

BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICER

LOCAL 964

--STAFF--

STEPHAN G. FUGATE -- MICHAEL B. CAMPBELL

By and For the Professional Fire Officer

June/July 2004

From the Desk of the President

By Stephan G. Fugate

Negotiations

I would have expected to use this space, at this point in the process, to lay out the terms of a newly agreed to or arbitrated M.O.U. for FY'05, but we have yet to reach a resolve and are poised to resume arbitration June 18th, nearly three weeks for now. Indeed, it might have been a much shorter article with wages and salaries as the only negotiable item for the coming fiscal year, but such things are never as simple as they might appear.

To recap, the Locals agreed to a M.O.U. for fiscal years 2004 and 2005 early last year, and the terms subsequently ratified by the memberships called for no salary increase in '04 and concessions in cost-sharing for health-care coverage. The second fiscal year of that two year agreement (beginning July 1, 2004) called for a wage-only reopened, negotiations of which began in early January and ended in impasse on the last day of February. Difficult as it was to propose and endorse for ratification a fiscally-negative agreement, we believed that the "pain" would be short-lived and that commitments implicit during initial negotiations would be honored. "Honor", however, is a virtue seemingly foreign to both the City and Department administrations and we will now simply have to fight on every front as the will to work together is simply not there.

At the close of negotiations on February 29th of this year, the Union wage demand for FY'05 was a two-tiered salary increase of 2.0% payable on July 1,

2004 and 2.0% payable on January 1, 2005. Obviously two plus two adds up to four percent, but by delaying the second two percent for half of the fiscal year, the real cost for FY'05 would be three percent, with a miniscule compounding effect. The City's wage "offer" on February 29th was (and remains) zero. As a side-note, negotiations ended at approximately 1500 hours on February 29th with seven hours left "on the clock" and the City would have you believe that the Unions "cut-off" negotiations. We were in 734's Union Hall, where we watched as the City's team packed their bags and walked out; we remained there well into the evening and available throughout, well beyond midnight.

The City's side seems to have a difficult time grasping the "end-game" of our historic negotiations process, however, and the overtures for continued dialogue soon began. As I have said and written many times, it is a genuine pain in the butt to continue what are more often than not wasteful and unproductive discussions, but I believe we have an obligation to do just that. However remote the possibility of settlement might be, it is in the interests of our members to keep the door open up to the moment the arbitrator renders a decision. We have settled "on the Court House steps" before, and we cannot ignore any such possibility, again, however remote.

Once again, other issues (Legislative Session, School System, etc.) pushed our Department's issues to the side and very little communication took

place other than that necessary to initiate arbitration. The formal arbitration began on the morning of May 4, 2004 and it took less than an hour for the City to object to our method of presentation causing a recess in proceedings. During the lull, the Unions asked to speak with two members of the City's team and what ensued for the remainder of the day could best be described as open and honest discussions with no holds barred. The City, it seemed, wanted a multi-year (three years) agreement and the Unions HAD to have a minimum of four percent in salary increases rolled into year one (FY'05) before any consideration of additional years.

To "cut to the chase" and, among the primary reasons we're taking this much space, we believe it important for you to know exactly what the City offered as a "Final offer of settlement" for two reasons; first, to judge for yourself our decision to reject, and second, to put the half-truths to rest. We have prior experience with some of the less savvy members of our now vast "command staff" telling our members half of the story in terms of what the Unions turn down in negotiations and the **facts** are best revealed here.

There were three major components of the City's "Final Offer of Settlement"; wages, health-care costs, and work schedule. In that order, this was the offer;

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President's Desk

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Three Year Package: July 1, 2004-June 30, 2007

Wage increases

1	July 2, 2004	2%
2	January 1, 2005	1%
3	June 30, 2005	1%
4	January 1, 2006	2%
5	January 1, 2007	3%

Health Insurance

The Fire Unions shall receive the same coverage as the FOP during the term of its agreement including any changes which may be implemented on or after January 1, 2006.

Vacation Options*

Effective for Fiscal Year 2006 and for the remainder of the agreement, the City may implement an eight (8) number vacation system such as has been described to the Unions by the City.

* There was, initially, some ambiguity with regard to exactly what "... has been described to the Unions by the City." and there are, at least, two ways to implement an eight number system. The final determination, however, was that the vacation numbering system would simply change from the current six to eight numbers. The net effect of such a change would be that your assigned vacation number would come up once in every **sixty-four** days rather than (the current) once in every **forty-eight** days.

