

# 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*

### The parting of a legend (Volume 1)

You likely already know that Local 964 conducts election for executive Board members and Trustees in what amount to three-year cycles that effectively "stagger" the principal officers and three Trustees so that it's highly unlikely that there will be a complete turn-over of the entire Board in any single year. There is, of course, a possibility that a single vacancy might result in multiple moves and several "new" Board members but that, too, has proven improbable. The net result is that as we approach our sixtieth year of existence as a Union Local in February of 2008, the stability and continuity that exists at the Executive Board and Trustee levels of our Union Local has been extraordinary and, in my humble opinion, very productive for our membership.

In addition to, and perhaps counter-intuitive, of stability and continuity, however, staggered elections also prevents "tickets" of like-minded members running as a "team" and actually encourages independence and autonomy. Once again, the net result is that we have had and continue to have a diversity of opinion that is not only healthy, but keeps the process honest so to speak. We may not always agree or be in complete harmony, but we listen to and consider the opinions that may differ from our own and the same divergent

views of our total membership are more likely than not to be weighed.

All of that comes to mind as we, just today (October 1, 2007), mailed the ballots for this year's election and with that having been done via first-class mail, surely you've received yours by now and hopefully responded already. You will have taken particular note, however, that the top of the ballot is for the position of Secretary-Treasurer and the nominees do not include that of our incumbent, Bob Jordan. It has been more than two years now, so you may have forgotten that Bob retired from the Department in June of 2005 but having been re-elected to a fourth term in November of 2004, he was permitted to and, thankfully, agreed to remain in office for the duration of that fourth three-year term.

The position of Secretary-Treasurer was created in 1994 when the former positions of Financial Secretary and Treasurer were combined reducing the Executive Board from six to five members. This Board contraction was prompted by the stepping-down and eventual retirement of Chuck Nolte who had served as Treasurer meaning that an incumbent member of the Board would not have been left without a position to serve in. Let me note that though I opposed the combining of the two positions for various reasons, if it were to be done at all the most logical time to do it was when an incumbent member chose not to run again. I do believe it would have been unfair to Chuck or anyone else to eliminate their position if they had intended to continue in office so the timing was right, the membership agreed and the change was made.

With the change in Board structure complete, the election for Local 964's

first Secretary-Treasurer ensued and in a most unlikely turn of events, I found myself the winner of that election. From the very start and among my concerns for combining the two previous positions, it was clear that the position was more than one person could handle in addition to a full-time job and I'd gotten myself into WAY more than I anticipated. In a Union Local without benefit of any secretarial staff or assistance, the role of Secretary-Treasurer is simply a never-ending cycle of paperwork, accounting, record-keeping and reporting that has to be experienced to be appreciated. From the beginning, there were four separate and distinct accounts with varying degrees of activity and a fifth was soon added with the start of our bingo operation in 1995.

As the official "keeper of the records" for the Local, I was also committed to conducting ALL of the regular business as Secretary-Treasurer at our Union Hall and soon found myself spending more time there and at work than at home. Over the course of the next two years, I did my absolute best to maintain the day-to-day activities of the Local, keep our finances in order and, in effect, "create" the position that had not existed previously. All of what had been done by two Board members was now the responsibility of one and rather than becoming easier with computerization, things became much more difficult and time consuming.

Early in 1996, then President John Seiss announced that he would not seek re-election in the fall of that year and through a series of discussions with other board members and with Frank

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

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Uhlhorn declining to succeed John, I decided to run for Local President myself. Among the considerations to make that move, however, was a heightened concern for who might assume the still rather fragile position of Secretary-Treasurer. Bob Jordan had been serving as a Trustee with regular oversight of the Local's finances and though he fully understood and appreciated the task at hand, he decided to seek election as Secretary-Treasurer and in the fall of 1996, we were both successful in our elections. The rest, as they say, is history.

Suffice it to say that in the twelve years to follow, if there has been a single factor in whatever success I or we as a Local have had, it is in some way because of Bob Jordan. Bob not only took over the position of Secretary-Treasurer in what I acknowledge to have been a "fragile" state but literally redefined the position and created the systems, policies and procedures that will easily survive the next sixty years.

Bob has, for the last twelve years, been my reliable partner making things happen when some creativity was needed and bringing prudent caution to the debate when that was needed. He has, somehow, balanced the books while paying the bills on time every time and has been the single most influential member of the Board in fiscal matters large and small. To say that he will be missed is truly the understatement of the year and though I am confident he will assure a smooth transition to his successor, there is now and will only be ONE Bob Jordan.

