wilson?

Second, and relating all the way back to the beginning of this writing, is what I believe to be the single most disgusting public comment I've ever heard. In a Sun article of March 16th that chronicled the previous day's Fire Board meeting wherein Lieutenant Mike Jenson called for Goodwin to "step down", OUR Chief's most notable reaction was "I promised the mayor I'd stick around and help her get reelected, as long as she wants me, that is as long as I'll be here." Faced with open criticism and rebellion that, despite his attempt to minimize, is shared by a significant majority in OUR Department and his reaction is a sniveling, pathetic, declaration of gratuitous political allegiance? THIS is the kind of person who should be leading OUR Department?

Arbitration

By the time this publication arrives, we hope to have the dates for our arbitration process set though we are hopeful of an early May time-frame. The preparation has already begun and we have been fortunate in securing "expert" witnesses to appear on behalf of the Union

Locals. That support, combined with the experience and ability of our legal counsel, Joel A. Smith of Kahn, Smith & Collins bodes well for a positive outcome, but there are of course no guarantees.

As you probably know, the arbitration panel is comprised of three members, one selected by and advocating for the City, one selected by and advocating for the Unions, and a third selected from a list of independent arbitrators provided by the American Arbitration Association.

The panelist selected by the City is Mr. R. Theodore Clark, Jr. who is a Chicago office based partner in Seyfarth Shaw. Seyfarth Shaw also has an office in Washington, DC which is where the City's contracted negotiator, Mr. Peter Chatilovicz is a partner as well. Mr. Clark, among other things, testified before a U.S. House Committee in vigorous opposition to The Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 1999 also known as the IAFF's National Collective Bargaining effort. To say that Mr. Clark is opposed to Public Employee Unions is something of an understatement of which I'm sure he'd be proud and I suspect he'll be a formidable opponent.

The panelist selected by the Unions is Mr. Francis J. Collins, the "Collins" of Kahn, Smith & Collins who has extensive experience with negotiations for public employee unions in the Maryland area including IAFF Local 1563 in Anne Arundel County. Mr. Collins is, by experience, very familiar with the general history of our two Locals and much of the bargaining history as well. He is now and has been preparing for his role in the process, and we can rest assured that he will advocate our interests in securing a favorable ruling.

The third panelist, selected from a list of eleven potential independent arbitrators provided by the American Arbitration Association, is Mr. M. David Vaughn. Mr. Vaughn's extensive biography is available on the Negotiations page of our web site though what is not pointedly shown is that he has done similar work in Montgomery County and other Maryland jurisdictions and has been described as "very fair". In the world of independent arbitration, I believe that is high praise indeed as fairness is the most one can expect once the testimony

actually begins.

The entire proceeding is expected to take three days with a fourth day possible but unlikely. The issues in dispute are few and not at all complicated or unique. Perhaps the only issue somewhat unusual in terms of typical employment matters might be our work schedule. The six numbered vacation system as opposed to an eight numbered vacation system is uncommon outside of the Fire Service. We can easily predict the tact the City will take with regard to the work schedule and though this is NOT the place to make our case, rest assured that we'll be prepared.

Battalion Chief Moves

Two days ago (as I write) D.O. 25-07 was officially released listing the transfers of sixteen of eighteen suppression Battalion Chiefs in our Local. All but two of those with permanent assignments or long-term details have been moved from their places of assignment without regard for choice, seniority, or personal impact. To give you some sense of the Chief's attitude, in a meeting that lasted for more than an hour and forty minutes the day after the publication of D.O. 25-07 he questioned the aversion to "parking your car in a different place".

There is, of course, more to it than that, but I am not personally convinced any of it makes more sense, is more logical, and/or less offensive. For starters, it is the view of the administration that most, but not all, of our Chiefs are not doing their jobs in terms of enforcing policy, particularly as it relates to safety. I lost track of the number of times "two deaths" was mentioned during our discussion and I'll simply refer you back to the first topic of this newsletter with regard to one of those "deaths". There also seems to be a general feeling that most, but not all, of our Chiefs are "too close" to those that they are tasked to supervise and such closeness has resulted in general complacency.