There would also have been a committee established to come up with a recommendation for an alternative to the eight number system, but whatever alternative the committee would have developed, would have to have been approved by "...the Director of Finance, after consultation with the Fire Chief...".

The response of the Unions' Negotiation Committees was a unanimous "Thanks, but no thanks", and now you can decide for yourself whether or not we've done the right thing. And, should you hear someone say that "Your Union turned-down NINE PERCENT!", you'll know enough to call them a liar.

Arbitration is to resume on Friday, June 18th with a decision entirely possible before July 1, 2004.

Fallen Heroes Day

Once again this year, for the nineteenth consecutive year, Mr. John Armiger was the unassuming host and behind-the-scenes driving force of Fallen Heroes Day at Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens. Always on the first Friday in May, Mr. Armiger opens his arms, lays out the red carpet and spares no effort or expense to honor the Fire Fighters and Police Officers of Maryland killed in the line of duty during the previous year.

Formally known as Fallen Heroes Day, this annual tribute is clearly the single most significant event of its kind in the State of Maryland and it was begun and continues to thrive primarily because Mr. John Armiger cares so much. What makes the event all the more special is that Mr. Armiger himself simply refuses any accolade or acknowledgement, and shuns the spotlight to a degree that actually makes those of us invited to participate a bit uncomfortable. We know what he does and why he does it and we want the world to know as well, but he always responds with "Thanks, but no thanks".

Preceding the Fallen Heroes Day ceremony, there is a "Healing Hearts Reception" where surviving family members of previously honored Fallen Heroes gather for what amounts to a reunion of the mutual support group that has developed over the years, again, with the hosting support and encouragement of Mr. Armiger. At this year's Healing Hearts Reception, the metro area Fire Unions joined to present Mr. Armiger with a Bronzed, full-sized Fire Fighter's helmet complete with a brass front-piece engraved with the appropriate message. It was, of necessity, presented by surprise without the prior knowledge of Mr. Armiger as we know he would have refused to accept otherwise.

The helmet presented was but a very small demonstration of the sincere and deep gratitude of IAFF Locals 734, 964 and 1311 and we trust that we'll be permitted to do something, from time to

time, just to say "Thanks". You're a true Hero of ours, Mr. Armiger, and we are forever grateful for your support, your thoughtfulness, and your friendship.

Readers of this newsletter will know that we do not accept paid advertising, so let us simply offer this as a matter of good and friendly advice. If you have not already made plans for yourself or your loved ones, you surely could not do better than to call or visit Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens, and allow them to share with you their knowledge and experience.

Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens
200 East Padonia Road
Timonium, MD 21093
410.666.0490

Scholarship Opportunities

Once again this year, **Ashcraft & Gerel, LLP**, a local Law Firm that specializes in labor issues and provides representation for many of the area's Labor Unions is offering scholarships to deserving and successful applicants. They will provide a no-strings-attached \$2,500 scholarship to two students, one undergraduate and one post-graduate student based upon information provided by application and evaluated in a "blind" competitive manner.

All applicants must be members in good standing of a Baltimore Area AFL-CIO affiliated Union, OR someone in the immediate family of a member of the qualifying union. Applications MUST be verified by the Union Local which will verify affiliation and familial relationship.

Please contact Mike Campbell at 443.629.0216 for applications and/or additional information, or leave contact information at the Union office 410.276.6964 (toll-free 1.888.625.4386).

Thoughts for Father's Day

Fire Fighter, EVD, PO, Lieutenant, Captain, Secretary Treasurer, President, Trustee, Chairman; I think I've covered all of the titles I've had in my wonderful Fire Department career, though I'm absolutely certain there are others less formal and unprintable. There is another, however, that's never been a prefix in terms of Departmental, Union, or Pen-

sion Board service that means more to me than all else added together and compounded by any measure, and it is simply "Dad". With Fathers' Day just around the corner as I write, it suddenly occurred to me that my "children" are adults themselves now, and I worry that "Dad" is no longer much more than a comfortable way for my beautiful daughters to get my attention.

What to say? Approaching thirty years, with all of the sacrifices that Fire Department, Union and Pension Board service demands, I have finally reached a point in my life that I am able and willing to look back and take stock. Although I was extremely fortunate in being able to be with my girls for most of what was important in their lives, I surely missed a lot, and I only hope that they can be more forgiving of me than I might be of myself. I can only hope that they will someday accept the hours, days and weeks away and appreciate what I've done, why I've done it, and know that they were in my heart and mind all along.

