

# BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICER

LOCAL 964

--STAFF--

STEPHAN G. FUGATE -- MIKE CAMPBELL

*By and For the Professional Fire Officer*

IN UNION

THERE IS STRENGTH

Volume VIII, Issue 5

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## From the Desk of the President

*By Stephan G. Fugate*

### Tentative MOU, continued

In the last edition of this newsletter, I ended this segment with a promise to elaborate and so I shall. At the time of my last writing, we had not yet presented the proposed agreement to our membership for ratification and, believe it or not, I did not want my rather jaded attitude to taint the process. We had agreed, as a committee, to take the proposal back to our membership and speak only to the facts of the various parts of the agreement and I (for one) believed that meant absent personal opinion and/or speculation. Well, the voting is over and it's time for me to get a few things off of my chest.

I must admit that I happen to like the Labor Commissioner, Mr. Sean Malone, and while that may actually cost him his job, it's important for me to say so because though he surely understands that none of this is personal, others may not. Having said that, it was difficult for me and all of the others to maintain our composure during negotiations as every single time we reached a substantive point, particularly when salary increases were involved, the primary focus was on the potential impact OUR agreement might have on the FOP Units. It was as though we were negotiating for Baltimore's Police Officers and that if we could agree on the impact and/or benefit applicable to them, the IAFF Locals would be included.

That prevailing attitude was further evidenced in the since averted arbitration process during which it was said many times

that "even if we (the City) win, we lose because we won't be able to provide salary increases for the Police"! In other words, knowing that we would impose the salary parity provision of our existing agreement, if the City prevailed in arbitration the only down-side was that they would be hamstrung in their continuing and irrepressible desire to accommodate the Police. Lest, by the way, ANYONE view that observation as somehow being anti-police or anti-FOP, nothing could be further from the truth and my personal and professional experience and relationship with the FOP would stand to ANY scrutiny.

Now, what could be more egregious than knowing you're playing second-fiddle during your own negotiations? Knowing that our Chief is not only prohibited from participation, but apparently oblivious to the dynamics as the process escalated to the complex end of making the economic impact fit the claimed limits of affordability. Keep in mind that we continued to negotiate up to and literally during the arbitration process with the sincere belief that avoiding an arbitrator's ruling was in the interests of BOTH sides.

We all now know that the final agreement provides an across-the-board salary increase of three percent in each of three years but what you don't know is that we were 0.5% apart upon reaching an obvious stalemate in the eleventh hour of ongoing discussions. The Union's final proposal would have provided an increase of 3.5% in year three and get our memberships as close to "double-digits" (through compounding) as possible, mindful of we had viewed as the City's ability to pay. The difference between the ultimate "3,3,3" and the Union's "3,3,3.5", over the course of the THREE YEAR agreement was \$200K. That is, over the course of THREE budget

years, the Union request would have cost two-hundred-thousand dollars more than the City's offer, or .063% of the cumulative three-years' budgets. Given the benefit of further distinction, that personnel costs might represent 95% of budget, the figure would increase to .066% over the three years. Simply stated, we're talking about a rounding error, not any substantive budgetary impact, but that's not the worst of it.

During the approximate time-frame of negotiations for FY'05, the cumulative cost (extending over three years) of the magic-wand promotions and upgrades EXCEEDED the \$200K cost of a .5% salary increase for ALL members of BOTH Locals! That is NOT, by the way, the cost of ALL of the magic-wand beneficiaries (now approaching thirty) of the past two-plus years, ONLY that activity taking place during the same time-frame as negotiations. The point being, that while your Local struggled (and to some degree lost) to provide minimally enhanced salary increases only to be told the additional \$200K was "too much", our Chief GAVE more than that away to a chosen few!

### So where are we now?

Having received an affirmative decision by our voting members to accept the tentative, three-year agreement, we proceeded to dot the i's, cross the t's, and do the necessary "clean-up" such as date changes and the like only to discover that there had been yet another "misunderstanding". Contained in the eight point summary sent to all of our active members prior to voting, bullet-point number eight "Exclusions" stipulated that "All other provisions of our MOU shall remain as is, with NO OTHER changes through June 30,

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

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2007". The text of said notice was submitted to the Labor Commissioner for review, but the aforementioned "misunderstanding" seems to be the meaning of "NO OTHER changes"!