There are also, however, some underlying issues that simply don't pass the smell-test. Standing alone, they would clearly be subject to grievance which begs the question, "what's the REAL reason for such unreasonableness"?

For example, our Chiefs make “too much money” NOT to be giving 100%. Who’s not doing that and if they’re not, why haven’t they been dealt with appropriately? Do we not have Battalion Commanders whose job it is to run their Battalions?

Our Chiefs are also in the call-back rotation and, it would appear, the feeling is that they shouldn’t be since there are no Battalion Chief vacancies. Lest we forget, the corollary to that policy is an officer (or Chief) in the “front seat” at all times.

Our Battalion Chiefs, for the most part, are not inclined to take-on added duties and responsibilities such as special projects on their own time. It seems that the litmus test for worthiness with this administration is “stepping up to the plate” and doing whatever it is you’re asked to do whether you want to do it or not. It matters not that you do your job as best you can, taking on the ever increasing workload and responsibilities.

Then, perhaps the most egregious offense of all, not having the willingness to ascend to the level of Battalion Commander if and when asked to do so, not accepting the challenges associated therewith. The real issue here is too obvious to waste time and space elaborating upon. Ironically, D.O. 25-07 is merely additional confirmation of the underlying reality.

Finally, though I believe a majority of our Chief Officers displaced are not at all happy with their movement, there is likely a number of those perfectly content with their being given someone else’s assignment without the inconvenience of waiting for a transfer. That’s unfortunate.

THANKS to Rick & 734

As everyone should know, our building is undergoing significant renovation and has been closed to our use for several months now. In that time, we have had occasion to need space for our arbitration votes as well as our Social Night and in both cases, 734 has allowed us to utilize their Hall.

I know the economics have been worked out between the “two Bob’s”, and that Local 734 is not absorbing any expense (nor should they) but simply having the space available and the cordial

atmosphere in the process is a VERY welcomed relief from having to go elsewhere.

While we do extend our THANKS to Local 734 and its members in general, I would be remiss if I did not make it a point to THANK Rick in particular for all of his help and hospitality. THANKS, my friend!

From the Desk of the 1st Vice President

By Michael Waldner

There have been many tragedies during my time served in the Department. I have been on many fatal fires and mourned the loss of comrades who have given their lives in the line of duty in this inherently dangerous occupation. The circumstances have varied in actual occurrences but none compare to the death of FPA Wilson during a training session gone horribly wrong. We are always in danger just doing what we have chosen as our career, but no one should die in a *controlled burn*. Hopefully, an honest and thorough investigation will serve as a corrective measure to insure nothing like this ever happens again. But that can only happen, if and only if, the Department admits to the cause and effect of what led up to and continues to permeate our once proud Department. There should be no scapegoats or smokescreens, but honest and corrective solutions worked out to protect all of our active members and new hires. Judging by what has transpired since the day of her death, I guess that will only occur in a more perfect world than the one we live in today.

I would like to thank all the members of C Shift throughout the Department that I have served with since promoting to Battalion Chief a couple of years ago. I have seen most of the entire Department while serving in the 6th battalion and running on all the SOC/Hazmat calls covering all areas of the city. You have all made me proud to be a part of this Department, and I wish you all good luck, health and most of all continued safety in this dangerous job.

I will be moving to D Shift in the 4th

battalion, apparently as of this writing, unless there is a revision of the current order. That is still possible, since what order is not revised at least twice these days before it’s final. Please bear with me when I finally arrive, as I am not all that familiar with your area. I will adapt soon enough to your ways as I’m sure you will learn my ways. Please, don’t misjudge me as stand offish or ignorant if I don’t try to get too friendly with you. It’s just that I don’t want to have to move again too soon. I don’t make the rules, I just work here.

