

BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICER

LOCAL 964

--STAFF--

STEPHAN G. FUGATE -- TOM NOSEK

By and For the Professional Fire Officer

IN UNION

THERE IS STRENGTH

Volume , Issue

August/September 2007

From the Desk of the President

By Stephan G. Fugate

FY'08 Settlement Agreement

With the voting now behind us and our members overwhelmingly accepting the proposed settlement agreement, it's an appropriate time to explain how it is that we got to this point. If you were able to attend either of the voting session on Friday, August 10th, you will have heard this already but even if not, you too are deserving of the same information.

At the March 9th voting sessions wherein our members voted unanimously to proceed to arbitration, I made my position (and I believe the position of the entire Negotiations Committee) very clear in that with the mandate of the membership to proceed to arbitration, we would NOT bring anything short of an arbitrator's ruling back as a resolution. We had, to that point, bargained in good faith, and it seemed to us that the City had not and in affect had forced the matter to arbitration with their final offer.

While the short version might be that I've learned once again to "never say never", there's much more to the story than a hasty comment born of frustration. The long version is indeed a bit long but, again, I believe ALL of our members have a right to know the facts. Furthermore, given how so many other issues relating to negotiations and arbitration have been misrepresented by our CEO, it is essential for the TRUTH to be put into writing.

The panel of arbitration consists of three members; one selected by the City, one by the Unions, and the third through a "striking" process wherein a list of up to twelve professionals provided by the American Arbitration Association is, one by one, reduced to a final candidate. This striking process has both the City and the Unions eliminating, in alternating turns, individuals on the list who might be perceived as biased to the other side or with who experience has been less than positive. That's not to say that ANY of the professionals listed are indeed biased or unfair, but the object of the exercise is to get the most independent and "fair" member possible and in this particular case, I believe that was clearly accomplished.

The independent arbitrator selected was Mr. A. David Vaughn who would serve as chairman of the panel and the arbiter of the proceedings much like a judge in determining relevance of testimony and evidence presented. It is important to keep in mind that though the panel of arbitration is a "tribunal" consisting of three members, it is the opinion and ruling of the independent member that would make the ultimate decision of which side would prevail. The role of the other two, one selected by each side, is to advocate for their side in the closed-session deliberations and try to sway the view and opinion of the independent.

The fact that the independent, Mr. Vaughn, was truly the person in charge and the one who would ultimately make the decision cannot be overstated. While very careful not to show any bias or prejudice, Mr. Vaughn effectively guided the process and orchestrated the final outcome.

Arbitration began on Sunday, June 24th and the first day was taken up almost completely with the direct testimony of Jeff DeLisle, former President of Local 734 Director with the IAFF in Washington. Jeff's personal knowledge of and experience with local bargaining history combined with his vast experience nationwide through his service with the IAFF was invaluable and provided a tremendous starting point for the Unions' case. It's quite possible that, had the arbitration gone to conclusion, Jeff's testimony would have been a major factor in the final outcome.

Day two, Monday June 25th was an entire day of testimony by myself on behalf of both Locals and I'll defer to the opinions of the others on our joint negotiation committee in terms of content and effect. Suffice it to say that I did my best under somewhat adverse conditions and can only hope that my input was helpful.

Day three included lengthy testimony from Alex Perricone focusing primarily on the EMS issues in consideration of some of the proposals in question. Alex handled himself and his testimony very well and no doubt provided a more than adequate counter to the City's apparent opposition to those proposals. Day three was also the day, however, when both sides were advised of a "concern" of Mr. Vaughn which would be the turning point leading to eventual settlement.

I am not an arbitrator and would not presume to be an expert, but I have had some experience in arbitration over the years and would offer some observations for consideration. First, the objective of any arbitration proceeding is to reach

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From the President's Desk....

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an agreement. Our statutory process demands that an arbitrator consider the total offer from each side and find in favor of one or the other. The arbitrator cannot combine the parts of both offers in an effort to reach an amicable agreement, but must choose one or the other in total.

This is certainly not the first arbitration process in our format wherein the independent opined about the difficulty faced by, in effect, having his "hands tied" and not having what might be viewed as the traditional or more common ability to craft a settlement from the various components of both offers. Indeed, Mr. Vaughn had done his homework beforehand and was familiar with the City and the Union proposals to the extent that he seemed uneasy from the start.

