

# 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

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## From the Desk of the President

*By Stephan G. Fugate*

### Chief Goodwin's Departure

It was my intent not to address this issue at all in what amounts to the "Christmas edition" of our newsletter as I would prefer to keep things positive at least once a year. With a more compelling event to be addressed below now making that impossible, however, I may as well not ignore the proverbial "800 pound gorilla" in the room.

I think that Chief Goodwin himself would admit that he made it well beyond the tenure of a typical big-City Fire Chief and the fact that he did that through some hugely troubling times cannot be denied. Now, whether all of that was the result of his own ability or the result of political motivation beyond his control is a matter of opinion and I suppose mine is really not important at this point. The fact is that he will be less than two months shy of six years as Chief on December 31, 2007 and it is what it is.

It will not surprise anyone to know that I was caught by complete surprise upon receiving the first of MANY calls for comment by the local media. Suffice it to say that I am not on the Chief's list of people to contact in such matters and though it would have been nice to have some notice beforehand, my initial reaction was based wholly on surprise. That's not to say that my knee-jerk reaction wasn't an expression of my true feeling, just that I would have preferred to offer a more thoughtful response.

Given that the announcement came as such a surprise, there emerged early specu-

lation that perhaps it had something to do with some medical issues in the Chief's immediate family and though that concern has since been dispelled, I do sincerely hope that health concerns of ANYONE had nothing to do with his decision. I actually made that very clear in every contact with the media that followed, but that concern never made "news" and though I fully understand that, I do not want anyone to think I was being indifferent to that possibility.

We are still, as I write, more than a month away from December 31<sup>st</sup>, and we have MANY issues outstanding that NEED to be addressed before then, so I'll reserve any further comment at this point. You can believe that I do have MUCH more to say, but I would not want my views and opinions to have a negative impact on anyone else at this point so that can wait.

As to whoever will be selected to follow Chief Goodwin, that is a matter that we (the Local) have absolutely no intention of engaging in or commenting on. I know there are two schools of thought with one being that we HAVE to be involved, and I must admit that we've certainly done that before. In hindsight, we also paid a very heavy price for our involvement and believe it in our members' best interests NOT to do that again.

### FY'08 MOU

By now, our active members will have received the first pay check that includes the negotiated salary increase as part of the FY'08 Memorandum of Understanding, and we trust will receive the back-pay due by the first pay in December. As always, there are a handful of members who did not receive the increase due and there will likely be a similar or greater number who will not receive appropriate back-pay. We do not

discount that and we know that even if all but one of our members is paid correctly, the impact for that one member who was not is one-hundred percent.

Rest assured that we will not relent until everyone has received everything that they are due. To that end, however, we must rely on each member having some knowledge of what it is they are owed. It is impossible for the Local to have kept track of overtime worked since June 27<sup>th</sup>, and we have said many, many times that it is incumbent upon each member to do that for themselves. We will assume the responsibility to compute the dollar amounts in question, but we cannot do that without accurate information regarding time worked.

There is also a matter of back-payment of the ALS Stipend for those members so certified and, once again, we must rely on information provided by those individuals. We know that no one has received the stipend since promotion to Local 964, but we do not know if any such member did receive the stipend from July 1, 2003 to the point of their promotion to Lieutenant. All of that is information necessary to calculate what is due, and we will work with every member affected until it is "right".

Inasmuch as we will be headed right back to the bargaining table in January to work toward an agreement for FY'09, we do NOT plan to have the written agreement for FY'08 printed and distributed as it will likely have been changed to some extent before that could be done. We will make an electronic version of the MOU for FY'08 available to anyone upon request either in the form of a CD or via email. Please just contact anyone on the Negotiations Committee and make the request, but I would suggest that the request be made via email

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## From the President's Desk....

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so that it can be tracked and less likely to go unfilled.

Finally, though it may appear to someone outside of the process that it took WAY too long to affect the salary increases and formalization of the MOU, it would surely have taken MUCH longer without the hard work and persistence of the Labor Commissioner, Mrs. Deborah Moore-Carter. She had the unenviable task of actually reducing to writing what had been verbally agreed to through the negotiations process and, as one also involved in that arduous task, I can assure you it would not have come to pass without her relentless efforts.