Unfortunately, we have just gotten tentative dates for Arbitration of our Contract dispute and they are not until late June. Rest assured, we will go full tilt to get a complete victory at all costs and the raise will be retroactive to the first payday in July, if we don’t get the verdict for some time after concluding arguments at the hearings. This was a disturbing round of Negotiations, to say the least, but I have complete faith in our lawyer this time, as he is looking forward to the ultimate confrontation and victory over the Administration’s hired gun from DC/Virginia.

As stated in the last newsletter, I have been working with Union Memorial’s Fitness Center to revive the Fitness Assessment Program that was conducted in the fall of 1987 through the Human Performance Lab at Union Memorial. If you were around then, you will recall that all members of the Department were put through blood screening, physical assessment as well as a treadmill/breathing tests and received a spiral booklet with comparison results to the general population so as to view your general condition. There was much helpful info to advise you on how to improve your health and conditioning. Unfortunately, the Department chose not to continue this program after the initial consultation. Union Memorial has elected to revive this program through the Local at no charge to the member. We have chosen to conduct this program on your time instead of involving the Department as in the past. Assessments will be by appointment at the Fitness/Rehab Center and will include the same type of screening and testing. Heart and lung scans will be offered at that time for the same \$150 fee to any

member who has not already participated in our scan program. This program will be offered to **ALL** interested members, **active and retired**. The results will be available only to you or a Doctor you designate. That is why we are promoting this program to you on your time, unlike in 1987, when we did it as a company unit on shift work time.

We have had much success and participation due to the confidentiality of the heart/lung scans and we intend to continue in that mode with this venture to ensure that trust level. Please take advantage of it when it is offered either in the next newsletter or on the website, if the beginning dates are sooner than the next newsletter. Presently, the Executive Boards of both Locals will be the next round of test subjects beginning April 24 & 26. I have already been through and I can attest that the stress test part is now done on a stationary bike and takes only about 10 minutes for a six mile ride. The improved technology since 1987 makes this program easier and quicker to attain the same results. The entire program including the heart/lung scan will take about 1.25 hours of your time and will be done on designated days assigned to us. It will be worth it just to get all the rest of our members through the heart/lung scans. **Again, this will be open to active and retired members.**

As always, I will mention again about the Community Outreach Program (for parents/spouses/siblings etc.) conducted by Union Memorial Hospital offering the heart/lung scans only on Saturdays to the general public at **the rate of \$75 each**. The phone # is **1-877-744-3278**. *Getting both for a combined \$150 is a great bargain.* There was a mailing that I received from Upper Chesapeake Hospital that offered a heart scan only for a \$799 fee. The Union Memorial program is much more reasonable and should not be ignored. The wait is not as bad as it had been due to the opening of another scan program at Franklin Square taking some of the crush off the schedule at Union. If Union Memorial is not convenient for you, contact Franklin Square Hospital (sister to Union Memorial in the same Health group). They have a scan machine and are doing heart scans and will expand to lung scans

soon through its own Community Outreach Program. Check with them on pricing, but it should be similar. **The number for Franklin Square is 443-777-7900.**

The softball season will be starting Monday, May 7th in Perry Hall for the Firehouse Tavern team. Anyone interested in playing should contact me at any of the numbers listed below to reserve a roster spot. Monday is hot wing night at Firehouse. We can always use new players.

Stay safe, attend a meeting and remember this is your Union. I can be contacted to answer any questions or try to help with any problems at (C) 410-908-2179, (H) 410-879-4545, or (W) 443-984-1737 or email at captald@aol.com.

From the Desk of the 2nd Vice President

By Mike Campbell

It is hard for me to believe that for the second time in four months I am writing about another line-of-duty death in the BCFD. First, Brother Allan Roberts on 10/10/06, and now Sister Racheal Wilson who died during a training exercise, that went horribly wrong on 2/9/07. We all know and respect the inherent dangers of fire fighting, but you should never, ever have thoughts of dying while TRAINING! This tragedy has sent the Department. in a downward spiral and is at its lowest ebb of my career and I have lost all confidence in the direction of this once proud Department. It appears that all of the Command Staff with the exception of the Chief of Staff are walking on eggshells awaiting the investigation results and are afraid to buck the system for fear of reprisal. The Unions have been warned at various times to cease and desist or else face the full wrath of this Administration. With charges, suspensions and transfers becoming the item of the day, one has to wonder who or what will be next. As much as this FD Administration would love to believe that their tenure will be remembered in a positive light, the sad truth is that their legacy will always be that un-

der their watch, a recruit died while TRAINING. **May God Bless FPA Wilson and her family during this time of extreme sadness!**