Article 21 of our MOU contains the provisions for acting out-of-title payment, including the methodology for calculation in terms of what happens when. The salient point of the methodology is NOT "what happens when", but the point at which the new rates take effect which is six months following the date of a salary increase. This structural "lag" is neither accidental nor coincidental, but the result of negotiations in that it is an economic benefit. The net effect of the six month "lag" is that the City avoids the additional cost associated with salary increases for six months and we have accepted that "lag" as a component of negotiated benefits. Indeed, the "lag" in acting calculation was a full twelve months prior to FY 2000 when the current six-month "lag" came by way of negotiations in early 1999.

It must be noted that while acting out-of-title payments were certainly the subject of discussion during negotiations, but only in terms of the economic impact and the claimed inability to budget such an expense. There were, however, absolutely NO direct negotiations in terms of the amount paid, how or when it is paid, or how and when rates are calculated, and NO CHANGE very simply means NO CHANGE. Unless, that is, you chose to be very fast and loose with word definition, much akin to the infamous parsing of the definition of "IS". What follows is the exact wording of the agreement outline produced by outside counsel representing the City in negotiations:

***Step up Acting money as of January 1, 2005, January 1, 2006 and January 1, 2007, as customary, by advancing the usual dates in Article 21 of the MOU.***

"As customary" has been defined by the City as referring to the specific months referenced in Article 21 without regard to the effect. What the City would do is merely change the years in Article 21 which would delay the increase of Acting rates for a full eighteen months in year one and twelve

months in both of years two and three. The Unions define "AS customary" as the maintenance of the substantive effect of the benefit which is to continue the six month "lag" with very simple and very common language clean-up. The impact of the extremely unusual January rather than July salary increases requires flipping the months referenced in Article 21 in order to accommodate the economic intent of the benefit.

To suggest that the substance of the Article is the months in which certain events occur and NOT the resulting, dramatic change in the actual benefit is utterly ridiculous. This Union Local will NOT cede to such tactics and we will do whatever it takes to resolve the dispute in the appropriate manner. We have refused to sign the agreement and intend to proceed to arbitration on this single issue. Once resolved, we will sign the agreement and have it printed and distributed to our members as quickly as possible. Having to arbitrate a contractual dispute in an agreement yet to be signed and implemented is unprecedented and I would submit the result of the extremely poor process forced by the City and the subject of much criticism last year. In NOT exchanging the various proposals in written form, in an orderly manner, fosters this very type of disagreement and we WILL demand adherence to such form in the future.

Finally, though we adamantly hold to our view of this acting out-of-title dispute, the arbitrator could possibly rule in the City's favor, and we will be "stuck" with a diminished benefit for the duration of the agreement. If that comes to pass, this City Administration will have been guilty of deceptive labor practices and I will have no problem saying so and supporting that claim.

### So what's next?

If you attended any of the three ratification meetings that were held in early September, you will know that another of the features of this three-year agreement is a commitment NOT to close any "units". You'll also know, because we told you, that there is another difference of opinion in the definition of "unit". The Addendum essentially stipulates that units listed in M.O.P. 111 shall not be permanently closed through June 30, 2007, but the City does NOT view Battalion Chiefs as a "unit".

Again, this distinction was well made during the ratification meetings, and there should be no surprise about the City's position. Our position, however, is that M.O.P. 111 does indeed include Battalion Chiefs as "units" and are, therefore, included in the "non-closure" policy. During debate with the City on the definition, it was stated over and over again that there were "no plans by the City or the Department" and that we should not worry about it. When pressed to eliminate any discomfort that we might have by agreeing to our definition, the City reiterated that there were no plans to close Battalions and it became something of a perpetual riddle.

I would not have even thought about mentioning this but for the City's view of the acting out-of-title provision as that, in the kindest of terms, defies logic. A more cynical concern might be that it's intentional obfuscation without regard to principle or integrity. We still have six Battalions as I write, so I'll opt for the former... for now.

### Lowering the "Glass ceiling"?

The proverbial "Glass ceiling"; is that invisible but functional impediment to upward mobility of women in the workforce alive and well in the BCFD? As a certified, middle-aged male with thirty years of service and experience in a predominately male profession, I may not be the best judge of that query, but the fact that I am even THINKING about it is noteworthy. And, in the interest of fairness and full-disclosure, I myself hold some views and opinions that would surely not pass PC muster, but I can also VERY easily defend myself AND my position(s) with my record. I, in my role as Union Local President, have not, do not, and will not treat ANYONE differently based upon gender; period. You get hired and promoted on merit and you're a member of this Local without any caveat or exception, and we WILL represent "you" whoever "you" might be.