Having been through the negotiations process several times with the "hired-gun" from Washington, I think it would serve everyone's best interests (not the least of which would be the City itself) to simply allow the Labor Commissioner to do her job in negotiating with the Union Locals. Clearly, my opinion would not be sought in making such decisions, but I suspect those members from the City on the City's side of the table would agree that things could and would be handled with much less difficulty without outside interference. But then, perhaps my view that positive labor relations are mutually beneficial is passé.

### 25<sup>th</sup> Street Station. Again.

You will recall that back in May of this year, someone wandered into the lounge area of the 25<sup>th</sup>. Street Station and took note of a deer head hanging on the wall. Though I never saw it myself, I am told that this particular deer head had been adorned with a straight-haired wig, Mardi Gras beads, and was sporting a gold tooth among other things, and the member who came upon it took offense. It seems that he believed that the added accessories were somehow racially motivated and that (I can only assume) whoever was responsible for it should be held accountable.

And thus began one of the saddest episodes in my thirty-three year career with OUR Department that has yet to be resolved to the satisfaction of the members of that station who were so wrongly accused in such a hateful manner. Among the first to weigh-in with vitriol before the facts were

known were the presidents of both the Local Chapter of the NAACP and the Vulcan Blazers. Without so much as the start of an investigation, both of these purveyors of racial animosity charged that the station was a haven of racism and was merely a microcosm of a racist Department in general.

Though the headline-grabbing accusations that accompanied the matter in the beginning were never matched with a more restrained reporting of THE FACTS in the end, it is quite clear that the leaders of both the NAACP and VBI were incredibly irresponsible and, to date, unaccountable for their leap to conclusions that proved inaccurate at best. Unfortunately, in hindsight, it was determined that it was in the best interests of all, particularly the members involved, that the best thing to do was to let the issue die of its own weight and not seek public apologies or retractions. "Let it go" was the course best taken at the time with the hope that lessons had been learned by the REAL scoundrels of the day. How foolish we were.

Fast-forward to the early morning of November 21, 2007 when a member detailed to Medic 16 returns to station and "discovers" a note making rather pointed threats apparently toward him and what is described as a "noose", the universal symbol of racial intolerance in America. What ensues is, as Yogi Berra might have observed, déjà vu all over again. Before an investigation is even out of the blocks, the race hustlers are at it once again labeling everyone within the four walls of the station a racist and somehow indicative of the "culture of racism" plaguing the Department.

Perhaps more troubling than what's only to be expected from such dubious sources was the reaction of our own Mayor in stating that she was "outraged by this deplorable act of hatred and intimidation. ... Threats and racial attacks are unacceptable anywhere — especially in a firehouse." To be fair, I would agree and would be just as strident IF I knew for a fact that the note and "noose" had indeed been placed by someone with malice and intent. The point being that there was and remains NO credible evidence that the offensive materials were placed by ANY member of that station and the very real possibility that there is MUCH more to the facts than would meet the eye simply BEGGED for a full and thorough investigation BEFORE conclusions were drawn.

Instead, what we have is a very serious situation wherein three of the most "credible" sources that would be viewed as having accurate information announcing to all that the "racist" atmosphere of that particular station is such that it's not only did "they" (and we ALL know who "they" are) target an African-American member of the Department, but it was merely more of the same in a Department somehow steeped in such racially motivated attacks. That's B.S.. and I defy anyone to prove otherwise.

The FACT of the matter is that we have the most mutually tolerant Department in the City, not because we're so different from our counterparts in other agencies, but because we HAVE TO BE. We virtually LIVE with each other, and while there certainly are issues that might be better addressed and better handled, we cohabitate and coexist very, very well. Indeed, I would suggest that our "atmosphere" is similar to that of our armed forces and might well be among two or three places in American life where such cultural divide is not at all so divisive.

With all of that said, I am to understand that there are those who somehow believe that I do not view this "noose" incident as serious an incident as I should and to that, I simply say "quite the contrary". I do sincerely believe that whoever is responsible for this latest incident at the 25<sup>th</sup>. Street Station should not only be FIRED on the spot, but prosecuted at the Federal level and if found guilty should serve time if that is a remedy under the law. I would hasten to add, however, that it should not matter WHO that individual is as the damage done is the same and the truly innocent majority will have suffered nonetheless.