I would like to offer congratulations to our many members who either promoted within the Local or into the Local. This Union is only as good as its members' involvement. You may not have the time or the energy to run for an elected position, but there are many ways for you to contribute. Attend the meetings and choose how you can improve **your** Union. I would also be remiss if I didn't acknowledge all of our recent retirees who so heroically served the BCFD and the citizens of Baltimore for many a year! Thanks for your service and hope to be with you in about 10 years or so! Negotiations have ended without us settling on an agreement, so we are on to Arbitration. I am sure that President Fugate will have more on this in his article. The Memorial Service, whereby we pay homage to our Brothers and Sisters who have passed on this past year will be coupled with Medals Day as a Day of Remembrance in Archbishop Curley High School's chapel. The date is May 5, 2007. I attended, along with Brother Nosek the MDA Conference in Virginia and our goal this year is to collect \$62,400. Our numbers were down last year due to bad weather. This is a worthy cause and I believe we can and must reach this target. I also attended the IAFF's Annual Legislative Conference in Wash., D.C. and all of the major Presidential Candidates spoke to the delegates on the last day. The IAFF has yet to endorse a candidate and I am hopeful that they choose a candidate who looks out for fire fighters and the fire fighting profession. I have mentioned this in previous Newsletters but feel it needs repeating. The IAFF's *only* concern is fire fighters and their profession. Their choice for endorsement doesn't always jive with mine but I understand where they are coming from and I would expect them to understand where as an individual I am coming from. We also went to Capitol Hill to speak to our representatives about issues such as Presumptive Laws, Staffing, the Alternative Minimum Tax, Fire Act and Binding Arbitration along with some others. We were received extremely well and have

seen the fruits of our labor realized by having the representatives take up our causes. Let's hope that it made a difference. It sure beats sitting on your ass bitching and doing nothing!

I attended the Deferred Comp. meeting on 2/27/07. There were many positives to speak of in the last quarter. For the first time, all of the stocks made gains with the Global Stocks at the top of the list. Members who are under the age of 50 can deposit up to \$15,500 and those over the age of 50 can deposit up to \$20,500 into Deferred Comp. This can be extremely beneficial when retiring and cashing in your vacation days. You can take the money (tax deferred) and deposit it into your account as long as you don't exceed the limits above. If you have any questions, you can contact them @800-905-1833 or go to their website. The next meeting of the Deferred Comp. committee is scheduled for May 22, 2007. If you are not participating in the Deferred Compensation program I would highly recommend that you begin immediately. This is an excellent avenue to save for the future and with Health Care increasing for Retirees this may be your way of financing it in the future. If you have any questions give me a call.

EMS Lieutenant John Giotis has been released from Brightwood and is now recuperating with family. Please keep John and his family in your prayers. I would also ask that our members please keep Brothers Wayne Nowowiejski and Steve Canter and their families in your prayers.

Health Care

On April 7, 1986, a Federal law was enacted (Public Law 99-272, Title X) requiring that most employers sponsoring group health plans offer employees and their families the opportunity for a temporary extension of health coverage (called "continuation coverage") at group rates in certain instances where coverage under the plans would otherwise end. This is commonly referred to as **COBRA**. There are many qualifying events that provide for COBRA. Please contact ADP Benefits Services, the administrator of the City's COBRA program, to elect coverage. ADP Benefits Services can be reached

by calling 1-800-526-2720. The full document explaining "COBRA" can be found on the Fire Officers website at www.iafflocal964.org under the "Health and Safety" link. I have also included a link for the "Flexible Spending Account" along with "Retiree Health Care FAQ's sheet". You can also find a "New Retiree-Health Care" document in this Newsletter which describes the process of obtaining health care once you retire. If you have any Health Care questions please don't hesitate to ask. A reminder to our members that before seeking medical care, make sure that the provider that you are seeing is covered by your Health Insurance carrier. I have been notified that Quest Diagnostics (a laboratory provider) is no longer covered by UnitedHealthcare and MAMSI in many service areas. Even after setting up an appointment, ask the provider on the day of service if their services are covered!