I have, from time to time, written of personal and life experiences in this Newsletter and I am always mindful of not abusing my latitude in such writing, but I sincerely believe this is important. My "children" are twenty-two and twenty-four now, but they are still my children, and I am still their "Dad" and every time I hear that word from them (depending on the tone) I think of how lucky I am to be what I am... to be their Dad, regardless of the circumstances. I doubt that I need to tell anyone with children that being a parent is often challenging but, with all things considered; it is truly the joy of a lifetime.

How painfully ironic that "success" in parenting is in many ways measured by how well your children do *without* you. I remember letting their hands go when they took their first steps, and how quickly they plopped to the floor when they suddenly realized they were no longer tethered to Dad's finger for balance. I remember the first time I let go of the back of their bicycle seat running down the alley behind them until their confidence grew to no longer need Dad as a substitute for the training wheels already removed. I remember crying the

day they turned thirteen because it was a first stark foretelling of what lied ahead, albeit still many years away. I remember the first time they pulled out of the driveway alone and being nearly paralyzed with fear until they returned home safely. All of the things that any loving parent does, often not appreciating the significance at the time, and all somehow aimed at letting go.

So, to the men of our Department (both active and retired) who are collec-

tively the bravest, toughest, strongest, most unrelenting bunch I've ever had the privilege to work with and know, allow me to offer some advice. Whether you're just starting-out, half-way there, at the ultimate point of letting go such as myself, or even if your children now have children of their own, take a few minutes to tell them how much you Love them (I know you do) and how much they mean to you and your life. And, by the way guys, Happy Fathers' Day!

From the Desk of the 1st Vice President

By Mike Waldner

There is much for me to relate as to the happenings occurring over the past two months. Change for most human beings is a hard pill to swallow, even if it brings a better end result. My life has changed dramatically every Spring for the past few years. Memorial Day weekends usually mean cool, wet weather around here, but that is the least of my apprehensions for this time of year. On May 25, 1999, my dear mother lost her battle with cancer and passed away over the holiday weekend. On May 27, 2003, my father was taken from me after an extended illness linked to kidney failure. He too passed during the holiday weekend. This May on the 7th, Uncle Phil (Waldner) lost his battle with cancer. I want to heartily thank all who expressed their condolences to my family and myself at Uncle Phil's passing and especially those who attended the funeral and wake. We as a family also appreciated the hospitality shown in honoring Phil's memory by hosting the after Services luncheon. We especially need to thank Ben Alder for ordering the food, preparing and cleaning the Hall, as well as hosting the family that day. Phil's children were very impressed and gratified by the homage paid to their Dad by this Union and for the use of the Hall. I can only assume he went to join his wife Lolita and his sister-in-law Bernie (Uncle John Waldner's wife) who both also passed away between my parents' deaths. They were all suffering from different but debilitating illnesses, and are

much better off now that their pain and suffering has ended. They are greatly missed by all the remaining children and despite our sorrow; we all understand they are in a better place and together again.

Over the years the Fire Department has had to put up with four (4) Waldners throughout its ranks. My father George (E47) retired first, then John (E43) and Phil (8th Battalion Commander), leaving me as the last holdout. By the time I retire in 18 to 24 months (for those counting spots for promotions) the Waldners will have amassed over 130 years of service as dedicated members of the Baltimore City Fire Department. Phil was the most active Union member of the three brothers, and was my inspiration to aspire to Union service and in seeking an active leadership role in the Fire Unions. I was lucky enough to work in this Local while he was still active in this Union. I eventually followed in his footsteps to assume the 1st Vice President's Office as he had done. I can only hope that he was as proud to have me follow him, as I was to be able to shadow his career.

That brings me to another bitter-sweet round of thank you acknowledgements. On May 5th I was promoted to Battalion Chief while in Las Vegas with the Fire Department Softball team playing in a 911 Memorial Fund Raiser Tournament for our FDNY Brothers. I wish to thank all who have con-

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1st Viced President*...continued on page 4*

gratulated me or wished me the best of luck with this future endeavor either in person or through the website. The unfortunate part is that I learned of Phil's pending death while in Las Vegas. I had been waiting for the actual promotion to take effect before visiting Uncle Phil and telling him. I didn't return home until Saturday May 8th, and Phil was already gone. So in actuality, the Fire Department had two Chief Waldners for two days. Phil will still hold the family record for highest rank as he did finish up as a Battalion Commander.