My primary concern is that the culprit be identified and dealt with swiftly and surely. Second only to that is that the INNOCENT members of the 25<sup>th</sup>. Street Station NOT be subject to the type of hatred, ridicule, and actual threats they have received PRIMARILY because of the incredibly irresponsible statements from our Mayor, Henry Burris of the VBI and Doc Cheatham of the NAACP. THEY have placed OUR members in harm's way in such a reckless manner that even an apology could not undue. THEIR careless statements beg the question; what is more likely in the City of Baltimore in 2007? Is it that a

member of the Department would be *lynched* for his failure to obtain minimal training standards or that some knucklehead with a gun would seek retribution against the “racist” (because the Mayor, Henry and Doc said they were) members of a public agency sworn to serve and protect?

### And MERRY CHRISTMAS to ALL

Okay. Perhaps note the best lead-in I've ever written to the most important message of all, but as I will not ignore the “bad” regardless of how or when it comes, I'll not overlook the “good” either. Longtime readers of this publication will know (and likely tire of hearing) that this is my FAVORITE time of the year and Christmas is certainly my FAVORITE holiday though things will be a little different this year. Our youngest daughter, Erin, was married in October and for the first time in twenty-eight years, there won't be any children (they're always your “children” no matter how old they get) around the Christmas tree. We also celebrated the arrival of our first grandchild, Ashlyn, in August of this year so now we can start the spoiling process ALL OVER AGAIN!

I know that not everyone celebrates Christmas as we do, and it will not be as joyful an occasion for many of our friends who have lost loved ones this year now passing. Indeed, this time of year ALWAYS causes me to think of family and friends no longer with us on earth, and I find myself longing to see them once again. Please do yourself a favor and make that extra effort, take that long drive, or MAKE the time to visit even if you don't have the time. You won't regret doing that, but you might well someday regret NOT.



--Steve

### From the Desk of the 1st Vice President

By Michael Waldner

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year or just plain Happy Holidays! That should cover all the possibilities for extending Seasons Greetings to all. By the time this issue is published and arrives in your homes, the Holiday Season should be in full swing, so here's hoping you all are enjoying it to the maximum.

The votes have been tabulated and the election results are complete! Congratulations to new Treasurer Anita Hatoff, new Trustees Kevin Rock and Harvey Webster, and returning Sergeant at Arms Art Turner. Welcome to our Eboard family. Thanks to outgoing/retiring members Bob Jordan and Bill Kern for their long and commendable service. Equal thanks go to all who ran for these offices and all who voted in this election process for taking the time to make your voice heard. Thanks also to Election Chairman George Jones for a job well done.

The end of the year approaches and the tumultuous disasters, scandals and a too long list of investigations and incidents look to spill over into 2008. Final and truthful results seem to elude us on too many fronts and new embarrassments seem to crop up on a weekly basis before old problems can be put to rest. Will we ever get back to normal operations and out of the headlines? I prefer not to comment on the ongoing investigations, but these cases need a swift and thorough resolve. I personally do not see racial problems entwined in all of our problems. If someone does something wrong and the investigation confirms it, the race of the guilty party does not matter. It should be handled and preventative measures should be put in place to see that it never happens again, period.

Many of our Department's problems stem from not resolving issues and letting them fester and grow into larger problems (see FPA program failures, etc.). If they were addressed immediately and decisively on their own merits, they would not escalate and pick up other unrelated outcroppings and spiral out of control like a snow ball rolling down a hillside. To paraphrase a TV car commercial line “This ain't your father's (Oldsmobile/Buick) Fire De-

partment” would be appropriate for those of us in multigenerational Fire Department families. I don't think I could have begun to explain some of the crap going on to my Dad, and expect him to comprehend it. Hell, I can't hardly make sense of much of what goes on these days myself. I'm not too sure it's even *my* Fire Department anymore.

I know I am repeating myself every article, but at the risk of being boring, I feel I need to reiterate the Union Memorial Program. The past two months we have done a good job of filling the Tuesday/Thursday schedule. I worry that the appointments will be ignored or neglected due to the hectic shopping/party season ahead. Please heed the advice of program participant/retiree Joe MacKenzie (as reported on the website) to get it for your family's sake as well as your own. Joe is recovering from bypass surgery prompted by results disclosed by his heart scan. He will now have much more time to enjoy his loved ones since his operation is sure to have extended his time with his family. Best wishes for a full recovery and a long retirement Joe!