Also to be considered is that there are likely two scenarios when an arbitrator may have some difficulty and they are the opposite extremes. There are those situations where the two sides are SO CLOSE in their separate positions that it seems irrational not to have reached mutual agreement. Then, there are those situations where the two sides are SO FAR APART that continued negotiations is simply mandatory and it is the latter of the two that best described our position going in.

Throughout the arbitration process, the three-member panel would recess in closed session to discuss in private issues that arise, and it was in one of those closed-door sessions that Mr. Vaughn made it very known that he believed the City and the Unions had clearly not exhausted negotiations and that he STRONGLY encouraged additional efforts by both sides. It would have been rather foolish of the Unions to ignore the opinion of Mr. Vaughn, not to mention a genuine disservice to our members. It would also have been unwise not to make the effort in good faith, and so it was that we reverted to continuing negotiations.

Over the course of the next several days, a great deal of time was spent in various stages of negotiations. Both the City and the Unions struggled with the issues subject to arbitration and after

several attempts and exchange of written proposals, it appeared that we were headed in the direction of possible compromise. Alas, however, a final agreement could not be made and the arbitration process resumed in the prescribed form with the Unions closing our side of the direct case on Saturday, June 30th.

In the course of the several days beginning June 27 and concluding on June 30, several other witnesses appeared on our behalf and offered testimony essential to solidifying our position. Among them were Craig Oldershaw, First Vice-President of Anne Arundel County Professional Fire Fighters Local 1563 and Amy McCarthy, the professional economist that the Locals had engaged for assistance both during negotiations and arbitration. The quality, relevance and value of Amy's work, by the way, was second only to that of our primary legal counsel, Joel A Smith, and we are grateful for her work and support.

Finally, we were also joined by Battalion Chief John I Cole over portions of two days who stood ready and willing to testify on our behalf. Chief Cole's testimony proved unnecessary but his very presence speaks volumes for his personal commitment to the Local and its members not to mention his courage in light of rather predictable consequences.

With the close of one full week of scheduled arbitration and only the Union having presented its side of the case, additional dates were scheduled for early and mid-August. Though the continued negotiations during the week had not resulted in a firm settlement agreement, the City had moved dramatically from its position going into arbitration, and we were confident that we had heeded the advice of Mr. Vaughn as best we could.

It appeared that we would indeed be resuming arbitration in early August, but with the entire month of July to go, there remained a possibility for closure and I'd already been reminded to "never say never". Even absent any settlement agreement, we were now at the SO CLOSE end of the spectrum that it would now take very little movement to have a deal.

By the middle of July, the continuing efforts of Joel Smith and multiple meetings with the negotiating committees resulted in the settlement agree-

ment recently accepted by both Locals. Though verbal agreement had been made, written confirmation of that agreement arrived via a letter dated August 7, 2007 without which there might not have been any vote at all.

The rest, as they say, is history, and we now have the task of implementing the various provisions and reducing the new M.O.U. to writing for approval by the Board of Estimates. The back-pay to July 1, 2007 and the inclusion of the various levels of ALS certification pay will be addressed as quickly as possible, but we all know that such matters are typically easier said than done. The one thing that we can guarantee is that whatever you are owed will be paid, however long it might take. If overtime payment becomes an issue, we may well have to rely on information you maintain, so please keep accurate records of overtime. By my calculation, the salary increase payable July 1, 2007 would have commenced with the pay period beginning June 27, 2007 as more than half of that pay period falls within the new salary scales.

Finally, though I have indeed learned once again to "never say never", I trust you'll understand and appreciate the position that I and the negotiation committees were placed in through our best efforts on your behalf. In brief, we were virtually compelled to make the good faith effort at negotiations during arbitration based upon the view of Mr. Vaughn and in doing so, reached an agreement SO CLOSE to what our arbitration position that it would have been irresponsible not to have our members so advised and given the opportunity to consider. There is a premise in labor law known as a "Duty of Fair Representation" and this most recent situation clearly falls within the scope of that premise.

Two follow-up comments

Believe it or not, this publication is scrutinized by those outside of the Union much the same way as our web site. Certainly everyone on Calvert Street and beyond denies that, but we know better.

First, I mentioned at the start of this column that the City had not bargained in good faith which, in effect,

forced arbitration and that statement deserves some explanation.