Safety and Health

I would like to begin by thanking Lieutenant Bill Kern for his many years of service on the Safety & Health Committee. Billy is currently on his retirement leave and has been a proponent of safety for our members and has devoted much of his career towards making sure that everyone goes home safe and sound at the end of their shift. Bill, thank you very much for showing me the ropes and for your dedication and years of friendship. Lieutenant Steve Horchar has been chosen by President Fugate to take on this very important position for the Local. The Fire Department had declared the month of March as Stand Down for Safety month. As part of their plans there were safety training initiatives along with inspections from the Safety Office and members of the Command Staff. It is incumbent that Company Officers inspect their members gear (this includes 2nd line gear as well), along with the fire house and apparatus for any safety-related issues and bring them to the attention of the Fire Dept, and have the corrections made ASAP! If there is a lag by the Dept., make sure you document all requests and notify the Union so as to CYA. Make sure that you e-mail the Safety Office at (FDSO@baltimorecity.gov). **I would ask all of my Brothers and Sisters to take Safety to heart. It is our job to see**

that those that we are entrusted to lead go home safe and sound at the end of each tour. Many of you may disagree, but as Officers we do have a responsibility and an obligation for our people! Due to the tragic events of 2/9/07, the Safety & Health meeting was rescheduled for 2/26/07. Items discussed with the Committee and Jim Bellamy is the following: Roof work has been completed on E-4, E-55, E-57, E-27 & E-43. Upcoming roof work will begin on E-2, E-36, E-51, EMS quarters (old E-26) & T-15. E-53 is in line for repairs to their apparatus bay floor along with E-31, whose work is out for bid at this time. The Custom Energy plan, whereby houses will be fitted with new windows, doors and HVAC systems are moving along with E-35, E-13, E-8 either completed or well on their way. The Fire Academy is included in this and will be air conditioned when the process is complete. The Fire Academy burn building is due for some rehab work with additional supports added inside and some areas partitioned to prevent burning repeatedly in one place. The Ward Diesel systems have been installed on E-41, T-20, T-27 M-16 & RM-22, with four more on order (SQ54, E-31, SQM47 & SQM11). The Dept. is currently looking at alternative funding to purchase more of these systems. Chief Zinck informed us that the portable radios are due for some PM work. The Dept. is also looking to install portable radio chargers, one on each apparatus and two on each medic. We have had discussions with the Dept. with regards to CPAT. The Labor part of the Safety & Health Comm. would like to see the Dept. move forward with this physical agility testing. The Dept. has refused changing to this testing, so far. We have not given up this fight! Here is a list of items that the Dept. is looking to purchase and others that they are hoping for in the future: New AIRFLEX 2 due in the summer, Four tiller trucks on order and should be delivered in Sept – October, Four pumpers in the purchasing process – not yet approved, Eight medics in the purchasing process – not yet approved, Purchase additional sets of TO gear, Purchase additional ground ladders, Purchase additional hose, Pay for third party testing of aerials and pumps and an increased bud-