Finally (for now) Bob has continued to function in his Union Local position for a little more than two years since his retirement in June of 2005 and has literally volunteered much of his time in doing so. There has been some minor debate about a retired member continuing service as an Executive Board member and that very issue will be dealt with later herein. Let me say for the record, however, that I Thank God every day that Bob chose to complete his term of office as currently provided for in our Con-

stitution and By-Laws. In the time since his retirement, what has become the largest single economic venture in the sixty year history of our Local came to fruition and though not yet complete, every detail of the ongoing renovation projects in our Union Hall have been handled personally by Bob. Whoever prevails in the election to succeed him, I intend to ask Bob to continue his work on our behalf regarding those projects and I sincerely pray he'll agree.

### Criminal Background Checks

Seemingly coincidental with the implementation phase of a new City central payroll system, several members were promoted into our Local but the attendant salary increases were not made in a timely manner. Frankly, there's nothing new to that process often taking several payroll periods and though it's always difficult to determine who might have been at fault, the changes are ultimately made with back-pay and aside from taking too long, no harm-no foul.

The Board member typically responsible for such payroll issues is Mike Campbell and I think it's fair to say that our members could not have a better advocate on their behalf. Mike is relentless in his efforts and we ALL believe that there are few issues more important than assuring prompt and proper payment as an employee's absolute right. We do not presume to know nor do we need to know the economic realities of our member's lives and we do not view ANY money issue, however small, as insignificant. Unfortunately, our view appears not to be shared by some others in the chain of implementation and control and all too often there's no urgency in their efforts at resolution.

Such was (we thought) the matter with our members promoted since June 27, 2007 and as each pay date passed without resolve, it appeared to us that it was merely more of the same. After more than two months, however, we learned that there was something more to the delay in promotional salary increases and we were advised that it was an unintended consequence of the aforementioned "new" payroll system provided by Automated Data Processing (ADP).

We now know that the "new" payroll system, in part, automated any number of payroll issues that previously might have been done manually and/or haphazardly or not at all. Those issues varied significantly and ranged from salary garnishment, customary payroll deductions, IRS and resident State regulations, AND City Policies.

Unbeknownst to anyone in OUR Department, there has existed since 1991 an Administrative Manual Policy (A.M. 237-1) that REQUIRES a criminal background check for any employee promoted to a "position of trust". Every "rated" position in OUR Department is considered a "position of trust" and therefore ANY promotion requires as a City Policy a criminal background check. Once the Department and the Locals became aware of the "hurdle" to proper payment, the forms required were made available and EVENTUALLY distributed to the members involved for processing. At this point, we do not know if anyone promoted since June 27, 2007 has been processed and is receiving their proper payment but the issue is not that simple in any event.

Several of the members REQUIRED to subject themselves to the check objected not only to the check itself but the form they are now required to complete and sign authorizing said check. To say the very least, the form that is being used is TOTALLY inappropriate for the stated purpose and literally gives the City carte blanche access to any and every personal record that exists. The City claims that they only intend to conduct a criminal background check through a third party provider and do not venture into any other area such as credit or MVA checks. Forgive me for my cynicism but it's the result of personal experience and I DO NOT TRUST "THEM" whoever "THEM" might be.

Beyond the concerns of the check itself and the form for authorization is the matter of "what happens if an infraction appears as a result of the check"? The answer that we received from the Department of Human Resources is that it becomes a decision made at the Agency level. In other words, someone within the Administration of OUR Department would apparently determine whether or not a newly promoted mem-

ber would retain their position based upon the content of the check.

So, in addition to "trusting" that no one would actually use the authority provided by the completed and signed form to access personal records beyond a criminal background check, we are to "trust" the judgment of OUR Department Administration to fairly and evenly apply unstated standards in cases of negative findings. If ever there were a clear and concise definition of what we mean by "No Confidence", this is it.

The issue has been grieved by the Joint Locals and is scheduled for a Hearing by the Labor Commissioner on October 19, 2007. I will not get into how we intend to proceed with our case outside of that process but we will keep you posted as the issue develops. In the interim, we can only advise our newly promoted members that to comply or not with the A.M. Policy is a decision that THEY will have to make. If you do not comply, you will not be paid as you should and that is beyond our control aside from taking the action we already have.