Our Department, like most urban departments in the country, is comprised of multiple bureaus and sub-divisions with multiple "career track" opportunities, and fire suppression happens NOT to be one of much success for our female members. In the Year of Our Lord 2004, we have TWO female suppression officers, and I believe that is not by any surreptitious intent, but by natural selection. Fire suppression is not necessarily the preferred career track for

many of our female members, and that's neither good nor bad, but simple reality. So what's the problem?

The two Bureaus within which our female members have had the most overall success in terms of promotion are the Medical and Communications Bureaus. In fact, the only two female Captains in the Department are in the Medical and Communications Bureaus and a very troubling pattern has developed in both Bureaus. In spite of the highly technical and dramatically divergent skills required for the highest levels of supervision in the Medical and Communications Bureaus, the positions of Battalion Chief in each have been summarily eliminated. Why is it that when female members have advanced to the brink of Chief Officer, the opportunity to compete and advance is simply taken away?

I think that someone has some explaining to do and while this writing may be dismissed as trivial, it's only the beginning.

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

*By Michael Waldner*

By now, all should be aware of the outcome of the contract vote. We have tentatively agreed to a 3% salary increase in January '05 to complete the wage reopener. We have also extended the contract to include a two-year extension of most all provisions as they exist, with the exception of some possible Health Care rates (depending on the FOP negotiations). In January '06 & '07 of this extension, we will receive matching 3% increases each year to total 9% salary increase over the three-year period from July '04 through July '07.

If you attended the contract vote meetings and listened to each Eboard member's opinion of this offer, you surely know that I opposed this deal. If you listened to the entire team, you could tell we were divided over good and bad points contained in the offer. At the first meeting, when our lawyer announced for the very first time, much to the surprise of the Negotiation Team that we were losing at Arbitration, we were flabbergasted. He torpedoed the whole process at that point, and I still disagree with his timing and his logic. But when your pitcher concedes defeat,

you don't stand much of a chance at winning. Time to go to the bullpen and get a new pitcher with some confidence and some heart. I felt we had a chance, and we still had a position to negotiate from with the City. They were eager to settle out of Arbitration, and we let them off too easily.

Unfortunately, not too many members found time to vote their minds on this matter. The crab feasts were better attended, and I am quite at a loss to understand why that would happen. Negotiating contracts is the single most important thing we do, and the results should be of utmost importance to our members and their families.

Speaking of the crab feasts, they were fabulous. Bob Jordan's crab soup was once again outstanding. Thanks to Bob and Char, his wife, Ben Alder, Tom Nosek and everyone on the Entertainment Committee for a pair of enjoyable parties.

Congratulations to all members who were honored for their efforts above and beyond the ordinary at Medals Day. This affair also honored our own and was not overly attended by recipients or comrades. Thanks in part to the appearance of the movie stars the attendance was up from last year, but certainly nothing to brag about. The ceremony came off very nicely. Thanks again to Tom Nosek, who worked on the Medals Day Committee for Local 964.

The long awaited release of "Ladder 49", the movie filmed in and about the Baltimore City Fire Department, has come and gone. The Premier at the Senator on Monday, September 27, 2004 was a spectacle to behold. With the help of my wife Kelly, Ben and Meghann Alder, Rick Lago and Tim Reilly (both from crew of T-2), a presentation was made to several of the prominent stars of the movie. On behalf of this Local, we extended honorary memberships in the IAFF and Local 964 to John Travolta, Joaquin Phoenix, Tim Guinee, and Kevin Chapman. Along with the membership card, each received a helmet and black wool and leather sleeved jacket emblazoned with the IAFF on back and Local logos and their names on the front. They portrayed Officers of Ladder 49 and Engine 33 in the movie. They were truly humbled and grateful to be so honored. They seemed to be more impressed with our presentation to them than how star struck we all were during this personal moment afforded us with them by the Disney folks on hand. They tried to

keep them away from the common folk, but we managed to get through the reception line. In its opening weekend, Ladder 49 finished second only to "Shark Tales", an animated blockbuster release in the vein of "Finding Nemo". This was pretty good, considering there are many more kids going to the movies than Firefighters and their families. The premier the next night, Tuesday September 28, 2004, for rank and file members held at the Charles Theater was also a great event. I would like to thank the owners of the Charles for the free tickets and especially the free drink and popcorn given to all who attended three showings before the public release. They truly honored all those who have made a career out of helping others by honoring our members and their families, who also make unheralded sacrifices in their daily routines. Normal families don't have to deal with Dad or Mom working Holidays or birthdays, etc., that we take in stride as just part of our routine in the firefighting business.