Among the issues that the Unions identified as non-negotiable from the very start was the work schedule. The Union position did not change through the entire process as, unlike salary and/or longevity steps, there was simply no room for compromise. The most significant issue in the City offer which virtually compelled arbitration was the insistence on imposition of an eight-number system. Going in to arbitration, the City also took a position that it was non-negotiable to the extent that they were demanding change.

In the end, however, the City moved off of the issue completely which begs the question that if there was room for movement during arbitration, why not during the initial round of negotiations? Again, the salary and longevity step issues contained enough "grey" area that compromise is not only possible but expected. The work schedule issue, however, could not have been more "black or white" and it seems that such a drastic move after the fact (negotiations) reveals a less than honest and above-board approach from the start.

Second, I suggested that among the reasons for going through a lengthy and written explanation herein was that so many other issues relating to negotiations have been "misrepresented" by our CEO. Actually, "lied about" might be more accurate, but I'm trying to be kind.

On more than one occasion, our CEO has told audiences of his adoring fans (i.e. captives in the workplace) that "the Unions" had turned down significant salary increases during negotiations. Beyond that, we had also turned down a quid-pro-quo with the Mayor of significant salary increases in exchange for political endorsement. Neither is true and the latter is actually illegal though I wouldn't expect one who publicly professed that the primary focus of his continued employment post February 9th was to "...stick around and help her (the Mayor) get re-elected..." to understand or appreciate that. As Forest Gump might say, pathetic is what pathetic does (or says).

Much more

SO much more to write, but space

is not unlimited and I've already gone on too long. I would be remiss, however, if I did not acknowledge the generous contribution to our VEBA Fund recently in honor of a former member who was a Captain at the Fire Academy when I went through in 1974.

That contribution was made by Dr. & Mrs. Max Weisfeld in honor of Captain Thomas & Mrs. Thelma Bailey on the occasion of their Wedding Anniversary.

We are truly grateful and appreciative and we wish Captain Thomas and Mrs. Thelma Bailey well and congratulations!

From the Desk of the 1st Vice President

By Michael Waldner

As a last minute addition to this article, I am happy to announce that we have reached agreement with the City on a new contract and will avoid a continuance of the Arbitration Hearings that have dragged on way too long. The details are included elsewhere in this newsletter. I do wish to thank those members who took the time to attend the explanation meetings and cast their vote. We did not get everything we wanted or promised when you voted to proceed to Arbitration. We have reached a reasonable compromise according to the vote tally. We will be returning to the Negotiation table again in January and hopefully will be dealing with different and more reasonable people on the City side of the table.

Also as per your vote, we are endorsing Kiefer Mitchell for Mayor in the upcoming election. Please follow your vote mandate by helping support his campaign both physically with your time and effort and financially with donations if you want things to change for the better.

In this ever changing Department, things always seem to be in turmoil. Last edition I stated that my transfer to the 4th Battalion, as well as transfers for 16 of the 18 permanently assigned Chiefs, was on hold for the time being. That situation has now morphed into rotating

through the Department as a floating Battalion Chief and began for me and the other 5 in the first group on July 9, 2007. I will now be seeing all of you on "C" shift in the near future (at least the next 3 months as originally proposed). Our CEO has decreed that this will make the Department safer. Who am I to disagree with the now Harvard trained, Hopkins Masters graduate. Here's hoping we will soon get a Chief to replace the CEO and go back to being a Fire Department instead of a flounagain, what would I know since I was only educated at the former St. Mary's School for Boys (Cardinal Gibbons H. S.) I must point out that this was long after Babe Ruth did his time there. I mention this for benefit of those wise guys who might want to jump on that statement to make unkind age-related remarks.

Tom Nosek and the Entertainment Committee again need to be mentioned for an outstanding Family Picnic that turned out to be the best summer event in recent years. The facility was top notch and the weather cooperated to make for a great day. The food as always was delicious. My wife and I, and I'm sure all who attended, are looking forward to next year and an even bigger crowd. Don't miss out on the best Union sponsored event of the year, and the chance to mingle with all your co-workers and their families at a great venue. This is the bargain of a lifetime. All the crap going on in the Department is put aside to enjoy our families and each other.