#### **FY'08 M.O.U.**

In a matter that affects ALL of our members, we continue to work with the City to reach agreement on ALL of the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding for fiscal year 2008 including the new salary scales. By the time this newsletter reaches you, we will have had SEVEN pays since the actual effective date of our negotiated increases and though several of those pays were prior to our reaching settlement agreement on August 10<sup>th</sup>, we believe that there has been ample time for movement toward implementation of new salary scales and payment including back-pay.

There remain a handful of issues as of this writing (10/01/07) and we hope to have those addressed soon and however frustrating it might be to have to wait for so long, we do believe it's better to have it right than quick. We've learned the hard way over the years that the devil is always in the detail in terms of contractual language and we have an obligation to make sure the document we eventually sign is reflective of exactly what we agreed to in the process.

#### **To Our Retirees**

First and foremost, our return on investments in the Fire & Police Employees' Retirement System for FY'07 were 19.8%, placing our system in the top THREE PERCENT of public pension funds and guaranteeing a post-retirement increase payable in January of '08. Exactly what that increase might be is not yet known and too important a matter to guess about so. . .

At this time I cannot provide a percentage figure at this time. I can tell you that we typically receive a preliminary report from our system actuary at our October Pension Board meeting (10/16) and I hope to be able to respond knowingly after that date. When the final figure is available, I will post that information on our web site and do not mind at all if you would prefer to contact me directly at 1.888.625.4386.

There has been a continuing problem with our retired members who do not have the requisite "forty quarters" of Social Security covered employment to qualify for Medicare coverage and I know personally of several members who are now paying a quarterly fee for participation as a result.

It seems that just prior to reaching age sixty-two, our retired members receive a letter from employee benefits advising of the need to apply for Medicare coverage and the implication is that due to our exemption from Social Security as members of the F & P, the City has NO obligation in the matter and qualification for Medicare is individual specific.

Retired Lieutenant Ron O'Brien took issue with that approach and after a significant amount of research and communication with the appropriate agencies, it was determined that he did indeed qualify for Medicare coverage in spite of his lacking the "forty quarters". Ron has provided documents to the Union which we are now having evaluated and at the risk of raising the expectations of others in a similar situation, he may well have found the solution to a long-standing problem.

We hope to have more definitive and demonstrably accurate information on this issue in the near future and will provide that directly to our retired members should our findings be helpful.

#### **Constitution & By-Laws**

As noted in the start of this writing, Bob Jordan has (thank goodness) continued to function as an Executive Board member for the last two-plus years though he officially retired in June of 2005. While his continuance in office has been nothing short of a blessing, it also created some concern in that perhaps Bob is unique in his contributions to the Local and its members. Further, there seems to be a belief that ALL FIVE members of the Executive Board that effectively comprise the negotiating team should be actively employed. Whether or not that is the consensus of the membership as a whole remains to be seen but it is surely an issue that most be given due consideration.

To that end, the Executive Board (including Bob), acting as a Constitution & By-Laws Committee is proposing the following amendment that will, if adopted, decree that active employment in the BCFD is a requisite not only to seek nomination and be elected to office but to continue in office once elected. Simply stated, official retirement from the BCFD would automatically result in removal from office in Local 964 and create a vacancy to be filled by an active member. Proposed changes appear in bold, underlined and italicized.

#### **Proposal**

##### **Article III - Membership**

###### **Section 1a**

When an active member retires he /she shall be eligible to retain membership as a retired member, but will not be eligible as a nominee for elective office **nor will he or she be eligible to continue in an elective office**; other than as a representative of the retired members on the Board of Directors; or as a delegate or alternate to conventions.

##### **Article IV - Officers**

###### **Section 6**

Any regular active member of the Baltimore City Fire Department in this local in good standing is eligible for election to **and retention of** the office of President, 1st. and 2nd. Vice President, Secretary Treasurer, Recording Secre-

tary, Sergeant-at-Arms, Trustee and Board of Directors; provided, however, that said member, in order to qualify for elective office or become a candidate to any convention, must have attended at least five (5) regular meetings during the Twelve (12) month period immediately prior to the date of nominations. Special meetings are not to be construed as a regular meeting. **Should an active member in an elected office as described herein retire from active service, his or her retirement shall be considered a "Vacancy for Elected Office" and subject to the provisions of Article IV, Section 1 of the By-Laws hereof.**

This being proper notice of a proposed Constitution & By-Laws change as provided in **Article XII – Amendments**, the proposal will be voted upon by the members present at the December 2007 meetings of the Union Local. If approved by members present and voting, the amendment will be submitted to the IAFF for final approval with immediate implementation.