Let me continue my rant about attendance, as on Sunday October 3, 2004, the Department held its Annual Memorial Service to honor those active and retired members who passed away in the past year. Members of our department, other than the Command Staff and Union Officials, stayed away in droves. Had it not been for units detailed to this affair, you could have counted on one hand the number of active and retired members who bothered to join family members to wish a final goodbye to our former brothers in blue. Considering the number of active members honored, I was quite saddened to witness the lack of remembrance for each other by our brotherhood. I hope we can all find the time to correct that next year, beginning with Fallen Heroes Day at Dulaney Valley Cemetery in May '05. Please keep an eye out for the announcement, and try to attend these types of events for each other as well as for the grieving family. After all, in this business, it could just as easily be you, and your family might have to attend one of these functions. Hopefully, someone will be there to comfort and support them. "The more you give, the more you will receive".

This year's IAFF/MDA Softball Tournament was, as usual, a great success. Although in our "40 and over" bracket, Local 964's team lost both games, we were in there fighting to the very end. We drew Louisville, Ky., (4<sup>th</sup> place) and Montgomery Co.,

Md. (9<sup>th</sup> place), two of the better teams initially and held our own both games. This senior bracket is getting stronger every year and will soon exceed the twenty-team entry limit. Statistically, this is the fastest growing segment of slow-pitch softball nationwide. I would like to thank all the members who participated and invite all interested players to contact me about next year. We would like to enter a team in the Vegas Fire Games in the first week of May in sunny Las Vegas, Nevada. I am looking for members who are over or will turn 40 in 2005 to make this road trip. I have been the past three years and can attest that it is a great trip and benefits the 911 Fund.

Congratulations to all the participating members of the other three teams for their victories and placement in the "B" Division. Dickie Altieri's team finished tied at 13<sup>th</sup>, Mike Temple's group snagged a tie at 17<sup>th</sup> place and the Deerslayers finished tied at 33<sup>rd</sup> out of 65 entries.

### HEALTH & SAFETY

Last several meetings were canceled by the Administration, but here are the last updates from my previous article. The reminders are worth repeating.

1. The most important agenda item successfully attained is the release of the E53 Station funds to be diverted to roof repairs, etc. to the most desperate stations. Bids will go out ASAP and work will start as quickly as possible.

2. Still working on written confirmation system for apparatus repair reports and completion of work reports.

3. PM is now on a recurring 3-month cycle for Tues. – Thurs.; repairs are on Mon. and Fri. following Co.'s list of repair problem.

4. TB Exposure program scheduled for next meeting.

5. CPAT testing center set up should be used for next class.

6. 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 is unknown at this time, contact me with agenda items ASAP in case we do schedule one. If any issue is of an emergency or urgent nature, I will get in contact with Chief Heinbuch immediately to try and abate any problem.

Stay safe, and try to attend meetings to voice your opinion and be informed of the facts rather than listen to rumors!

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

By Ben Alder

As of this writing (10/3/04) the contract is still not signed, and we will be going over it line by line to ensure that it is what we agreed to and NOT anything other than just that. To listen to the Mayor talk about us in public and how well we are trained, how we are the best equipped and then to see what he is doing to us with Health Care, Benefits and Pay does more to demean us than words can express on this page.

The test for Battalion Chief was held the end of September and I still say and always will say, it should be a WRITTEN TEST! The interview process is flawed and subjective at best. You are rated on a one-time meeting by a panel of three, and we all know (if you have read the books) first impressions are everlasting and usually wrong! Of the seven scenarios given, ONE dealt with fire ground tactics - that, in it self is amazing. But beware of the danger from overhead, the magic wand is dropping crossed bugles and Commanders buttons all over the place, and some come with a magic carpet. At last count there are approximately 29 people that have been hit by the wand.

PSI: After speaking to Dr. Levi, he stated to me that if a member has a concern about being placed on Light Duty after they visit PSI, and your Doctor has said that you should be OFF, he wants you to have your Physician contact him. But, that same morning after speaking to him, they did just the opposite and placed a member on Light Duty who was told by his Physician NOT to work. I was also informed that the Department would work to the letter of PSI because we filed a Grievance. So much for the Department doing the RIGHT thing for the members!