The softball trip was a three peat for me as I've been fortunate enough to be asked to play the last two previous years. It is always a pleasure to join Locals from all across our great nation for a remembrance of our fallen Brothers from New York. They truly will never be forgotten. This year we played hard and finished tied for 5th in Division 1 with the big teams. I prefer to play in the "40 and Over" bracket but it's tough to get the older guys to travel. We did manage to place four of our Senior players on this roster and they all played well and contributed to our success. Ray Ryan, Gerald Hughes, Roger McPherson and myself survived playing with the kids and would do it again if requested in the future. Our fan base was comprised of Ray's wife Bonnie, Bud Ryer, Elroy and Randy Schmidt. They were there for us in the early mornings hours, late evenings, and through the oppressive 100-degree sun. Thanks for all your support and encouragement. Congratulations to all team members and I look forward to taking the Senior Team next year. I am still recruiting players for the "40 and Over" team for the IAFF/MDA Tournament in September in PG County. Anyone interested can call me at BC6"C"(443-984-1737) or 410-879-4545.

Arbitration hearings will resume June 18th and continue to a conclusion and then a decision will be rendered to complete Negotiations for this coming Fiscal Year. We had continued to discuss an agreement but the city was offering little in exchange for lots of givebacks. That is just not acceptable and I considered it rather insulting to say

the least.

There will be a 2nd Annual Steadman House Reunion on Sept. 12th at Rocky Point State Park. Contact Tim Reilly at Truck Co. # 2 for details. He can be reached at 410-396-5167 or check T2's webpage. Flyers will also be sent to all stations. The last outing was a great time and a gathering of past and present members (and their families) who had or are doing time at Steadman House. There is great food and drinks supplied, as well as swimming and water sports (sail boats, kayaks).

HEALTH & SAFETY

1. New RIT bags issued with 15' air mask hose & new ropes. Will be modified again with 25' air mask hose.
2. Still working on written confirmation system for apparatus repair reports and completion of work reports.
3. Problems with Seagrave's warranty work. President of company has been contacted for direct resolve.
4. Old T26 now at E41's quarters as RT32.
5. PM is now on a recurring 3-month cycle for Tues. – Thurs., repairs are on Mon. and Fri. following Co.'s list of repair problems.
6. Medic litters being retrofitted + upgraded on new units at time of purchase.
7. 4 new four wheel drive Ford 350 w/ box body like Squad 51(TV show) coming for EMS Officers. Two on street, two on order.
8. TB Exposure program scheduled for next meeting.
9. CPAT testing center set up should be used for next class.
10. Send any Big Ed lights or batteries to shop for repair or replacement.

REMINDERS

1. Protect face pieces on fire ground from water and debris during overhaul, return to unit if not wearing.
2. Stress battery cable cleaning with drivers, maintenance more important with high tech electrical controls and equipment.
3. Drain **all** air tanks on air brake/horn system. Some units have as many as 5-6 tanks, call shop for locations or info.
4. Oil levels need topping off as some systems divert engine oil for other uses and can run low.
5. Looking for CPAT Proctors to be trained to administer testing at Fire Academy and for other area Departments. Contact Fire Academy staff.
6. Part time work for Comp time available at Repair Shop doing various duties, contact Oscar. Help needed/wanted.
7. OSHA has been in firehouses to enforce no smoking ban in City buildings. Company Officer will be held accountable by the current Administration, as per the Memos. Be aware and forewarned, proceed at your own risk. Complaints have come from our own members who know the rules too.

Next meeting 3rd Thursday in June (17th), contact me with agenda items ASAP.

Have a great summer, don't forget to attend the picnic, and we will resume again in September for regular meetings.

Drink plenty of fluids in the heat and stay safe!

**Visit us on line at
www.iafflocal964.com**

From the Desk of the 2nd Vice President

By Ben Alder

I hope everyone has an enjoyable and safe summer and we look forward to seeing you in the fall at the Union Hall. Remember the meetings are the first and third Mondays of the month at 1900 hours.

Hiring and Recruitment Committee: If you want to know the straight facts and not the partial story you read in the newspaper and heard on T V and Radio, call me @410 908 0183.

PSI: We had a date set to hear the Grievance but due to two untimely deaths, one of an active member and one retired, the hearing was postponed. As of this writing (6/4/04) we do not have a new date for the PSI Grievance to be heard. We have had only 3 responses to my request for information. If you have had a problem with PSI not following your Physician's instructions, whether it's LOD or N/LOD please contact me. I will assure you it WILL be kept confidential.

Examinations: The hiring exam will be held June 12th @ the Baltimore Convention Center.

Officer School: We have had a good turnout to the Officer's School and after a few bumps in the road the class is becoming very informative. The majority of the members attending have been the senior members. We would hope that all of our members would take full advantage of this opportunity. It is possible in the future that Act Lieutenants will be included.