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

By Michael Waldner

The Sunpaper reported this week that the Police Unions settled on a new contract with a 5% raise. No details yet on timing of the effect of the raise. Good news for us as they have guns and hopefully will be able to get the City to institute their increase (as well as ours) before we start in January for negotiations for our next raise to take effect in July '08. Instead of whining that we held them back from getting a larger raise, maybe they should contribute to our Negotiations lawyer fees, which paid for their easy and inexpensive negotiation process.

Congratulations and thanks to Tom Nosek and the Entertainment Committee who once again out did themselves and treated the membership to two great crab feasts. The crabs were big and heavy and the other food offerings as always were delicious. I'm

sure all who attended are looking forward to next year and hopefully we will be able to entice an even bigger crowd. Don't miss out on another fabulous Union sponsored event. This is a bargain crab feast and is unmatched by crab feasts by any other organization around. It was a pleasure to see all the retirees enjoy them selves and mingle with our current members. It proves that no matter how different we seem, we are really so much alike and bound together in the Firefighter brotherhood.

In the ever-expanding EMS Division there have been many changes and upgrades of personnel recently. Congratulations to the BCFD's first ever-female Battalion Chief Laurie Shiloh. She was promoted because she does her job day in and day out to the best of her ability and for no other reason. No politics or kool aid, just hard work and fairness to those she works with on a daily basis. A promotion that was well deserved and earned the proper way. Unfortunately, this method is apparently not worthy of any publicity campaign or hoopla attached to the announcement. Not to worry Laurie, we respect your accomplishment and salute you and your integrity. Also included on the same order, promotions to BC for Chuck Cheelsman and Alex Perricone, equally earned and deserved. They will be joining recently promoted Battalion Commander Dickson Henry to help administer our EMS Division. Joining them are newly promoted EMS Captains: Mark Fletcher, Theresa Harp, Tavon Claggett, Jim Matz, and Kim Staton. As a result of the previous promotions, we also welcome new EMS Lieutenants: Sarah Dausch, Abdul Waajid, Jon Brooks, John Blake, and Donald Dziwulski to our Local.

We also welcomed new Lieutenants in Suppression due to a flurry of list expiring promotions, which include Jeff Walsh, Mitch Gilbert, Ellery Queen, Tim Rice, Henrietta Lewis-Ott, Matt Dubois, Heather Patzman-Cate, and Andy Franz. Two new Battalion Commanders were appointed recently sending Ron Mosteller to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and placing Bo Lehl in charge of the Fire Marshall's Office. Congrats to new Captains Harry Melrose, Scott Czwaltko, and Jim McCauley. Best of

luck to all in your continued careers and in getting proper pay rates to match your promotions.

**Please read this next section and take immediate action! During the summer months we did not use the Heart/Lung Scan and Assessment Program and are in danger of losing this vital benefit!**

As stated in the last newsletter, 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.** 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 members through the heart/lung scans. We have had much success and participation due to the confidentiality of the heart/lung scans and we intend to continue in that mode with this venture to ensure that trust level. Please take advantage of it. You are never too young or too old to monitor your health. **Again, these are open to active and retired members of both Locals.** Please take advantage of these appointments while they last. We need to keep the schedule full until all active and retired members avail themselves of this unique opportunity. Union Memorial will only staff these programs if we use them. Summer is over and we need to fill all the appointments, especially before the holidays creep up on us and personal schedules get busier.

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 feedback. 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.**

The 34<sup>th</sup> annual IAFF/MDA fall Tournament in Bowie on September 7, 8, & 9 was another great success for MDA. We won our first game Friday morning against Providence, RI. We followed that with a loss Friday evening to Houston, TX. We didn't hit and they did, what else can I say. We victoriously returned Saturday morning with a shortened 5-inning slaughter rule shutout 12-0 against Fairfax, Va. Our finale took place Saturday evening, without our bats once again, against Miami Dade, FL. We had greater expectations but hitting is the key, and when the bats go cold bad things happen. I would like to thank all those who came down to participate as well as our fans. We will try to improve our record next year at the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual event. This could well be the last year of this event. Anyone interested in getting in on the action before it disappears forever should call me to reserve a spot on next year's roster. This roster can

only include members over 40 or turning 40 years old in calendar year 2008.