We still have not had the meeting requested numerous times by the Local of the Labor Commissioner on the PSI Grievance.

MDA: *THANKS to all of the companies that put forth an effort to go out and collect. This was a record year for Mattie and the MDA.*

Metro Burn Fund: Members of the Burn Fund will be in Chapel Hill NC the middle of October attending the World Burn

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Contact: Lt. James E. Beebe, B5, E32  
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Congress Conference. We will be promoting Baltimore, as we will be hosting this conference in August 2005 at the Marriott Waterfront. This conference is for burn survivors from around the country. Please keep this date in mind; we will need plenty of help.

**Entertainment:** Once again the Crab Feasts were excellent. It still remains one of the best-kept secrets in the Union. You can't beat the price for all the crabs and food you can eat, beer and soda you can drink and all the Brotherhood you can handle. Thanks to Bob Jordan, Sam Darby and Tom Nosek for all of their help in making this a great event.

**Medals Day:** All I can say is Good Job to all involved in putting together the event, it was first class, as it should be for all of our members. Congratulations to all of the recipients, you deserve it.

### From the Desk of the Recording Secretary

By Mike Campbell

I had the distinct pleasure of attending my first IAFF Convention in Boston, MA. in August and was intrigued by the cohesiveness and the friendly atmosphere created by the International and my fellow firefighters. Elections were held for the General President and General Secretary-Treasurer positions which were won by Harold Schaitberger and Vincent Bollon respectively. The sixteen District Vice-President positions were up for election also with Bill Taylor winning re-election in the 4<sup>th</sup> District. There were a number of resolutions passed that will assist the IAFF in continuing to provide superb service to the Locals. The IAFF has long been an advocate for Firefighter and EMS workers, fighting legislative battles regarding staffing, collective bargaining, Fire Act funding and most recently protecting our overtime pay to name just a few. In an impassioned speech, President Schaitberger asked that all the Delegates return home and do more for their members and raise the bar a little in our expectations. I for one will be heeding President Schaitberger's words!

Your Negotiations Committee voted to bring back a contract offer from the City,

and you the members, voted to accept. I will not elaborate on the agreement because I am sure that President Fugate will speak of it in his column. I will state though, that you elected me to represent the entire membership not just a select segment. I would not be fulfilling my duty if I didn't provide you with every possible bit of information and the chance to hear all of the facts and let you decide what is best for your situation. No two people are exactly alike. What may be good for one may not be good for another, therein lies my reasoning for bringing back to the members a deal, that albeit did not provide 4% this year, but in my estimation, did do enough for the majority of our members to at least warrant some discussion and a vote.

The hearing tests are being administered by the Department at this time, and as of this date no one has been placed off duty due to their hearing. If you would like a copy of your hearing test, you can call PSI @410-332-9770 the day after your test and request a copy. You will have to go to PSI to pick it up.

I wanted to thank Brothers Alder, Jordan, Nosek, Darby and Sister Hatoff for a couple of tremendous crab feasts! I heard nothing but positive feedback about both of the affairs and am looking forward to many more. If you have an idea about a fundraiser or just a get-together for our members, please call Tom Nosek @410-917-5017, your Entertainment Chairman. **Long Live Our Union!**

### Health Care

The Ad-Hoc Committee that was tasked with looking into Health Care costs for active and retirees presented their report to the City Council on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. There were a few recommendations by the Committee that were well received by the Council and President Dixon. One such recommendation was that the City use funds that were rebated back to the City by CareFirst for pre-funding healthcare benefits utilizing a Trust Fund. This will have to be done by way of legislation. The Committee has been urged to continue with this process, and I can promise you that we will continue the fight.

If you have Fidelity Insurance, you should have received a letter from both the City and Fidelity alerting you that as of March 1, 2005, Fidelity will be discontinued as a healthcare provider. If you do not

make a change during this upcoming open enrollment period, you will be covered by Fidelity through December 31, 2005. During the open enrollment period for 2006, you will have to pick another healthcare provider. The City's letter in its entirety is located on my site on the Baltimore Fire Officers website. ( [iafflocal964.org](http://iafflocal964.org) ). One of our members has informed me that CareFirst no longer covers braces, support devices etc. until a \$200.00 deductible is met. In assisting one of our members, I learned from CareFirst, that you will be charged an office visit co-pay anytime you go to have physical therapy, and that if you have blood work done at a lab that is either attached to or affiliated with a doctors office, you will be charged an office visit co-pay also. If you go to a lab that is not attached to or affiliated with a doctor's office, you will not be charged office visit co-pay. My advice-research and ask questions before any type of procedure.