As stated in the last newsletter, I have been successful in restarting the Fitness Assessment Program that was conducted in 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 test and received a spiral booklet with comparison results to the general population so as to view your general conditioning. 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 revived this program through the Local at no charge

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to the membership. We have chosen to conduct this program on your time instead of involving the Department as in the past. Assessments will be by appointment on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 1200 – 1300 hours at the Fitness/Rehab Center and will include some of the same types of screening and testing. These programs (Assessments and heart/lung scans) at Union Memorial are now offered to **ALL** interested members, **active and retired of both Locals**. 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.

Many members have been through in June and July and 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 for the assessment phase. We are also making the heart/lung scans available at the same time as the assessment. **There will still be a fee of approximately \$150 for the scans.** The entire program including the heart/lung scan will take about 1 hour of your time and will be done on the same designated days (Tuesday and Thursday) assigned to us. It will be worth it just to get all the rest of our members through the heart/lung scans. 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. You are never too young or too old to monitor your health. **Again, these are open to active and retired members of both Locals.**

Please take advantage of these appointments while they last. We need to keep the schedule full until all active and retired members avail themselves of this unique opportunity. Union Memorial will only staff these programs if we use them.

Below are the directions, instructions and contact information to sched-

ule appointments for the Assessment and heart/lung scans. You will have to contact the heart/lung phone # to coordinate your appointments for the same Tuesday or Thursday that you do the assessment.

FITNESS ASSESSMENT PRETEST INSTRUCTIONS

Guidelines recommended for the most accurate test results:

- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. Sneakers preferred.
- Avoid food, tobacco, and caffeine for at least 3-4 hours before testing.
- Abstain from alcohol consumption within 48 hours of the assessment.
- Avoid moderate or vigorous physical activity within 12 hours of the assessment.
- Ingest no diuretic agents, including caffeine, prior to the assessment.
- Get an adequate amount of sleep (6 to 8 hours) the night before the test.
- Drink plenty of fluids over the 24-hour period preceding the test to ensure normal hydration prior to the testing.

Directions to Fitness Center

Park in garage A (1st garage on your left) and take elevator to main lobby. Walk across bridge to security desk. Sign-in at desk. Go to 33rd Street Building which is straight ahead down the hallway past the pharmacy and to your left. Walk down the ramp past the Conference Center. Elevators will be on your left. Take elevator to 2nd Floor and turn left and proceed down the hallway to the Fitness Center. You will receive a voucher to cover the parking fee.

For questions regarding the assessment test and scheduling, contact: Rebecca Winch at 410-554-2563. She will refer you to 1-877-744-3278 to set up the coordinated heart/lung scan.

As always, I will mention again about the Community Outreach Program (for parents/spouses/siblings etc.) conducted by Union Memorial Hospital of-

fering the heart/lung scans to the general public only on Saturdays 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 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. These are also open to the general public.**

I am recruiting for the 34th annual IAFF/MDA fall Tournament in Bowie on September 7, 8, & 9. This roster can only include members over 40 or turning 40 years old in calendar year 2007. This is a great chance to interact with Fire Fighters from all over the USA and Canada. Ask anyone who has ever participated, and they will tell you it is not to be missed under any circumstances. Contact me if you are eligible and interested in playing or just going down there with us. Our schedule begins at 1200 hours on Friday Sept. 7th against Providence, RI and if victorious we will play again at 1600 hours against Houston, TX. All 40+ games are played on field # 2. Come on down and cheer our team on and enjoy a great tournament.

Please attend the September meetings (9/5 & 9/17) as nominations will be made for Treasurer and Trustee positions for the next three year term. As always educate yourself on the candidates and **make sure you vote** for the leadership you want to manage your Local for the future.

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 captal@aol.com.

From the Desk of the 2nd Vice President

By Mike Campbell

I begin this article with some sad news to pass on to our members. Retired Captain and former Vice-President of the Fire Officers, Frank Uhlhorn is ill and is currently at St. Agnes hospital. Frank is an icon of the Union and the BCFD and has worked tirelessly for our members while on the Executive Board. I would ask all of our brothers and sisters to pray for Frank and his family during this most difficult of times.