Please try to attend our monthly meetings (October 1 & 15, November 5 & 19). In September nominations were made for Secretary-Treasurer (Anita Hatoff, Ben Alder, Steve Kowalewski), Sergeant-at-Arms (Art Turner, Frank Schlosser) and Trustee (3yr term- Steve Horchar, Kevin Rock & 1yr term- Harvey Webster, Jim Murray) positions for the next three-year term. These are the few interested and active members willing to step up and be leaders in this organization. I am sure all will do a great job if elected. You decide who you want to steer this Local into the future and fight your battles for you. Ballots will be arriving before or around the same time as this newsletter. As always educate yourself on the candidates, read their campaign literature and **make sure you vote** for the leadership you want to manage your Local for the future. Mark your ballot and put it in the self addressed and stamped return envelope and drop in the mail. Only ballots in the official envelope will be counted. It can't be any easier than that to take active control of your Union and make a difference in your own future and that of your Union leadership.

**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).**

**Support  
Your  
Union**

**Attend Union  
Meetings!**

## From the Desk of the 2nd Vice President

By Mike Campbell

This is the last thing that I want to do, but I will begin this article as I did the last with some sad news to pass on to our members. Retired Captain and former Vice-President of the Fire Officers, Frank Uhlhorn is ill and is currently receiving home hospice. Frank is an icon of the Union along with the BCFD and has worked tirelessly for our members while on the Executive Board. I would ask all of our brothers and sisters to pray for Frank and his family during this most difficult of times. I also would ask our members to keep in their prayers, Active Battalion Chief Steve Canter who lost both his wife Jenny, and his younger brother Mike in a span of 48 hours! My last bit of pleading to you is for Retired Assistant Chief Michael Dalton and his family who also have a courageous fight ahead of them! We do what we do for maybe 30 to 35 years and it's all good, but then...

WOW, where do you go from there? I'm not quite sure, but I know that the men I mentioned above would want me to continue with what it is that we do and that is giving our membership the best bang for their buck, so here goes! The "new" payroll system, (anyone have an aspirin)? This has gone from bad to worse with the City informing the Local that all future promoted members must complete a background check in order to receive their promotional pay. Our attorney has looked over the document and the Union has filed a grievance over this. Currently our members have two avenues they can pursue, either complete the form and begin receiving what is rightfully yours or refuse to sign and wait for the outcome of the grievance, but this could take many months and in the end we still could not prevail. I am in agreement with our members and hope that we prevail on this issue! The City explained that this item has been a part of the Administrative Manual (237-1) since 1991 and that at that time the Fire Dept. deemed all positions in the De-

partment as "positions of trust". I cannot tell you why it wasn't complied with in the past only that the new HRIS payroll system has picked up on every payroll rule and we are being told that it cannot be bypassed. We are also being told that they are not doing a credit history check or a check of MVA, but they are included in the document. I apologize if it seems that we aren't empathetic to our members on this, but we are doing everything humanly possible to rectify it ASAP! If you are experiencing issues with MECU such as savings account, or Christmas fund deductions, my advice is to complete a new deduction card. This will expedite the matter faster than phone calls. With the current lists being investigated by the Inspector General's office any promotions that become available will be held in abeyance until the investigation is completed and all promotions will be backdated with full pay and seniority. By the time you read this the Local will be owed (1) Captain and (3) Lieutenant Promotions.

Congratulations to all of our recently promoted members and a special congrats to Chief Shiloh, Chief Cheelsman and Chief Perricone on their promotions to Battalion Chief, EMS. The Union had fought long and hard for these spots and it is nice to see a win in the column for once. Laurie Shiloh has become the first female Battalion Chief in the history of the Department and kudos to her!

Please keep abreast by logging on the Fire Officers website at [www.iafflocal964.org](http://www.iafflocal964.org).

### Health Care

Open Enrollment will begin on November 5th and run until November 16th. I had previously stated in the August Newsletter that Kaiser was no longer a plan participant. That was a mistake and there are no changes to plan participants nor to the drug carrier for 2008. Prudential Life is no longer the Life Insurance carrier. The new carrier is The Standard. If you maintain the same level of coverage then all of your coverage volumes and beneficiaries will roll over to The Standard. **I have included in this Newsletter a document that can explain the process along with the**

**changes this year.** Active employees will again have to make changes online, but Retirees can either make changes online or, if you do not have access to a computer, then you can complete the mailed out worksheet. If you aren't making changes then there is nothing to do. All plans are covering dependents up to age 25 until the end of that calendar year. There is no need for school verification. You must still request the waiver for opting out of coverage. To make changes online you will need your social security number and your pin # which is your month and day of birth unless you changed this last year. For newborns and new spouses you must make the change online. If you have the supplemental dental coverage from SF&C, you will have to call them and complete a form to have your coverage halted. It may take 6 to 8 pays, but I am being told that they will reimburse you what you have paid. The City is asking everyone to complete an updated Beneficiary form even if nothing has changed. The Employee Benefits Division is located at 201 E. Baltimore Street, Suite 500. Staff of the Employee Benefits Division will be available to provide computer assistance and/or answer questions. <https://www.baltimorecity.essbenefits.com>