### President's Club

At the present time, we have 24 members who are participants of our President's Club. The President's Club is part of our PAC-Fund and takes the monies that are collected and utilizes them to support the politicians who support us. This is a very worthwhile endeavor, and I would like to increase our membership to 30 this upcoming year. We need your help so our voice will be heard!

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: [captain16@hotmail.com](mailto:captain16@hotmail.com)

### Words to twirl by...

You imagine me sipping champagne  
from your boot

For taste of your elegant pride,  
I may be going to hell in a bucket, babe  
But at least I'm enjoying the ride;  
at least I'll enjoy the ride.

--Grateful Dead

## 1st Annual Retirees Bull & Oyster Roast

December 4th, 2004

Columbus Gardens

Tickets \$30 each

Contact Charlie Williams 443-324-2531

## From the Desk of the Secretary-Treasurer

By Bob Jordan

First, let me thank the membership for my nomination at the September 8<sup>th</sup> meeting to be re-elected to the position of Secretary-Treasurer. And then on October 4<sup>th</sup>, when no one else was nominated, President Fugate, cast one vote to allow me to represent our Local again for another three-year term as your Secretary-Treasurer. I thank you for your trust and support in the job that I have been doing for our Local, and will continue to do the best I can for the Local and the IAFF.

I also want to say congratulations on the re-elections of Anita Hatoff to the position of Sergeant at Arms and the Bill Kern as Trustee each for another three year term. Both also ran unopposed, showing that the membership knows that they are doing a great job.

**Per Capita:** At the IAFF Convention in Boston in August, the membership passed resolutions that increased the Per Capita that we pay to the IAFF by 42 cents. What this means to our Local is the Per Capita paid to the IAFF for each active member has increased to \$8.91 for each active member and \$4.46 for each retiree of our Local. At present we have 324 active members and 414 retired members which means the increase per month in the Per capita will cost the Local about \$225. I will not get into a

big debate in this article about increases of this size (which I consider high), but if the IAFF doesn't control spending, they will find (and they already are) that they are forcing the small Locals out of the IAFF.

**IAFF Alumni Program:** Let me make sure our members know the facts behind this new program by the IAFF that was established by Resolution #40 at the convention in Las Vegas in 2002.

Many States and Canada Provinces do not allow Locals to have retirees to participate in an "Active-Retired" status for the Local. And those retirees were not allowed to keep a retired status with the IAFF. In turn, the IAFF could no longer send them any request for contributions to the Firepac, or offer them membership in other IAFF programs such as the IAFF Financial Corporation, IAFF VISA card and other programs that the IAFF can offer to "Active-Retired" members.

That is why we have always made our members "Active-Retired" in the IAFF, so that you always had those benefits afforded to you, including receiving the IAFF newsletter. Included in this Resolution was a provision, that if your Local offers an "Active-Retired" status, you may not join the IAFF Alumni program. The program's intent was to allow those retired members who were not allowed to be "Active-Retired" by law, a chance to again become members of the International Fire Fighters Association. If any retired members have any questions regarding this issue, please call me at 410-908-2434.

## IN MEMORY OF F.F. ERNIE CERIALE A TRIBUTE TO MY BROTHER, MY FRIEND

It is the 3rd year anniversary of the tragic death of my brother Ernie. It still seems like yesterday for me and my family, and sometimes I think that it will always feel that way. For those who knew Ernie personally and had the privilege to work with him, knew firsthand what a good person he was and a fine Fireman that gave his all on the Fireground. Someone you could always count on when it came to getting the job done no matter how hairy it got. I'm sure there are many who miss his smile and wonderful spirit. I know that Ernie touched many people the short time he was here, and it will always be difficult to accept the fact that he is no longer with us for those of us that loved him and meant so much to. AS WE GO THROUGH OUR BUSY LIVES CAUGHT UP IN WORK AND OTHER THINGS, I HOPE THAT YOU WILL ALL TAKE A MOMENT ONCE IN A WHILE TO REFLECT ON WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO US AND SOME OF THE THINGS THAT WE MAY TAKE FOR GRANTED EVERY DAY. I hope those of you that knew Ernie will take the time to pray for him from time to time. I will always miss Ernie so very much, HE WAS MY BROTHER, MY FRIEND.