**Please read this next section and take immediate action! During the upcoming Holiday months, we need to keep using the Heart/Lung Scan and Assessment Program in order to avoid the danger of losing this vital benefit!**

As stated in past newsletters, Union Memorial has resumed the Heart and Lung scans in conjunction with what has evolved into a Physical Wellness check up. This program will be by appointment on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 1200 – 1300 hours at the Fitness/Rehab Center and will include a wellness background questionnaire screening and blood test panel. There is also a cardio evaluation performed on a stationary bike. 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. **There will still be a fee of approximately \$150 for the scans but the assessment is free.** The entire program including the heart/lung scan will take less than 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 active and retired members through the heart/lung scans. We have had much success and participation due to the confiden-

tiality 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. The Holidays are upon us and we need to keep all the appointments filled until after the New Year and hectic schedules read-just to normal routines.

Anyone who has participated and received his or her report is encouraged to email or call me ([captal@aol.com](mailto:captal@aol.com) or 410-879-4545) with any feed back. Please let me know good or bad features so we can adapt and improve this program.

Below are the directions, instructions and contact information to schedule 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 (1<sup>st</sup> garage on your left) and take elevator to main lobby. Walk across bridge to security desk. Sign-in at desk. Go to 33<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. Let them know you are a Firefighter and need a Tuesday/Thursday appointment to coincide with your assessment.**

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

Please try to attend our monthly meetings (December 3<sup>rd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> and January 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>). We will also be having Installation of the new Officers on the Board on January 21<sup>st</sup>, so make plans to join in the celebration. Food and beverages will be provided for your enjoyment.

***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](mailto:captal@aol.com).***

#### **From the Desk of the 2nd Vice President**

*By Mike Campbell*

After writing my October/November Newsletter article, Brother Frank Uhlhorn who was battling a severe illness, passed away. I would ask our members to please keep Tim, Christine and the Uhlhorn family in your prayers during this holiday season. I know that it will be a rather somber time of year for them and I want them to know that their Fire Department family will be there in spirit, and we all should give our loved ones a little tighter and a little longer hug on Christmas Day! Frank was a very spirited Union official who fought for many of the benefits that we currently enjoy and for that I would like to dedicate this Newsletter article to his larger than life legacy!

I would like to begin this article giving homage to another larger than life Union official, my friend and our Secretary Treasurer Bob Jordan. I have had the extreme pleasure to have worked alongside Bob during my time as a Trustee, Recording Secretary and now 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President. Bob has helped me at all times and in many fashions so I could better serve our members. Bob is solely responsible for moving the Fire Officers Local into the 21<sup>st</sup> century financially and has put us on sound footing for many years to come. I want to wish Bob and his lovely wife Char many happy years together down the beach. Bob, thank you for your friendship and your devotion to our members. I know I'll see you somewhere down the road! A perfect segue way into my next topic. We held elections this fall and you voted to elect members into 4 positions. Congratulations to Secretary Treasurer Anita Hatoff, Trustee Kevin Rock, Trustee Harvey Webster and Sergeant at Arms Artie Turner. Anita, Kevin and Harvey are serving in new positions and I look forward to working with each of them and if I can be of any assistance you know where to find me.

Chief Goodwin offered his resignation to the Mayor and she accepted. That is the story line that has been played. You can come to your own conclusions. The Chief and I rarely saw eye to eye on most issues and actually were at opposite ends of the spectrum when it came to supporting the men and women of our Department. As a