I hope that everyone is enjoying the summer with their families and friends. Look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming fall meetings and the Crab Feasts! Look for dates later in the Newsletter. We had a rash of promotions at the end of the old Capt. and Lieut. lists, and I would like to congratulate all of our new members and our internally promoted ones as well. There was much discussion and angst about what the Fire Dept. did to keep projecting off of the old lists, but I can tell you that even though it may not have passed the smell test, it was done by the book and did not violate our MOU. I know that this will not please everyone, but those are the facts. With the current lists being investigated by the Inspector General's office, any promotions that become available will be held in abeyance until the investigation is completed and all promotions will be backdated with full pay and seniority. I am currently reading a book titled "Going Down Jericho Road" which intertwines stories of Union organizing, Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Sanitation Workers strike of 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. The Mayor at that time was Mr. Henry Loeb, who, just like our Chief of Dept. would not recognize Unions and did his best to subvert those who took the Union's position. In the end, the strikers gained what they were looking for and Union organizing did come to fruition along with better working conditions and pay. Our Chief of Dept. has shown through his divide and conquer tactics along with his constant threats and bullying that he feels just as Henry Loeb

felt back then, that Unions don't have a place in HIS Fire Department! He has declared war (his word, not mine) on our Union, but just as the sanitation workers in Memphis prevailed in 1968, so shall we! Headquarters has come up with a "switching locker" or "locker relocation program" that the Divisions are using now to punish our members. I disagree with this practice based on the fact that this is being done without prior notification of the Officer that their behavior or work ethic needs improvement. I have always felt that if I am not working to my supervisors' satisfaction, then let me know and I will correct it. This isn't the case, and I am also being told that the Captains will be held responsible for breaches of policy even if they are not at work and another person has violated this policy. This is the biggest crock of B.S. that I have heard. Our own Chief used the excuse "**I was in Israel**" and his locker didn't get relocated, but I guess that's a case of do as I say, not as I do! The Chief has also made attempts to blame the Union's because **he** has chosen to stop paying some acting out-of-title monies. The Union would never advocate taking money out of our members pocket and in fact have battled with this Admin. to get monies that were owed and have succeeded on many occasions. The Chief also has made reference to the types of vehicles that he sees on fire house parking lots with his take that we must be making too much money. I would think that he would be proud of how far the rank and file have come, but I guess we all can't have a house on the water! This job has always been about covering your fellow Brother and Sisters back. What makes a good person on the pipe on an Engine company is the knowledge that the Officer crouching behind you is with you and will not desert you. We have been deserted by this Chief, yet we choose to take the pipe in alone because as professional fire fighters that is what is expected of us!

The City has implemented a new Payroll/Human Resources system. We are now being paid on Fridays. This will not change our pay period. It will still run from Wednesday until Tuesday. We saw our first check on August 3rd. and there were some issues with Deferred

Comp. deductions not going to Citistreet along with problems if you had a mortgage through MECU. These were supposed to be seamless, but they weren't. I am currently working on this and hope to have these problems resolved by the time you receive this. Please check over your pay stub to make sure that everything is correct. Call me if you are still experiencing problems. The next meeting of the Deferred Comp. committee is scheduled for August 28, 2007. Anything of significance will be on the website. I have recently completed Critical Incident Stress Management training and want to thank all of the team members who give of themselves for accepting me on the CISM team as a peer supporter. I wholeheartedly support the concept and feel that this is a much needed function in the line of work that we have chosen. For those that think I don't know what compassion is, you are wrong. I looked it up and it is just after Compass in the dictionary. If you ever feel a need to talk, you can call me or any of the other dedicated members of the Team. These are very special people whose only concern is for our members' health and welfare! I would like to thank Morton's Steakhouse in Baltimore for their generosity in delivering steak sandwiches and subs to some of our fire houses to recognize and thank our members for their dedication.

Please continue to keep Steve Canter and his wife Jenny in your prayers. We will see you in September for the resumption of our meetings on 9/6/07. This will be on a Thursday due to the Labor Day holiday. The meeting will be held on the 2nd floor of our hall. We will still be under renovation, but should be capable of accommodating our members. This will also be the next meeting of the Board of Directors. I will be calling the Board of Directors with the time. Please keep abreast by logging on the Fire Officers website at www.iafflocal964.org.

Health Care

Open Enrollment will begin in the fall:

All active employees will be able to enroll online.

You must sign on to the employee benefits website to make changes to

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benefit plans for 2008 and to add, change or delete dependents. The website has been designed to be secure and user friendly. You may make changes on the website as often as you like during open enrollment. The site will be open 24 hours/day and 7 days/week during the open enrollment period. **Retirees will be able to enroll online or by phone.**

Open enrollment material will be mailed to your home address.