get for apparatus/equipment costs. They are requesting to purchase three new tillers from FY '08 funds and requesting the immediate purchase of up to seven new vehicles that are immediately available (It takes 10-12 months to build a truck). These items will benefit our Dept. tremendously. If you have any Plymovent issues, please contact Jim and I. Also, House Captains if you are looking at some spring cleaning projects such as painting, minor construction, etc and you want it done some time before you retire, I would suggest that you do it yourself and Jim Bellamy will supply the materials. If you wait for the City, you may be collecting Medicare by the time they get around to it! The next Safety & Health meeting will be 4/19/07. Call me with any concerns. **Food for thought**, there was an article in the Wall Street Journal recently from the New England Journal of Medicine stating that *between 1994 and 2004, 45% of on-duty deaths among fire fighters were due to cardiovascular events. Even given the stress levels of the job, that is a high proportion and that it is double the percentage of police officers during the same period. The study showed that the physical demands of the job, rather than its stress, are largely responsible. The largest number of heart attacks occurred while fighting fires or during training exercises. The study also says that fire fighters fitness is probably to blame, with their hearts unable to cope with the sudden physical demands of fighting a fire. More than 70% of fire departments lack fitness programs and that new recruits may be overweight and have low-to-normal aerobic capacities.* This would seem to make the case for a more stringent physical agility test for new hires and to put an end with the numbing number crunching that goes on daily and replace it with a physical fitness program that in the long run would save the City and the Department large sums of compensatory damages. But that's just a high school educated underlings opinion!

President's Club

Currently we have 101 members who are contributing to our PAC Fund. Of those, we have 98 President Club members. The PAC Fund is our most important tool to have the **local** politicians listens to

our concerns. If you contribute \$4.00 or more a pay you are automatically included in the President's Club. Thanks to those who have contributed and to those who haven't, contact me if you need a dues deduction card.

As always, keep your Beneficiaries up to date and don't hesitate to call or e-mail me at any time.

Cell – 443-629-0216

Work – 410-396-5773

E-mail: capttain16@hotmail.com

Words to twirl by...

Paranoia strikes deep
Into your life it will creep,
It starts when you're always afraid
Step outta line, the man come and take you away!
We better stop, hey what's that sound
Everybody look what's goin down!

Buffalo Springfield

From the Desk of the Recording Secretary

By Tom Nosek

Social Night was held March 21 at local 734's union hall. Sixty of our members dined on steamed shrimp, beef, turkey, pasta/meatball and hot dogs. The beer was cold!! I would like to thank Rick Schluderberg for his allowing us to use 734's hall.

The 4th annual Retiree dinner/dance will be held April 21 at Klosterman's hall (see the flyer) tickets are \$30 for open bar, dinner and live music.

The VEBA raffle is going slow, PLEASE send in your tickets and money!!

The site and date of this year's picnic will be posted on our web site and in May/June's newsletter.

Aberdeen Ironbird "night at the ball park" will be August 3, 2007.

I attended the MDA conference last week and that has jump started plans for fund raisers and Fill the Boot on Labor Day!!!

Brother Campbell and I were the Union's representative for the NIOSH and MOSH interviews. I would hope there would be a report sometime late this Spring rather in July or August. The fam-

ily of Rachael Wilson deserves the truth and such should not be delayed.

I find the comment by the COFD that "I am here to help get the Mayor reelected" as somewhat beyond his job description!!!

The words in the press lately have been "cozy, fresh and cultural ". Well, a few years ago there was a culture change by the COFD, magic wand promotions, creating positions that only people who were "COZY" to him could obtain. How about a "FRESH" look at the people who serve and protect the citizens of Baltimore, the members of the BCFD. Chief Goodwin should tell the press my responsibility is to the men and women of the department and they need a raise, that would be a CULTURAL change. Advice to Chief Goodwin, no Battalion Chief is going to step up and be COZY, they have seen the revolving door at headquarters.

From the Desk of the Secretary-Treasurer

By Bob Jordan

Golf Tournament: May 11, 2007

The Annual John L. Seiss Benefit Golf Tournament will be held on May 11, 2007 at Woodlands Golf Course, in Woodlawn, Maryland. This tournament benefits our VEBA Fund, which provides death benefits, and programs for our active and retired members.

The cost of this year's tournament is \$100 per player, and includes a continental breakfast, food on the course and a great buffet after the tournament. There are plenty of prizes including trips, dinner certificates, hotel certificates, closest to pin, and longest drive.

I think we put on one of the best golf tournaments of the year, so please plan to attend and join in on the fun.