leader, I held no respect for the Chief because of his lack of support and his disdain for our Union, but I harbor no ill will towards him and truly hope that he and his wife enjoy a happy and healthy life together. My only wish was that he could've seen the impact his actions were having on the very people who were and are thirsting for true leadership and not listening to his close advisors who either are clueless or who don't give a damn about what the inside of the palace looks like only that they keep polishing the outside so it looks so shiny and perfect to the outside world! Somewhere along the way, the Chief started to **BELIEVE** those around him who would stroke his ego and keep telling him that he was "The CEO" and he lost sight and eventually stopped altogether remembering what it is and what it means to be a Baltimore City Fire Fighter. There were clues along the way, such as the Water Taxi accident that made national headlines and thrust Chief Goodwin into the spotlight and stardom, but almost took the life of Fire Fighter Bernie Muller. We sent live divers into a murky harbor to retrieve lifeless bodies and yet the mantra I heard over the Oldtown speakers last week from our Safety Office was "Risk Nothing, To Save Nothing"! The next clue in my opinion was the end result of the Class 13 issue or as it was dubbed by this town's vulture media and various organizations with their own agendas, "The All White Class"! The Chief was taken to task on this and was brow beat by politicians from across the state to diversify the Department by any means necessary and we all were made to feel as though we were racists and that we went back 50 years in time. The Chief acquiesced without giving the proper explanation of the facts and for the following 6 recruit classes the City and the Fire Dept. were more interested with quantity over quality. Which brings us to today and the fact that Chief Goodwin's ultimate legacy will be that a recruit died in a training incident under his watch and that cannot be glossed over or polished to make shiny for the outside world to see! My last clue and final straw was the Cecil Avenue fire where our members endured some of the most horrific sights that you could imagine with multiple deaths and made dramatic rescues along the way only to be snubbed by their Leader who was on the scene. He didn't have the decency to address his troops on that God awful day, but had the

audacity to dress them down a few days later because of a deer head and a t-shirt!

This Department is in need of some true leadership and someone who is willing to hear the word "**NO**" and not take offense to it and maybe just maybe listen to that idea or suggestion rather than to lead by intimidation and fear! Here's hoping that Mayor Dixon can find that person and that he or she understands that it is more beneficial for Labor and Management to work hand in hand than against each other!

The members of E33/T5 are currently going through an extremely traumatic experience right now, and I am hopeful that the person or persons responsible for this despicable act are brought to justice and given the severest of penalties. I firmly believe that Marvin Cheatham and Henry Burris have inflamed this situation where it is now unsafe to be a Baltimore City Fire Fighter working in that house with their rush to judgment and their vitriol that they spew at the drop of a hat without all the facts and without regard of what their actions may cause. This type of race hustling is what divides us and does nothing for the men and women of the BCFD who serve the Baltimore community with dignity and professionalism. They both attempted this with the deer head incident and were found to be wrong, but didn't have the guts to apologize to those members or to the Fire Department. They just continually paint the entire department as being racist and that is not only irresponsible, but dangerous as well!

The Lieut. and Capt's promotional exam report by the Inspector General's office is complete with the I.G. finding that the test was compromised from Human Resources down to our own members. The Mayor has requested a re-test and has asked for strong action from the Fire Dept. with regards to discipline. With that said, all promotions will be backdated with full pay and seniority. By the time you read this the Local will be owed (1) Captain and (2) Lieutenant promotions. The reason for the change from (3) Lieut's owed to (2) is that Lt. Norman Hall has been reinstated and will occupy one of those positions. By this time you should've received your contractual raise and back pay. We are currently working on the ALS, EMT-I and EMT-P stipends along with the various pay issues that pop up. If you have an issue please let me know and also e-mail the Dept. at BCFD.Etime.

I attended the Deferred Comp. meeting on 11/20/07. The Committee recommended that our consultants Segal Advisor begin a search to replace the Legg Mason Value Trust and the Mainstay Small Cap Opportunity funds. The Committee also voted to place the Brown Capital International fund on the "Watch list". Citistreet's Advice Service, which assists members with investment information is at a 10.4% usage among all participants. Industry wide this is about average. You can contact Citistreet at 410-332-0809 or 1-800-905-1833 also on the web at <http://myplan.csplans.com>. 2007, by all standards was an extremely bitter and depressing year for the BCFD! It is my hope that by working together instead of apart we can bring the lost dignity of our great Department back and begin to heal the wounds that are still festering today. Time will only tell!

I would like to wish all of our members a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Please keep abreast by logging on the Fire Officers website at [www.iafflocal964.org](http://www.iafflocal964.org).

**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.**

### MERRY CHRISTMAS!

If PHASE 1 of the snow emergency is in effect by noon on the day of a Union meeting, then that evening's meeting is cancelled!