Be sure that your home address is current in order to receive the personalized enrollment material containing your website ID number and PIN number. Your material will include a personalized enrollment worksheet showing your benefit options and cost for 2008.

Log onto the open enrollment website.

Find useful information online. Link to health plans, provider directories, visit the Forms Library, and view your dependent information.

WHAT'S NOT NEW

Not changing your plan.

If you do not need to make changes to your benefits, you will retain your current plans in 2008 at the new rates. However – you must enroll for certain coverage each year. This includes: waiver credits, dependent care FSA, and certifying college students. All employees will receive a confirmation statement in early December confirming 2008 benefits, dependent information and 2008 costs.

Employee Benefits Division is there to help.

Can't find a computer? Need help logging on? Computers are always available at your local library or stop by the Employee Benefits Division located at 201 E. Baltimore Street, Suite 500. Staff of the Employee Benefits Division will be available to provide computer assistance and/or answer questions.

<https://www.baltimorecity.essbenefits.com>

Kaiser Permanente will not be a plan offering this year. The City will be notifying all members who currently have Kaiser by mail about this. There should be a new vendor in place by September. If you do not choose another provider the City will automatically place you in CareFirst PPN, due to a wider network of doctors. Prudential Life is being eliminated as well. A new vendor has not been chosen as of yet. When I get more info. I will place it on the website. The City is offering a new dental plan choice to all active employees and their eligible dependents. I have inserted a document elsewhere in the Newsletter with more info. about this option. For out-of-state members, the IAFF-FC now offers a separate dental plan. You can get more information by visiting the IAFF website, www.iaff.org and clicking on the IAFF Financial Corp. icon or by calling 1-866-423-3757. **It is extremely important that you notify the Fire Department and the Union if your address or phone number has changed. A lot of important information can be missed if those two things aren't done.**

Safety and Health

The Safety & Health meeting was held on 6/21/07. Items discussed with the Committee are the following: Brian Hesselbach E-50 is now assisting Jim Bellamy with Plymovent repairs. The FD is ordering muffler attachments for those vehicles where the Plymovent doesn't fit. When you contact Jim, please also e-mail Brian to expedite the process. The Dept. is currently looking at funding to purchase the Ward Diesel systems for all first line apparatus. The FD received two new rear mount trucks, T-1 & T-2. Four new tiller trucks should be in by September. The Fire Academy is looking at other jurisdictions to see about the physical agility testing for new recruits. We have received numerous complaints of members not wearing gloves on the fire ground or wearing the improper glove while fighting fires, (orange gloves). The orange gloves are for packing hose **only**. Quite honestly, if you are using the orange gloves for anything other than packing hose then you deserve what you get.

I have mentioned this subject numerous times in this Newsletter. Fire Supply would like you to check your ear protectors to see if they need to be replaced. Call Fire Supply if you need new protectors. We have been informed that all the fire houses will be receiving the up-to-date Fire Code books. Please make sure that the members under your care are operating in a safe manner in whatever capacity they are functioning. It is extremely important that you stop at all red lights and stop signs, especially 4 ways. Don't always think that the public will stop. It may not be the public approaching the 4 way, it may be us. The FD has shown that they will continue to hold the Company Officer accountable whether we like it or not! If you don't mind them sticking their hands in your pocket then that is your choice, albeit a bad one in my opinion! Make sure that you e-mail the Safety Office at (FDSO@baltimorecity.gov) if you have any safety-related issues along with contacting me.

President's Club

The upcoming Mayoral race is fast approaching and the Fire Officers have endorsed Keiffer Mitchell, Jr. for Mayor. We need to be involved if we are to effect the changes that I feel are needed to see the Fire Dept. become a priority in the City and we believe Keiffer is the right person for that job! There will be much grunt work needed to get Keiffer elected. Give me a call if you can help with the campaign. Now is the time for action. Don't stand on the sidelines waiting, **GET INVOLVED!** With that said, we need more members contributing to our PAC Fund. Currently we have 114 members who are contributing to our PAC Fund. Of those, we have 112 President's 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. The President's Club shirts are in and I am in the process of getting them to the President's Club members.

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

Worlds to twirl by...

When I look out my window
What do you think I see?
And when I look in my window
So many people to be,
It is strange, sure is strange
You got to pick up every stitch,
yeah
Must be the season of the witch!