Entertainment: Social Night was held April 21st, the doors opened @1900 hours at the hall. Sam Darby did the catering and the food was outstanding once again, Thanks Sam! It was good to see a few new faces in the crowd.

Golf Tournament: Congratulations to Bob Jordan and the rest of the Golf Committee on a fantastic job. The weather

was great, the course was in very good shape and a good time was had by all.

Retirement Information: If you are planning on retiring please make your appointment with the Retirement System (room 640 City Hall) on a date as early into your ninety day leave as possible. This can be done as soon as you start your vacation or know the date that your ninety will begin. For example, if your vacation starts June 1 and you will start your ninety Oct 1, CALL the Retirement System on June 1st to make an appointment for the first week of October. If you are not going to use vacation, call as soon as you know the date you will start your ninety. Remember, after you are thirty days into your ninety you can not come back.

Please do not wait to call, this is your pension and it should be important to you!

Metropolitan Fire Fighters: On behalf of the Metro Fire Fighters Burn Fund I would like to say Thank You for helping to raise \$38,786 over the Preakness weekend. The monies you have raised will go towards Education, Research and Equipment at the Johns Hopkins Burn Center @ Bayview and Burn Camp for Burn survivors. To those companies that didn't make an effort for whatever reason, if there is anything we can clear up, please contact us. We hope you will rethink your position next year.

Again, Thank You!

The following is a complete list of monies raised:

E 2	\$972.	E 4	\$1,330.	E 5	\$ 2224.
E 6	\$136.	E 8	\$521.	E 11	\$ 338.
E 13	\$38.	E 14	\$92.	E 20	\$746.
E 21	\$236.	E 23	\$3,094.	E 26	\$645.
E 27	\$212.	E 29	\$453.	E 30	\$108.
E 31	\$160.	E 33	\$577.	E 35	\$1,251.
E 36	\$256.	E 40	\$968	E 41	\$473.
E 42	\$109.	E 43	\$662.	E 44	\$1,620.
E 45	\$304.	E 46	\$979.	E 47	\$53.
E 50	\$939.	E 51	\$736.	E 52	\$472.
E 53	\$1,098.	E 54	\$22.	E 55	\$1,000.
E 56	\$504.	E 57	\$95.	E 58	\$257.
T 1	\$37.	T 2	\$1,635.	T 3	\$2179.
T 5	\$721.	T 6	\$495.	T 8	\$244.
T 10	\$736.	T 12	\$1,765.	T 15	\$80.
T 16	\$10.	T 18	\$817.	T 20	\$951.
T 21	\$1,024.	T 23	\$100.	T 25	\$998.
T 26	\$201.	T 27	\$438.	T 29	\$590.
T 30	\$479.	FB 1	\$421.	R 1	\$1,128.

Battalion Totals

1	\$8,255.	2	\$2,218.	3	\$4,212.
4	\$6,553.	5	\$6,945.	6	\$10,600.

Top Engine was E-23 \$3,094.

Top Truck was T-12 \$1,765.

From the Desk of the Secretary-Treasurer

By Bob Jordan

John L. Seiss

Memorial Golf Tournament

Well another golf tournament for the VEBA fund has been concluded. I want to thank my main committee members, Rod Devilbiss, Mike Campbell, Bryan Hoffman, and Wayne Nowowiejski. I also would like to thank all the other members that came out to work the par three holes, and helped to make the tournament a success. It is the support that you gave that makes the event run smoothly and easier for me and the committee.

I want to also thank the sponsors that showed their support through their donations to our event. This is what

makes the tournament a success, because without our sponsors, there would not be a golf tournament. And this also goes true for the members of the Department and friends of the community that came out to play in the tournament because you can not have a tournament with out players.

I also want to acknowledge this years winner of the John L. Seiss Award, Mr. Roman Kaminski. Roman has been a long time friend of the Unions and the Department, and truly desiring of this award. Congratulations Roman.

I will give a complete report on the golf tournament at the Union meetings in the future.

THANKS
FOR THE
MEMORIES!