**It is extremely important that you notify the Fire Department and the Union if your address or phone number has changed. A lot of important information can be missed if those two things aren't done.**

### Safety and Health

The Safety & Health meeting was held on 9/20/07. Items discussed with the Committee are the following: We were given a demonstration from Draeger on updates to the NFPA standards for SCBA's and PASS Devices along with their latest version of the SCBA. Chief Goodwin addressed the Committee and informed us that beginning with Recruit Class 20; the Fire Dept. is looking into addressing the physicality of recruits by mentoring them for 12 weeks of CPAT then testing them on CPAT. We were told that if they fail they are out. Annual CPAT testing is being looked into. I applaud the Chief on this. This is an issue

that myself, and our Local have felt passionate about for quite some time. He also would like to address the incumbent members as well and that he is looking for input from the Locals. Brian Hesselbach E-50 is now assisting Jim Bellamy with Plymovent repairs. Jim Bellamy attempted to get funding for additional Ward Diesel systems for our first lines and it was shot down by Finance at City Hall. I have spoken to the Labor Commissioner about the NFPA standard along with the grievance that was one over diesel exhaust. The Plymovent is much too expensive to maintain and the Ward systems are easier to maintain. New Inferno stretchers are being placed on Medic Units. TB and Flu testing should begin this fall. T-10 and T-16 received new trucks. These have headsets that are mounted onboard. The Safety Office is looking to replace the 2<sup>nd</sup> line turnout gear that is out of NFPA compliance. 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 next meeting is scheduled for 10/18/07. Contact me with any issues.

### President's Club

As a Local, our membership voted to endorse Keiffer Mitchell, Jr. for Mayor by an overwhelming 86% majority. I would like to thank all of our dedicated members who went above and beyond the usual lip service and gave of themselves and their time for a candidate who **didn't** attempt to alter our Retirees Health Care language in our MOU and who **didn't** attempt to take time away from your family by altering your work schedule and last but not least **didn't** offer us, during negotiations, an abysmal 1% raise. We did not succeed this time around and the Monday morning quarterbacks were out in force asking why we get involved at all. My answer to that is quite simple. I would rather back someone who backs us then to take it on the chin and say "thank you sir, may I have another"! With that in mind, we need more members contributing to our PAC Fund. 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. The Presidents Club shirts are in and I am in the process of getting them to all President Club members.

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

Cell – 443-629-0216  
Work – 410-396-5773  
E-mail: [captain16@hotmail.com](mailto:captain16@hotmail.com)

### Worlds to twirl by...

I seen all the movie stars  
In their fancy cars and their limousines  
Been high in the Rockies under the evergreens  
I know what I'm needin  
And I don't wanna waste more time  
I'm in a New York state of mind!

--Billy Joel

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## Note Of Thanks

As many of you know, my family and I have experienced a number of serious maladies, especially over the last several months. Two of those culminated recently with the loss of my younger brother Mike on September 20th, immediately followed by the death of my wife Jenny on September 21st.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many, many members who have continually shown their heartfelt support to me, my family, and especially my wife Jenny, during these very trying times. From the countless cards, e-mails, and personal encouragements, to those that granted me the excessive time off requests needed to properly provide care at home, I am grateful beyond words. I am very proud to be associated with such a great group of men and women!

Steve Canter

Battalion Chief 2/D

## From the Desk of the Secretary-Treasurer

*By Bob Jordan*

### End of a Decade

I have one more newsletter to write in December but I thought now is the time to address this subject.

I have been very fortunate to be your Secretary-Treasurer for the last ten years, and I want to THANK the membership for their vote of confidence in electing me to that position over these years.

Yes, that is right, 10 years and Trustee three years before that. First thing I want to do is thank our Executive Board that I have had the privilege to work with over the last ten years. Many things have changed in this Fire Department during those ten years, but I can speak for one thing, that you (the members) have been represented and your rights have been respected and fought for during the time that I have been on this Executive Board.

First and MOST OF ALL, I want to thank my wife, Char (short for Charlene), for ALLOWING me to even run for this position. If it was not for her support to say, "I know this will mean I will not see you that much, if you want it, go for it". Any person who has been a Union Representative, you know what I mean. You miss a lot of time away from your family, but then you are representing another family, one that also needs your support because you were elected by them to do the job that is required.