Foursome applications maybe available on the Union web site, but if not call me at 410-908-2434 and I can send you one. Also, you can just mail a check, with the player's names to me at the Union Hall, 1030 S. Linwood Avenue, 21224, and I will fill out the form for your foursome. Make checks payable to "Local 964 VEBA Fund". If any-

one wishes to play as a single, we fill in same as a team. We limit the amount of golfers to 120, so get your names in as soon as possible.

Building Progress

Things are moving along but not as quick as I had hoped or for that fact the entire Board and Trustees. Good news is that the HVAC units are working in our hall and also have been installed for the Daily Grind. The contractor is moving along with trying to get the Daily Grind done so that we can start to collect rent.

I want to thank the Grunwald Club for allowing us to have our meetings at their club.

I would also like to thank Local 734 for the use of their hall for our Social Night, which was well attended, and also for allowing us to meet there for negotiations. Thanks Brothers.

I will give more in depth reports on the building at our Union meetings, but as of now, it doesn't look like we will be back in our building until maybe the second meeting in May.

Motorcycle Tags

As you may know, we have been trying to get 25 members to sign up for Fire Officers union tags for motorcycles for a few years. Some I had on the list have moved out of state, or retired out of state. This is the time of year people buy motorcycles, so let's try this again.

Please e-mail me if you are interested in getting on the list for tags. I think I have about 15 names at present, but I want everyone to send me their name again, so I can make sure you are still interested.

You can e-mail me at home: K9118@aol.com, at the hall: bfo964@aol.com, or call me at 410-908-2434

Remember that if you want tags for cars or trucks, call I or Mike Campbell, as he has been added as an authorized representative for our union tags.

**Baltimore Fire Officers
IAFF Local 964's
Annual Golf Tournament
May 11, 2007
See Bob Jordan's article for details!**

NEW RETIREES – HEALTH CARE

Provided by Michael B. Campbell, 2nd Vice President, Local 964

New retirees will receive a Personalized Health Benefits Enrollment Packet in the mail at their home address upon retirement. The Personalized Health Benefits Enrollment Packet includes a cover letter outlining guidelines and procedures for enrolling in health benefits, a personalized worksheet outlining health benefit offerings and deadline date to enroll, an information sheet entitled "Retirees Have Two Ways To Enroll," a 2007 Medical Plan Comparison Chart, and a 2007 Medical Plan Rate Chart.

New retirees have 60 days from the date of their retirement date to enroll online or by calling the IVR Benefits Enrollment Line. The deadline for enrolling will be printed at the top right-hand corner of the worksheet. Coverage for new retirees will be effective the first day of the month following their retirement date. Double medical plan premiums may be taken from the retirees' pension check for missed payroll deductions.

When new retirees receive their Personalized Health Benefit Enrollment Packet in the mail, they must log onto www.baltimorecity.essbenefits.com or call the IVR Benefits Enrollment Line at 1-866-440-2258 to enroll in health benefits as a retiree. If new retirees do not have access to a computer, the Internet, or a touch-tone telephone, they may visit the DHR-Employee Benefits Division at 201 E. Baltimore Street, Suite 500, Baltimore, MD 21202 with their enrollment packet for assistance. Retirees may also write their Medicare information, dependent information, benefit elections, daytime telephone number and signature on the worksheet and mail it into DHR-Employee Benefits Division for processing by the deadline date printed on the worksheet. If retirees are adding dependents that are not listed in the dependent section of the worksheet, documentation of the relationship is required. For additional information, retirees may contact the Employee Benefits Division at 410-396-5831 and select option 2 and then option 1.

Baltimore City Fire Officers IAFF Local 964 Annual Retirees Dinner/Dance

April 21, 2007- 8pm -12 am

Columbus Gardens, 4301 Klosterman Ave.