Bob Williams

From the Desk of the Recording Secretary

By Mike Campbell

Wow, how the rumors get circulated in regards to our contract! I won't pontificate on all of the stuff being bantered about. I will state the facts as I see them. We tried to present our Arbitration case in early May and basically were presented with a filibuster by the City's attorney, which in turn resulted in our case not being presented. As a result, we have new dates in the middle of June to present our case to the arbitrator. I have all the faith in our team and our attorneys that we will represent the feelings of our membership in the highest regard. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the retirement of a true friend and longtime union official, Joe Machovec. Joe, good luck in your retirement, your work will truly be missed by both the Local and the Dept. What a great way to segue into my next rant. With brothers like Joe retiring, the Local is looking for some fresh faces and fresh ideas. We recently have been inundated with new members into the Local. It is time to take the next step and get involved. The Local is only as good as the members they represent. The summer session is soon to

be upon us, and after being rejuvenated by the sun let's begin the fall session with an outpouring of support for our Union! There are many ways to get involved and not all of them have to do with running for office. Contact an Executive Board official to find out how to make your Union a stronger Union! Now that I mentioned running for office, it is my pleasure to announce that we have 3 offices coming up for election in 2005. Nominations will be held in both September meetings. The 3 positions are Secretary Treasurer, Sergeant of Arms and one of the three Trustee spots. Each office will take effect in January of 2005 and will be a 3 year term. Look forward to seeing you at the next Union meeting. **Long Live The Union!**

Health Care

The Ad-Hoc committee that is looking into Health Care costs for active and retirees has finished their work and is presently putting together a report to submit to the City Council. I will update you further after the report is presented.

President's Club

I am still collecting for the 2004 President's Club. At the present time we have 24 members and are looking for more support. All of the monies collected go in our Pac Fund and is utilized to support the politicians who support us. I will look into the payroll deduction slot for automatic deductions that will make it easier to contribute.

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 – 410-396-5161

E-mail: capttain16@hotmail.com

Words to twirl by...

I've seen the bright lights of Memphis
And the Commodore Hotel
Underneath a street lamp
I met a southern belle.
She took me to the river
Where she cast her spell
And in that southern moonlight
She sang her song so well.

Little Feat

Tired and Retired

By Bob Hatoff

In the April-May issue our first and second vice presidents referred to President Fugate's suspension. They declined to comment and said they would let Steve do that. However, there was no mention of it by Steve. I've been saying all along how I was a better writer than Steve. The fact that he failed to comment on a story involving him, that was reported on local TV and the newspaper, is more proof of that. I started my own investigation and found Steve's trouble began with something he wrote on the union's chat line. A good writer would never let this happen. Upon completion of my investigation I have determined the entire incident is nothing but a bunch of bullsh(censored).

Janice and I attended the Box 414 banquet last night (5-10). This is always a fun night as I get to see so many old friends from the Fire Department and Box 414. In fact, most of them I only see at this affair. I was sitting there looking around the room. I saw Chief Goodwin, and I remembered I worked with his father at Truck 20 from 1959 to 1963. Division Chief Curbeam was there, and I recalled I went to Fire School in 1958 with his father. That's 1958 not 1858, but it feels like 1858. I was starting to get depressed and along comes Mary Lesser to say hi. I remember when she first came to work as a secretary at FIB. She informed us she just hit the big 50. I was going down hill fast. Then I saw our youngest daughter Anita, sporting a head full of gray hair like you wouldn't believe. So at this point it dawned on me that I was getting very old. Then something really neat happened that made me feel a lot younger. It's a damn shame, but I'm too old to remember what it was.

The Retiree's new President Charney Harris was there to represent us. He told the crowd he was Porky Heckrotte. I want you to know he's getting old too, because half the attendees believed him. Walt and Marie Lemmon came in first and second in hours served on the coffee wagon. They're getting old too, but their not showing it.

Well, the weather is finally getting nice and warm. This means it's Ocean City time. I want to warn you before you head for the shore, make sure you have enough money to fill your tank for the trip back. The last time the oil companies decided to rip us off I refused to pay. I was going to leave the car and walk home. I got all the way from the motel to the parking lot, before I ran out of gas, personally. It's a good thing Janice was with me, because I was too tired to pump the gas for the trip home.

I hope you all enjoy the nice weather and have a safe and happy summer. If you should get in trouble talk to God, he's always listening. Anything minor that comes up I'll be glad to help. You can reach me at 10-866-3235 or 1805 Greencastle Dr. Baltimore, MD 21237.

Just keep in mind God's a lot older, but he's in better shape than me!