--Michael Ceriale

## Sick and Injured

By Bob Hatoff

Gil Wurzbacher has been in and out of GBMC with continuing problems with his knee replacements. 9/8

Ed Turner had a mild stroke but was doing well enough to attend the Retiree's meeting on 9/9.

Frank Brown had his leg amputated after complications from an accident. He's home, but depressed. 9/13

Charlie Williams had to get a stent put in a vein after chest pains. He's okay now. 9/9

Harry Stone was in the hospital on 7/26 after blood sugar problems. He's back home now. 8/11

Walt Middleton is home recovering from hemorrhoid surgery. 9/5

Bob Milaro's wife suffered serious injuries after being hit by a motorcycle. She had surgery at Shock Trauma and is facing more.

Ken Schutz had quad by-pass and is home recovering. 9/17

Junior Conavan had radiation which burned his back, but did clear the tumor. 9/14

Joe Andresini has moved to Brightview Assisted Living, 8100 Rossville Blvd., 410-665-4003. He's healed enough to get his artificial leg. 9/19

Frank Giotis is recovering at his daughter's home after spinal surgery. 9/24

Bill Bogdan has completed chemo and his scan looks good. 9/23

Ralph Malin had oral surgery and is home ignoring his doctors orders to take it easy. 9/23

Porky Heckrotte had knee replacement surgery and is at Sinai Rehab. 9/25

James H. Smith has Alzheimers and is at Frederick Villa in Catonsville. 9/27

The following members have passed away. Gone but not forgotten:

Ed J. Rasinski • Thomas C. Lombardo  
Chester Wisniewski • John "Mike" Fish  
Joseph E. King • Robert Tavarez  
Ed L. Garner • Robert S. Brown  
Donald W. Stanley • Al Feehely  
John "Ed" Ganovski • Mrs. Charles Hoyt

# Tired and Retired

by Bob Hatoff

In my last column I wrote about the support group Joe Kudrna had started for amputees. The only problem was I got his phone number wrong. So if you're an amputee or know someone who is, you can reach Joe at 410-529-6515. Sorry about that Joe, keep up the good work you've started.

Next up, I found some time to go through some of the bags of fan mail I receive every week. One of the letters was from my old instructor at Fire School, Jack True. Jack is now 88 and living it up in Florida, although it keeps getting tougher for him to outrun the hurricanes. He wants to say hi to all his friends. I took care of this at the Retirees meeting and now in my column. Okay Jack, I did my part. Don't forget to send me the check.

Sadly,, I must report the death of the Fire Department Retreat. It was killed by the extremely bright glare of sunlight reflecting off the gold stripes on the arms of Chief Bill Goodwin and his appointed shills. Years ago, before these men reached their glorified positions, the Retreat was safe from the glare. In fact, these same men attended and very much enjoyed the Retreat. Things have changed now, and you have to sell your soul to get the stripes. I loved and admired Father Schwind and he was a real force in my life. He started the Retreat about 40 years ago with several fire fighters. I have a lifetime of beautiful memories of the good father and the Retreat. No one can take them away from me, and I'll cherish them as long as I breathe. As for the killers, they'll have to deal with their self-serving acts on their own.

This month's column is difficult to write as I would be telling you what a great time I had at the Retreat, but I can't. I would be encouraging you to attend the Memorial Service. However, I can't do that either, because for the first time in more than 3 decades, I wasn't notified when and where the Memorial Service committee meetings were to take place. I'm the Retiree's representative on the committee, but apparently we're of no importance anymore. Then again, maybe some men didn't have the guts to look me in the eye. Have no fear brave chiefs, I'm going out of my way to avoid being where you are.

Brothers and sisters, I'm sure by now my hurt and anger is quite obvious. I'm also sure it's quite un-Christ like. Ephesians 4:26 says don't let the sun go down on your wrath. I also know I must forgive people who sin against me or Christ will not forgive my sins, which are many. As of now, I haven't obeyed either of these commands. I'm working to get to the point where I'll do what is right, but it's very difficult. Please keep me in your prayers.

As always you can reach me at 1805 Greencastle Drive, Baltimore, MD 21237 or 410-866-3235. Good news is always welcome.

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