--Donovan

From the Desk of the Recording Secretary

By Tom Nosek

First let me congratulate all who were promoted this summer, welcome aboard don't forget regular meetings the first and third Monday @ 7 pm from September thru June. NEXT UNION MEETING , THURSDAY 9-6-07 , SECOND FLOOR OF OUR HALL.

The summer picnic this July was the most well attended in recent years, the location of Cascade Lake in Hampstead was superb!!!! The large pavilion, pool and lake were enjoyed by all. The crowd pleaser was the waterslide, that has to be the fastest waterslide in the state!!!! It was great to see parents and grandparents with their kids and grandkids enjoying the pool, fishing , paddle boats and food. Speaking of food the chefs did a fantastic job and I would like to thank all who helped. Mike Stacharowski has finally convinced us that Cascade Lake is the place to hold a FAMILY picnic. (we should have listened Mike!!) Thanks goes to Mike and his wife Marie for all their work on the kid's games and prizes.

Second annual " night at the ballpark " on August 3 was enjoyed again by FAMILIES of our members, 54 people enjoyed a beautiful night at Ripken stadium. The hometown team, however, lost a 2-0 decision to the Vermont Lake Mon-

sters, but we all brought home plenty of bread!!!!

NEGOTIATIONS, ABRBITRATION AND SETTLEMENT

The phrase most often mentioned this summer was that negotiations "is not an event but a process" how true these words have become.

In late June the Arbitration process began with a one-week presentation; testimony, graphs and handouts were supplied to the Arbitration panel to present the UNION'S case. The City's rebuttal and attack on our profession, work schedule, overtime worked, parity clause was enough to make me angry. What was more astonishing, was all was orchestrated by a hired gun attorney and left over Citistat bean counters from the previous mayor. The current mayor offered no input and the FD was silent. The City never did present their case, and you know at this time, that there was an offer that both Locals negotiation committees' felt compelled to bring to your attention. That offer was unanimously accepted by both Locals a few days ago. I feel there are significant victories in this contract; the schedule is still intact (through 09), language for retirees health care and the parity clause were not altered and we received a JULY raise. All of the above mentioned are where the City and FD wanted changes, we prevailed!! This was my first NEGOTIATIONS, along with Steve Kowalewski and Alex Perricone, an education and experience gained. I would like to thank both committees (734 and 964), our attorney, Joel Smith, our economist Amy McCarthy, past President of Local 734 Jeff Delisle and all past negotiation teams who paved the way for the PROCESS!!!!

LOCAL 964 IS 60 YRS OLD THIS FEBRUARY 2008, ANYONE HAVING ANY OLD UNION FLYERS, PICURES OR ARTIFACTS, PLEASE CALL ME. I WILL RETURN SUCH ITEMS AFTER DUPLICATING. WATCH FOR MORE INFO. ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF GREAT LOCAL!!

In 58 days, Firefighter Allen Roberts will be deceased one year, still no official investigative report has been issued. My guess is none will, until after

the primary election of September 11. Speaking of elections, Local 964, Local 734 and the FOP have endorsed Councilman Keiffer Mitchell for Mayor, no surprise here -- Keiffer has supported our DROP legislation and the incumbent mayor was missing during our negotiations. We support who supports us. There will be a fund raiser for Keiffer on September 5 at Local 734's hall, starts @ 7 pm , your support is needed.

COMPUTERS, the last few years our members have been inundated with computer work, reports etc., it seems countless hours are being spent watching hour glasses, waiting for programs to boot up, etc. We appear to be attached to the mouse. Local 964 members have stepped up and taught themselves, shared their knowledge to the computer handicapped and basically made the software programs work, with little training!!! Hopefully our members in IT will acknowledge this effort and set up some continuing education at the FA, more than the one hour given, I would also like to thank the IT guys for their understanding that change takes some time, we will eventually get it!! Remember we are Firefighters/Officers, not data entry clerks!!!

CRAB FEASTS will be held September 18 and 19, doors open at 7 pm , cost is \$15. The location this year is O'Donnell St. and Oldham St. (United Auto Workers hall).

In closing, stay cool the summer is still upon us, work safe, remember "In UNION there is strength". Go RAVENS.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Nominations for Secretary-Treasurer and (1) Trustee will be accepted at the September meetings - both offices are for a 3-year term.