### Health Care

Open Enrollment is over and quite honestly I found it very easy to make changes this time around. We did have some issues that were corrected and that I brought to the City's attention. I am hopeful that each year it should get simpler. You can access Employee Benefits online at <https://www.baltimorecity.essbenefits.com>

### Safety and Health

The Safety & Health meeting was held on 11/15/07. Items discussed with the Committee are the following: The Safety Office is still looking to replace the 2<sup>nd</sup> line turnout gear that is out of NFPA compliance. An outside vendor has been repairing turnout gear and if it is condemned then Fire Sup-

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ply has been disposing them. All Plymovent repairs have been halted due to the hazardous materials that have accumulated in the permanent duct work along the ceilings. Both Unions are on top of this and working with the Fire Dept. to get the funding to acquire the Ward Diesel system for all of our stations. The City's Health and Safety dept. has been notified of this issue. The Fire Dept. is looking at doing non-punitive accident and injury counseling with members at the fire house after an incident. The FD's supply budget is depleted. The FD is looking for a supplemental budget to fill our needs. Officers are asked to only order what is necessary at this time. If you feel you have a water issue in the fire house and want it tested, contact the Safety Office and myself. The FD is currently evaluating different SCBA systems along with input from the Safety and Health Committee. Make sure that you e-mail the Safety Office at ([FDSO@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:FDSO@baltimorecity.gov)) if you have any safety related issues along with contacting me. The Safety and Health meetings are now monthly. The next meeting is scheduled for 12/20/07. Contact me with any issues.

### President's Club

Currently we have 123 members who are contributing to our PAC Fund. Of those, we have 121 President Club members. The PAC Fund is our most important tool to have the **local** politicians listen to our concerns. If you contribute \$4.00 or more a pay you are automatically included in the Presidents 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: [captain16@hotmail.com](mailto:captain16@hotmail.com)

### Worlds to twirl by...

Like a steam locomotive  
Rolling down the track  
He's gone  
He's gone  
And nothing's gonna bring him back  
He's gone!

--Grateful Dead

## From the Desk of the Secretary-Treasurer

*By Bob Jordan*

I want to congratulate the members who were victorious in the recent Local 964 elections.'

Anita Hatoff to position of Secretary-Treasurer, Art Turner being re-elected as Sgt. of Arms, Kevin Rock and Harvey Webster to position of Trustee. Congratulations to all of you!

I will be working with Anita to take over as your Secretary-treasurer in the month to come and into the New Year, as she needs me. I will give her all the support and help that she needs during that time. I think Anita will be a great Secretary-Treasurer for the Local, and will do a great job. This is also a first for our Local Union, which will be 60 years old next year, that we have a Sister of our Local on the Executive Board.

This will be my last newsletter for the Local. As most of you know I usually only did a news article when there was information dealing with the finances of the Union that had to relayed.

### Retirees Dues Increase

We will have the vote on the proposed motion to increase the retiree's dues at the two meetings in December. So by the time you receive this newsletter the vote may already be over with.

The Trustees submitted a proposal to increase the retiree's dues by \$2, from \$3 a pay to \$ 5 per pay, starting with the first pay in February 2008. I attended the retirees meeting in November and it seems that everyone understood why we were requesting the increase, as I state in the last news letter and at the meeting, so I will not repeat that now in this newsletter. If you need to hear the reason, you may call me at 410-908-2434 and I will explain it to you.

As stated above, this increase, if approved, will take effect with the first retiree pay in February if we have no problems with the new payroll system. This way retirees will see the entire amount of their pay raises (5.34%) in their January checks, before the increase of \$2 deduction for retiree dues. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in this manner.

### Building Update

The Daily Grind is up and running on the first floor and it appears there is a tenant for the other side. As for our second floor, the painters are compelling all the painting of the second floor. The ceiling is done, as for some of the walls in the main hall and the new Presidents office and lounge area. The new floor is down in the main hall and all the bathrooms and new closets. Once the painting is done, the carpet will be put down. The bar is under construction, with the top and the cabinets at the manufacture being made and should be in within by December 10. The electrician is finishing the stairwell lights, and lights in the lounge area. We will keep you up to date as to when we will have our first meeting in the hall.