Sick and Injured

By Bob Hatoff

Fred Mesenbrink is at Mariner Health Care, Catonsville. He's lost both legs at the knees, but is in good spirits. 4/12

Denny Doda was in the hospital a couple of days with chest pains. It was angina and he is back home. 5/11

Joe Andresini is having leg problems. He is at home re Cooperating. 5/5

John Mixter home re Cooperating from a second stroke. 4/14

Joe Mirabile is having more leg problems and has to use a walker now. 4/17

Bob Pearre is having trouble speaking and chewing. He and his wife had to sell their house and move to a condo. 4/17

John Bohon is bypass surgery and is home recovering. 4/25

Phil Meagher is taking it one day at a time. 4/14

Al Feehely had a serious heart attack. He was in Franklin Square, but he has recovered enough to go to Manor Care for rehab. 5/6

Jim Trenchard had a heart attack and is in Good Samaritan. 5/19

Charles Hoyt is battling cancer. He's home from the hospital, but he has no appetite. 5/14

Frank Giotis has pinched nerves in his neck. He's going to be in a body cast for a couple of months and will then need surgery. 5/10

Andy Gerhart has throat cancer and has started chemotherapy. 5/14

We've recently lost the following members. Gone but not forgotten.

Charlie Gress	John Mullin
Earl Clemens	William Eibner
Phil Waldner	Tom Bayne
Ted Zapalowicz	William Davis
	(Active)

Retired Fire Fighters and Fire Officers Association

Charney L. Harris, Sr., President

Now that Memorial Day has come and gone, we must remember those that gave so much to make us the "Home of the Free and Brave". Please also remember our heroes, the Fire Officers and Fire Fighters, who gave so much to make this B.C.F.D. the best it ever was. What has happened now is a sad state of affairs.

We have a Chief of the Department who either doesn't want to settle problems of the Department, or he is listening to some bad advice from those who surround him. If you had to rank Fire Chiefs today, he would have to bring up the rear. Come on Chief, be a Chief for Fire Fighters and not for the politicians who will turn their back on you if things don't go their way. But not the Fire Fighters and Fire Officers, they want you to be the best and they will stand behind you 100%.

Now to the Mayor of Baltimore City. This man has made a mess of every Department he has touched. Mr. Mayor, if you desire to be Governor, you'd better get on the ball because you are fumbling every time. You should take care of City Hall, and let the Departments run themselves.

Next, I cannot understand why there is a 13 ½ percent difference in pay between the Fire Officers/Fire Fighters and the Police. When the Police Department did not have representation, the Fire Officers and Fire Fighters Unions had to agree the Police would receive the same pay that we contracted for — that was fine. I have not, at any time, heard this been said in police negotiations. What happened — are we now orphans?

On a lighter note, I want to bring to the members' attention that we are going to create two awards this year — one for the retired member who projects the retiree organization and one for an active or retired Fire Officer/Fire Fighters who has served the organization with honor. The first award will be named The "**Charles W. Wetzelberger**

Award", and the second one will be named "**The Phillip G. Waldner Award**".

I hope all of you have a safe and happy summer. Don't forget the September meeting is our Crab Feast Night and Dr. Peterson who wrote the book "**The Great Baltimore Fire**" will be in attendance to sign your book. We will have books on sale for \$24.00, and they would make nice Christmas Gifts — a little early but worth the buy. Don't forget this is our fund raiser this year. If you can help, buy one. It's worth the money.

In closing, please read the following article which is a true story by Paul Harvey.

Years ago, a hard-working man took his family from New York State to Australia to take advantage of a work opportunity there. Part of this man's family was a handsome young son who had aspirations of joining the circus as a trapeze artist or actor. This young fellow biding his time until a circus job or even ones as a stagehand came long, worked at the local shipyards which bordered on the worse section of town.

Walking home from work one evening, this young man was attacked by five thugs who wanted to rob him. Instead of just giving up his money, the young fellow resisted. However, they bested him easily and proceeded to beat his body brutally with clubs, leaving him for dead.

When the police happened to find him lying in the road, they assumed he was dead and called for the morgue wagon. On the way to the morgue, a policeman heard him gasp for air and they immediately took him to the emergency unit at the hospital.

When he was placed on a gurney, a nurse remarked to her horror, that this young man no longer had a face. Each eye socket was smashed, his skull, legs, and arms fractured, his nose literally hanging from his face, all his teeth were gone and his jaw was almost com-

pletely torn from his skull although his life was spared, he spent over a year in the hospital.

When he finally left, his body may have healed, but his face disgusting to look at. He was no longer the handsome youth that everyone admired. When the young man started to look for work again, he was turned down by everyone just on account of the way he looked.

One potential employer suggested to him that he join the freak show at the circus as "The Man Who Had No Face" and he did this for awhile. He was still rejected by everyone and no one wanted to be seen in his company. He had thoughts of suicide. This went on for five years.

One day he passed a church and sought some solace there. Entering the church, he encountered a priest who had seen him sobbing while kneeling in a pew. The priest took pity on him and took him to the rectory where they talked at length.