I want to thank President Fugate for the support in first helping me when I ran for the position of Secretary-Treasurer. If anyone can remember, we had two positions in the Local that dealt with finances in the Local. There was the position of Financial Secretary, and the position of Treasurer. They were both combined and Steve Fugate was the first person to hold that position. I ran for Steve's position of Trustee when Steve ran for the new position of Secretary-Treasurer, and held that position until Steve decided to run for the position of President when John Seiss decided not to run for re-election.

That is when I decided to run for the position of Secretary-Treasurer, not having one clue (well maybe a little as Trustee) of what the job incurred, but learned very quickly, with the help of Steve. Not to go into a long history of the Union finances when I took over the job of Secretary-Treasurer, the Union needed to move in a direction to be financially sound which meant changing the dues structure of the Local, which we did going to the 1% of the base pay for members of the Local.

I want to let every member, active and retired, know that who ever wins this election to the position of Secretary-Treasurer, will have my full support, and I will work with them through the end of my term and as long as they feel they need me to add support and information afterwards..

Thank you for allowing me the ten years of being your Secretary-Treasurer of this Local. Thank You.

## Dues Increase for Retirees

I hate to bring this news, but I feel that it should come from me instead of a new Secretary-Treasurer.

Due to the fact that as of September 1, 2007, we are now paying the International Association of Fire Fighters \$10.22 per active member in Per Capita per month and one-half of that for retired members, or \$5.11. Dues at the present time is \$3.00 per pay for retirees, which has been the same amount since I became Trustee / Treasurer, over ten years ago and way before that.

Since we are only receiving \$6.00 per month and paying the IAFF \$5.11, this only leaves the finances of the Union 89 cents for the other materials we supply to the retirees, such as the newsletter and postage for mail outs, such as the ballot you just received. The added income will also help the cost incurred during negotiations to retain the health care coverage that WE, and I say we, because I am a retiree also, presently have. Also there are going to be more increases in the Per Capita in the future and the cost of running the Union has also increased and will increase in the future.

The Trustees and I are proposing an increase of \$2.00 per pay to take effect on the first pay in February. The reason for the start in February, is because the retirees are going to receive a raise (of at least 3% we were told by the Pension System) in January 2008, and we wanted to make sure that each and every retiree knows exactly how much that increase was in dollars and cents in their pay check. This increase in dues should be more than enough so that no other increase should be need for a long period of time

A vote for this proposal will be held at the regular meetings in December (December 3rd and 17<sup>th</sup>) according to our by-laws.

If anyone has any questions, please feel free to call me at 410-908-2434

*Bob Jordan,  
Secretary-Treasurer*

### From the Desk of the Recording Secretary

By Tom Nosek

The annual crab feasts were again a success, though the turnout was quite low, the crabs and food were fantastic. I would like to thank Bob Jordan for getting the "big" crabs. I also want to thank Steve Fugate, Mike Campbell, Frank Schlosser, Gil Brooks, Harvey Webster, Larry Goldberg, Art Turner, Anita Hatoff and Mark Playtek for all of their help.

We raised over \$1600 for FF Dwyer from Hazmat 1 who recently had a fire in his home. The brotherhood never ceases to amaze me.

Even though our efforts did not pay off for Keiffer Mitchell in the mayoral race, it wasn't because of a lack of members involved, their time and money was an inspiration.

Our Local has over 66% membership with less than 18 years of service. Ladies and gentlemen, you need to get involved. Come to Union meetings and take an active and real concern for your livelihood!!! Speaking of Union meetings, I would like to thank all who have been attending. We are seeing more new faces and increase in the attendance. Remember, in "Union there is strength".

Local 964 will be 60 years old this February!!! Anyone having any old pictures or documents, please contact me -- I promise to return such items.

## Sick and Injured

**Charlie Williams** came through his operation with flying colors. He will not need chemo and was able to run our September meeting.

**Walt Ward** is having problems with his balance and is unable to drive. He's still awaiting test results to find out the cause.

**Frank Uhlhorn** is out of St. Agnes and home.

**Mike Dalton** is scheduled to start chemo on October 8th at Hopkins for a brain tumor.

It won't be long and we will be planning for our annual retirees dinner/dance in Spring of 2008. Anyone wishing to help, please contact me. ATTENTION, WITH SUCH A YOUNG LOCAL, I AM LOOKING FOR IDEAS TO HELP RAISE MONEY FOR VEBA FUND (Local 964's Widows and Orphan Fund). Any idea is considered, I am on C shift at T3, give me a call!!!!