In closing my last newsletter, I want to again thank all the members and the retirees that had the faith in me to do this job for you all these years. Thanks for allowing me to serve you and the Local all of these years. Take care and be safe.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND  
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

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## From the Desk of the Recording Secretary

By Tom Nosek

I would like to wish each active and retired member, all 740 plus a Merry Christmas and healthy New Year. This is the time of year to reflect back on the past year and take time to spend with your loved ones. This past year was one I would have never envisioned. This year began with the tragic death of Fire Recruit Rachel Wilson, (just months after burying FF Allen Roberts our first LODD in 13 years) followed by investigations that took an eternity to be completed and made public, only to have such pointing fingers at seasoned veterans of the BCFD. The report was embellished with innuendo's and lies. I only say that because I sat as a Local 964 representative on the investigation of our members and visited the sight of the tragedy twice. We later had the President of the Vulcan Blazers and NAACP accuse members of the Department with racial intolerance, only later to find the accusations were unfounded and no apology was given to the members accused. The Baltimore City Fire Department and the Mayor are currently investigating a possibility of cheating on promotional tests, this investigation has been ongoing for almost six months, can we conclude and issue the results, please. Just last week, there again was act of racial intolerance in our Department and the Baltimore Police Department is currently investigating. What concerns me is the accusations from the Vulcan Blazers and NAACP without the results of an investigation to the facts and their comments putting our members in harms way. So my wish this New Year is for ALL members, outside groups, and the Mayor to try to work together for the common good of the BCFD and the citizens of Baltimore.

The GOOD things this past year has provided us a contract with a raise and ALS money for our EMS members, at least a step in the door for these hard working members. The Daily Grind opened last month on the bottom floor of our hall. The second floor is moving along with a new floor, new roof, electric, heat/A/C, plumbing, a fresh paint job and in the near future a bar/lounge for the membership. This past Spring we had our 4<sup>th</sup> annual retirees dinner/dance

along with our raffle that raised funds for our VEBA Fund. Also this Spring we had the annual John Seiss Memorial golf tournament, Bob Jordan again did another fantastic job and we raised more funds for the VEBA fund. The summer picnic was held at Lake Cascade and we had the largest crowd in years and everyone was pleased with the amenities, see you there next summer. In the fall we had our two annual crab feasts, the crabs were fat and big.

Just last month interim Mayor Sheila Dixon was elected Baltimore's 48th Mayor and the first woman to hold that post. congratulations Madam Mayor.

Chief William J. Goodwin, Jr. just last week announced he will retire effective December 31, 2007. I know too many there is a sigh of relief and desire to move forward. I personally want to wish the Chief the best of health and good luck. I would be remiss to say that his tenure was very disappointing!! Both Locals gave him their support when he was interviewing some 5 plus years ago. When appointed, our Union hall was packed to a standing ovation for the Chief who had come up through the ranks. The working relationship and optimistic future came to a grinding halt some 6 months later when overtime was halted for Fire Officers, PO's and EVD's. The same night of his standing ovation he proclaimed that he would promote from the top of the list and there would be no more "knighted" positions in the BCFD. Since that night there have been over 30 "magic wand" members. Prior to the COFD's tenure Local 964 had on average 4 grievances a year, to date we have 50 grievances, most still pending. The most disappointing act was his mention of the Locals turning down a 13% raise in last years negotiations, NEVER HAPPEN!!!! Only once do I recall Chief Goodwin speaking of our members pay, that was during the Water Taxi recovery operation, when interviewed he stated "these men deserve more money and we don't pay them enough", he never let City Hall know.

Whoever the next COFD is please take the following suggestions, NO magic wand promotions, it ruins morale. Make a concise effort to settle all outstanding grievances ASAP, so we can begin to move the BCFD forward. The title is FIREFIGHTER/FIRE OFFICER we put fires out, rescue people and provide EMS care to the citizens of Baltimore, we are not computer / data entry clerks, try to alleviate the redun-

dant data entry tasks and get back to having a well trained suppression force!! There is a State wide shortage of trained ALS providers, we are in need of quality ALS providers please consider addressing this need, you may have to pay higher wages. Speaking of wages, the BCFD needs to be caught up to the surrounding counties in pay, please make the effort to realize you have great people working in this department, make an effort to get them compensated for their efforts. Finally realize that the members are IAFF Union members who have fantastic ideas and quality work effort, tap the resource. We the Unions in recent years have worked under Mayors Schaefer, Burns, Schmoke, O'Malley and now Dixon, under Chief's Burke, O'Connor, acting McDonald, Williams and Goodwin, we Local 964 will be sixty years old in February, WE AIN'T GONE AWAY, IN UNION THERE IS STRENGTH!!!