Tickets \$30

Hot Buffet, open bar, live music and dancing

Boston vacation raffle donated by Boston FF's IAFF Local 718

Proceeds benefit the VEBA fund

Honoring The 2006 Retirees

Lt Dave Franz -E27

Lt Jim Bandelin - T26

Capt Ed Schaeffer -E8

Lt Gil Wroten- Hdqs

Capt Frank Ullhorn- T8

Capt Ed McCartney- E21

Lt Carlos Maddox- E47

Lt Darwin Williams- T25

Lt Charles Grantalnd- E26

Lt Malvern Jones- T21

Lt Donald Fletcher -T18

Lt Adam Watkowski - T29

Lt Ed Dix- E35

Lt Dave Baker- T30

BC Robert Salefski- 3rd Batt.

BC Warren Ashbrook -6th Batt.

For Tickets and Raffle chances:

Contact: Lt. Tom Nosek T3 (H) 410 638 2231 (T3) 410 396 9205

Lt Frank Schlosser E4 (C) 410 499-5441 (E4) 410 396 6204

Tired and Retired

by Bob Hatoff

Once upon a time in a magic kingdom far far away the ruler was King Gourmet. He loved food and the fancier the better. He hired the best chef he could find. He was completely pleased and proud of his new chef. He had more and more dinners. He invited more and more people to eat with him. The head chef felt he was too overworked and started hiring assistant chefs. Soon he had more than 30 of them. However instead of getting better the food got worse. Some of the guests got ill, one almost died. The king called the head chef in on the carpet, about conditions in the kitchen. The head chef said he wasn't even aware there was a problem. The king investigated and found many of the assistant chefs couldn't even cook. He told the head chef to solve the problem or hit the road. Meanwhile all the assistants were fighting and accusing each other of causing the problem. The head chef came up with a brilliant solution. He called it musical chefs. The pastry chef was put in charge of salads. The salad chef was made the vegetable chef. The vegetable chef became the dessert chef. This went on until every chef had a new assignment. The fact that they still couldn't cook was not even taken into consideration. It showed the head chef was back in control of operations. Now as in all fairy tales I know you're looking for a happy ending. All I can say to you is this

change will be just as successful as the steward who rearranged the deck stairs on the Titanic to keep it from sinking. (Note: In this kingdom the word for chef is spelled CHIEF, but I used the usual spelling to avoid confusion!)

In my last column I asked you to let me know about any special birthday or anniversaries you had, so I could report on them. I only got one reply, but it was a real winner. Hugo Warns wrote me to say he would be 95 on July 12th. He's living at Oakcrest and says he has been adopted by four very nice ladies. Hugo is 25 years older than me, but it appears he's doing much better! In answer to your question Hugo, yes I do remember you. I even have a list of all the money I lost playing poker with you. God bless you and I look forward to reporting your 100th birthday.

Now the rest of you, let's hear from you. It helps me fill my column and lets your friends know you're still alive and kicking. It also gives me more time to research fairy tales!

Finally Anita, her son Sam and I went to Anna Maria Island in Florida, the last week in February. It was like a breath of fresh air and reminded me of Ocean City in the fifties. No traffic, no fast food restaurants and nothing over 3 stories tall. If you just want to chill out, I highly recommend it. I felt really

relaxed when we got home, but within 2 hours the screaming started and the indigestion returned. I'm ready to go back, permanently!

As always you can reach me at 1805 Greencastle Dr, Baltimore 21237 or 410-866-3235.

Sick & Injured List

I didn't do one last paper because fortunately we haven't had much to talk about lately. Thank goodness the list is still very short.

Chuck Johnson is recovering from a bout with pneumonia.

Don Taylor is home after a hip replacement at Mercy. The operation went well, but he's having some other problems.

Frank Vitak is home after cancer resulted in part of his tongue being removed. He's unable to talk yet, but he's coming along.

Walt Ward is being tested for problems with his balance.

Don Schucham got a pace maker.

Jim Fenhagan had arthroscopic surgery on his knee and all went well.

THE BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICERS

Local No. 964

Meetings -- 1st & 3rd Monday

1030 S. Linwood Avenue

Baltimore, MD, 21224

PHONE: 410-276-6964

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