Even though we are still awaiting

this years raise to be paid, keep in mind negotiations for the next fiscal year will start in January!!! Please contact any E BOARD member with concerns and ideas. Remember, we work for you.

In closing, remember Baltimore's Irish Festival will be held, November 9-11 at The Maryland State Fairgrounds.

*Suggestion to Citistat, considering checking hydrants in the Spring and Fall, let common sense prevail!!!!*

## Tired and Retired

by Bob Hatoff

I got a call from Ron O'Brien (OB). He has just hit the big 65. He is in the process of signing up for Medicare. I say the process because as of this writing, he is still trying to get it straight. He has found out that apparently no one with Employee Benefits or Social Security knows how to do it. He asked if I had any problems when I signed up. I told him it ran so smooth for me all I had to do was go to then Congressman Erhlich's office. His aide worked it out for me, but I don't know how and I'm afraid to ask! I do remember the head of Employee Benefits told me to just have the money taken out of my social security check. When I told her I didn't get social security, she said she thought everybody got it. That's all I have to say on the subject. If OB ever gets it squared away, I'll refer all of you with questions to him. I asked him what he did when he wasn't fighting the government. He said he walks his dog twice a day and goes camping with Wayne Burgess a couple of times a year. He also said of the two walking his dog was more exciting. (Sorry Wayne, you know me, I couldn't resist it.)

I had a nice talk with Bob Bayne about the good old days, but believe it or not, he didn't remember Hugo Warns.

Anita and I went to visit Bud Cornell. He doesn't get out of the asylum too often and wanted to go for a ride. We wound up at Friendly Farms Restaurant and had a very delicious lunch. When I questioned him he said he did remember Hugo Warns. In fact he enjoyed talking about old times so much, he didn't even notice we had stuck him with the check!

Charles Browning told Anita today to let me know he also remembered Hugo Warns.

Hugo that brings the total to six who remember you and the list keeps growing.

George McKnight's wife Bobbie got a good laugh about what I wrote about him in the last column. Nobody knows it but I always liked her better than him.

At the September Retiree's meeting, Porky reported we would be getting a raise in January. Due to the many variables in play he could not determine what size it would be. Porky thanks for all you've done and continue to do for us.

Well I guess I'd better wrap this up. I hope you're all proud of me that I didn't once mention you know what. Just remember you have to keep feeding me tidbits of info or I'll have to refer to you know what and none of us like bad news.

As always you can reach me at 1805 Greencastle Dr, Baltimore 21237 or 410-866-3235. Calls regarding Hugo Warns are given top priority!

**2008 OPEN ENROLLMENT STARTS NOVEMBER 5**

The City's annual open enrollment for 2008 will be held from November 5, 2007 through November 16, 2007. Open enrollment is the time of year for you to review your current benefits and make changes for the new plan year.

Here's what you need to know to make your best choices for 2008:

- Personalized open enrollment material, plan brochures and ID cards will be mailed to your home address. Make sure that your home address is current. Please read your enrollment material carefully for new 2008 plan choices and new eligibility rules.
- The City will offer the same plan choices as last year. If you do not make changes, your coverage will roll over on January 1, 2008 at the new 2008 rates.
- Open Enrollment for active employees will be online. You must sign on to the City's benefits website at [www.baltimorecity.essbenefits.com](http://www.baltimorecity.essbenefits.com) to change plans, add, change or delete dependents or enroll in new coverage. The enrollment site is open 24 hours/day and 7 days/week during open enrollment.
- You must enroll for the \$650 waiver credit and the Dependent Care FSA each year. These benefits will not carry over from year to year.

**What's new in 2008?**

- Employees may cover eligible dependent children to the end of the calendar year in which they become age 25 regardless of student status. You will not be required to provide full-time student certification forms to continue coverage.
- The City's new life insurance carrier will be The Standard. All Basic, AD&D and Optional Life coverage volumes will be transferred to The Standard effective January 1, 2008. You will not need to re-enroll with the new carrier although you are encouraged to review your beneficiary form to make certain the information is current.

Look for information about the city's Enrollment Benefit Fairs that will be held on November 8, November 9 and November 14, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the War Memorial Building. During open enrollment, Benefits staff will be available at the city's Enrollment Fairs and at their walk-in office at 201 E. Baltimore Street, Suite 500 if you need assistance.

**THE BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICERS**

**Local No. 964**

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