I would like to welcome the newest member of the Executive Board, Anita Hatoff who was elected our new Treasurer last month. Anita, long with new Trustee's Kevin Rock and Harvey Webster will begin their terms in January. Art Turner was re-elected as Sgt. at Arms. I would like to thank Trustee George Jones for a job well done in coordinating the election process, great job George!!!!

I personally would like to thank and bring to the memberships attention of the hard work of outgoing Treasurer Bob Jordan and Trustee Bill Kern for their years of service to Local 964, THANK YOU BOTH, JOB WELL DONE!!

In closing, be thankful for what you have this Christmas, for me I am thankful for a great and loving wife, three healthy daughters and the GREATEST JOB IN THE WORLD, a member of Baltimore City Fire Department.

### REMINDERS:

Installation of Officers will be January 21, 2008, food will be served.

You will be receiving two \$5 raffle chances in mid-January to benefit the VEBA fund. This is the only time the Local ask your assistance in raising funds. The prize this year is a 4-night stay in Ocean City Md., at the plush Hilton hotel beach front at 32nd street.

# Tired and Retired

By Bob Hatoff

I'm opening this column with a real news scoop. On 10-14 I attended a surprise 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party for Will Snyder. He was truly surprised and a good time was had by all. Now Will put all his time in at Engine 33, so of course he remembers Hugo Warns. All the retirees there, and there were many of them, also remembered Hugo. Now here's the big scoop, Hugo was there in person! Imagine how I was in my glory with all those retirees and Hugo was the icing on the cake. I had Anita ask Hugo how old he was and she almost fainted when he said 95. Of course the fact he is in better shape than me could have been a factor. In thinking back I realized I've known Will for almost 60 years. Can I possibly be getting that old?

Next I got a call from Bob Harris, who is now 81. He remembers Hugo from the 40's. He was working as a soda jerk in the drug-store across from Engine 12. Hugo was the assistant engineman there and he used to make snow balls for him. I've lost count of how many of you remember Hugo, but it's really great to hear from you. Keep those calls coming!

Walt Ward is now 84, but I forgot to ask him if he remembered Hugo. See even kids like me can get senile.

Bob Kaufman called me from Florida. He is now 74 and he remembers Hugo.

Now I got a nice letter from Hugo saying how much he enjoyed the party. By the way his hand writing is better than mine. Here's his latest question. He was a firefighter at Engine 33. He was promoted to asst. engineman, engineman, lieutenant and captain. After each promotion he transferred back to E-33. He wants to know if any of you out there, has ever done this. If so let me know. My column has become so easy to write because of Hugo, I'm tempted to give back the \$500.00 a week Steve pays me to write it!

I imagine most of you have heard that Chief Goodwin is retiring at the end of the year. I've made no bones about the way I felt the Fire Department has gone under his leadership. However I feel no joy at his departure, only sadness and disappointment. I guess my expectations for the department when he was named chief were too much too hope for. Good luck Bill I just wish things had turned out better!

In closing I hope you all will have a happy and joyous Christmas with your families. Keep Christ in your Christmas.

### He's the reason for the season!

You can always reach me at 1805 Greencastle Dr, Balto., MD. 21237 or 410-866-3235.

### **Sick and Injured**

Joe Andresini fell out of his wheelchair. He spent a month in the hospital and rehab. He is back home now.

Bud Cornell was in the hospital for 4 days with a urinary infection.

Bob Hatoff had a ruptured tendon in his right ankle. He's back to tap dancing with the help of a brace.

Don Taylor is going through blood tests to monitor his condition.

Francis Butz is recuperating after a stroke.

Sonny Gentile is doing good after a hip replacement.

Ed Turner had a ruptured varicose vein in his leg. He was treated and released from the hospital.

Roger Melchior did a couple of days in the hospital with cellulitis of his legs.

Bob Jordan fell and broke his ankle. He got it pinned back together and is on the loose again.

Fred Baber is in St Josephs Hospital. They're running tests on him.

Bill Baum is being treated for prostate cancer.

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## THE BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICERS

Local No. 964

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