Due to Labor Day, the first meeting will be held on Thursday, September 6th.

Tired and Retired

by Bob Hatoff

As promised, I won't be writing about the Fire Dept. until all those magic wand chiefs, who ruined it, are given their walking papers. It is hard to ignore because every week there's a new scandal. It's amazing with all these unneeded and useless chiefs you can't find one who knew what was happening.

So I made up my mind I would write about sports. I got the Sunpaper and turned to the sports section, to do some research. I found 14 articles on Barry Bonds and steroids. There were also various articles on others, who are on steroids, as they break all the baseball records. In football we have a star quarterback indicted for operating an illegal dog fighting operation. I checked basketball and found a former University of Maryland player who is charged with illegally shipping rifles. Next came pro wrestling where a star on steroids killed his family and then himself. In the Tour De France bicycle race it turned out everyone of the racers came up positive for drugs. However all of the bicycles were clean.

Since I couldn't find any ball scores, only crime, I switched to the crime section. There were no ball scores there, but it wasn't as criminal as sports.

As a result all I have to write about are the news items I've heard from my fellow retiree's. Now these stories won't be as exciting as sports, but there's no criminal activity in them. I'll start off with the who remembers Hugo Warns report. Jim Almonecy called and said Hugo was his first captain. Next I had a really nice conversation with Don Webb. He and his wife (a.k.a. The Barracuda) have moved to Oakcrest and are loving it. Chic not only remembers Hugo he sees him all the time, because Hugo is at Oakcrest. He also confirmed all the ladies love Hugo. Don is now 83 and I just

can't understand how so many of my friends are getting this old and I'm still a kid. So Hugo there are now 4 people who remember you. Last, but not least, I got a call from another old friend, Rich Griffiths. In the course of our talk Rich told me he thought I was great. Of course I already knew this, but it was nice to hear he agreed with me. Humility is not one of my problems. Seriously Rich it was nice of you to say it and I do appreciate the thought.

Now to those of you who have retired to other parts of the country and can't get the local news: If you're not computer illiterate, as I am, you can pick up on what's happening by getting online with our union's forum. www.iafflocal964.org. It may make you sick to your stomach, but you can always turn it off.

Well that's it. I've done a column with little mention of the Fire Dept. I was only able to do it because of the input I got from you out there. Keep those tidbits coming in. It helps me write, but even better it's really good to hear from you. As always you can reach me at 1805 Greencastle Dr, Baltimore 21237 or 410-866-3235. Who remembers Hugo calls are always welcome.

Sick & Injured

Charlie Williams had a cancerous kidney removed in early August. **Don Taylor** has completed his chemo that was making him so sick. **Rick Detorie** is settled in okay at assisted living. **Walt Ward** has been very sick lately. **Alex Marshal** recently lost his wife and he is suffering with Parkinson's disease. **Frank Uhlhorn** is in St Agnes hospital.

CITY OFFERS NEW DENTAL PLAN OPTION

The City is offering a new dental plan choice to all active employees and their eligible dependents in addition to the current DMO dental plan, (The Dental Network). During Open Enrollment, you will have the option to remain in your current DMO dental plan at no premium cost to you or enroll in the new PPO dental plan, (CareFirst Dental). The new plan will be a "buy-up" option, which means that the City and employees will share the cost of the dental PPO premium.

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield will administer both dental plan options. Both plans cover all preventive, basic and major services. The two plans will vary in your choice of providers, your premium cost to participate and your out-of-pocket costs when you receive dental care.

The new CareFirst Dental PPO offers you more choice to use the full CareFirst dental network. If you use an in-network dentist you will receive considerable savings due to the plan's pre-negotiated fees. You may also use dentists who are not part of the CareFirst dental network and still receive a plan benefit.

Enrollment for the new plan begins soon. Look for announcements online and meeting notices as well as brochures and materials at your home address. Coverage under the new plan becomes effective January 1, 2008. Employees must access the City's benefits enrollment website to enroll.

<https://www.baltimorecity.essbenefits.com>

Cost to you:

Employee Only -	\$ 8.06
Employee & Spouse/ Domestic Partner -	\$16.11
Employee & Child -	\$13.69
Employee & Family -	\$22.56

THE BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICERS

Local No. 964

Meetings -- 1st & 3rd Monday

1030 S. Linwood Avenue

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