The Priest was impressed with him to such a degree that he said that he would do everything possible for him that could be done to restore his dignity and life, if the young man would promise to be the best Catholic he could be and trust in God's mercy to free him from his torturous life.

The young man went to Mass and communion everyday and after thanking God for saving his life, asked God to only give him peace of mind and the grace to be the best man he could ever be in his eyes.

The Priest, through his personal contacts, was able to secure the services of the best plastic surgeon in Australia. There would be no cost to the young man as the doctor was the Priest's best friend.

The doctor too was so impressed by the young man whose outlook now life, even though he had experienced the worst, was filled with good humor and love. The surgery was a miraculous

success. All the best dental work was also done for him.

The young man became everything he promised God he would be. He was also blessed with a wonderful, beautiful wife, many children and success in an industry which would have been the farthest thing from his mind as a career, if not for the goodness of God and the love of the people who cared for him.

This he acknowledges publicly: The Young Man is "Mel Gibson".

Mel Gibson produced the movie "The Passion of Christ" and this is his way of thanking God for his many blessings.

Charney's article was not included in our last issue - we have included it below:

The retiree organization has lost a faithful and dedicated member in our past president Charles "Buck" Wetzelberger. We, as retirees, stand ready to help the families of all our departed brothers; God Rest Their Souls.

Since becoming your President, I would like to thank, on behalf of all members, Rick Schluderberg, President of Local 734 and Stephan Fugate, President of 964 for their help and cooperation. We stand ready and able to assist the active Fire Officers and Fire Fighters whenever and wherever we are needed. A big thanks to both of you and your membership.

What has happened to the Fire Department when a Chief of the Department can suspend a President of one of the Unions? I can see now how the men feel and the morale is at its lowest. Come on Chief, get on the band wagon and be a Chief of the Fire Department, not a cow traveling to the politicians. The ball is in your court.

In closing, I hope everyone has a Happy Holy Holiday. If you feel up to it, volunteer for a committee, so we can continue our work for there is much to be done.

Were/Are You Assigned to The STEADMAN STATION?

Did You Do Any Time Here?

Do You Know Anyone Who Did Time Here?

31st Anniversary Get Together

Sunday September 12, 2004 Noon Till Dusk

Rocky Point State Park

Contact

Tim Reilly T-2 "C" 6-1238 6-5167

Steve Peavy R-1 "A" 6-5163 6-5167

Danny Davis HQ Day 6-5680

Box 414

By Walt Lemmon

Our Banquet was enjoyed by all and the yearly donations by members of the Fire and Police Departments and Retirees were most generous. We will make every effort to stay within our budget. Just an F.Y.I. our vehicle insurance alone is \$ 6,000.00 a year. That takes a large amount of money which leaves us to make the rest of the fiscal year with what is left. We will not cut back on any of the many things the Coffee Wagon does for the people we serve.

The month of May was a busy time for our members. It started with another unusual incident (removal of bombs in Fairfield). We participated in the funeral of Active Member Bill Davis Fireboat 1, C.I.S.M. Training at Patapsco State Park, another funeral for MSP Trooper Jones, the dedication of Engine 13 Station in honor of Smoke Stack Hardy, a Police D.U.I. detail, the triple murder 7010 Park Hgts Av. and the Blood Drive at the Fire Academy. Due to the unually hot temperatures this month we answered 5 alarms of fire and 1 working fatal rescue.

The hot days of summer are upon us and the wagon will answer any and all requests for our services.

BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICERS LOCAL 964 ANNUAL PICNIC

**July 23, 2004
12 p.m. - 6 p.m.**

**Valleybrook Country Club
1810 Valleybrook Dr. (Kingsville)**

Come out and enjoy 4 swimming pools, tennis & basketball courts, horseshoes & volleyball. Large separate pavilion for our 964 members, kids games and prizes.

Cold beer, soft drinks, hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken, ice cream, watermelon and more!

Directions: Proceed N on Belair Road (Rt. 1) from I-695. Turn right on Jerusalem Road, take Jerusalem Rd approximately 2 miles to Valleybrook Road (on your left), follow to entrance straight ahead.

Cost: \$10 per person, children under 13 are free! Any questions, you may contact Lt. Tom Nosek at home 410-638-2231 or at Truck 3, 410-396-9205.

THE BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICERS

Local No. 964

Meetings -- 1st & 3rd Monday

1030 S. Linwood Avenue

Baltimore, MD 21224

PHONE: 410-276-6964

Non-Profit
U.S. POSTAGE
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Permit No. 4815
Baltimore, MD

Change of Address -- Cut out and return to the Secretary, Local #964

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