

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 budget axe is falling

Yes, we've been here before and though we've always come through, albeit somewhat smaller than when we started, we appear to be headed into one of the most difficult eras in OUR great Department's history. Not since 1992 when we were forced to choose between a negotiated salary increase and the threat of layoffs have we faced such economic adversity. One might argue that the wholesale closures in 1999 by first-year Mayor O'Malley was little more than a significant budget cut without the formalities but now the ball is in our court.

On the heels of a \$4MM dollar budget cut, we have been told that our budget request for FY'10 should reflect a real reduction of \$.65MM and there's precious little room for creative financing. That first hit of \$4MM was arguably accomplished by deferring anticipated costs from FY'09 to FY'10 which now has the effect of exacerbating that additional FY'10 \$6.5MM. And don't be surprised by yet another demand for belt-tightening if the State of Maryland further reduces funding for local government as it appears will be the case.

It should be no surprise to anyone who has been even semi-conscious that the global, US, State and Local economies have suffered setbacks that are truly unprecedented in the lifetime of most of us. If calendar year 2008 were

to end today (11/30/08) it would go into the history books as the worst year in economic terms, second only to 1931. To compound the modern day impact, governmental operations at every level are much more reactive to and reliant upon economic forces outside of their own borders than ever before. The only difference between the City of Baltimore and the average 401K or 457 investor is in the scope of scale. For the individual, the increments may be in the hundreds or thousands but for a municipality, that measurement will be in the millions.

Why should we care? Because we do not have the luxury of ignoring reality and the reality is that as the City of Baltimore goes, so go we. But then you know that because, as I said, we've been here before. So what's the difference? In the administration of Chief Clack, we have access to and input into the operations of OUR Department, at virtually every level, that we have NEVER had before. So much so, that it's somewhat disconcerting that we find ourselves in such a position. Along with truly decision making opportunity comes decision making responsibility and we will be held accountable for those decisions we have a part in.

If we're to venture into an area that has historically been reserved for "The Administration", are we to go it alone or can we count on you in the process? Of the personal theories I've long held is that the collective "we" is MUCH smarter and resourceful than any individual "I" and perhaps the single worst characteristic (in a VERY long list) of a former Chief was truly believing the contrary.

We know what the problems are, now we need to have YOUR input in the solutions. We'll accept any suggestion

you might have and, unlike my personal view of on-line discussion boards, if you feel a need to remain anonymous, that's fine. Let us know what you think in whatever form you're most comfortable with.

FY'10 Negotiations

The above might have you wondering if there's even a need for negotiations for the next fiscal year and I will say, without reservation, that the answer is YES. There are indeed some non-economic issues that need our attention and we are NOT already resolved to accepting status quo. We have committed to addressing the needs and concerns of various constituencies in our Local and we will never ignore our stated commitments.

The Joint Locals have already given formal notice to the City of our intent to open negotiations for FY'10 and though we have not yet received a written response, our letter was only very recently sent and there has likely not been enough time to respond, given the multiple layers of input.

What we know going in is that there are significant fiscal constraints on the side of the City, but there are also significant concerns amongst our members. The object of negotiations is to reach some mutually agreed to common ground and not to routinely acquiesce to one side or the other. And once again, we do not claim exclusive brilliance and we are very much open to whatever suggestions you might have.

It is, once again, our intention to negotiate along with Local 734 which was a premise referenced in our letter

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From the President's Desk.....

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previously mentioned and inasmuch as such an arrangement is to the benefit of the City as well, we expect that to be the arrangement. Both Union Locals have traditionally added two members to their elected Executive Boards for a combined total of fourteen members (seven each) and that has allowed for the representation of everyone's interests in the past. There is no reason to believe that such will not be the case this year and in the future as well.

No discussion of MOU Negotiations from this point forward would be complete without mention of what will be a first-time absence of my dear friend, Rick Schluderberg. Rick has been part of every single negotiation I've been part of and he had emerged as the most reliable source of information and documentation. It will be interesting to see who might fill his role in the process, but I can assure you it will not be me and the standard that Rick set is not likely to be matched by anyone anytime soon.

Speaking for myself and our members, we'll miss you, Rick!

Variable Annuity

In another, yet to be quantified, reaction to the very nature of the economies to which our Pension System is subject, the only post-retirement benefit structure that our members enjoy is now under review and significant changes to how it works have been proposed. That proposal is in the form of legislation introduced in the City Council as CC 08-0220 which can be found in total on the City Council website. The details are such that it will require a separate mailing to our members at some point in the future as the legislation winds its way through the process, but we did what to bring it to your attention if only generally speaking.

The five groups directly involved are the two Fire Union Locals, FOP Lodge 3, the Retired Police Officers' Association and the Retired Fire Fighters and Fire Officers Association all of which have been working together very closely on this issue with the assistance of legal

counsel and actuarial experts. Indeed, the very individual now working in the private sector on our behalf was a principle actuary for the City at the time of the development of the variable annuity and has intimate knowledge of the history as well as the process.

Unlike the two issues outlined above, the capital market forces driving the proposed changes to the variable annuity structure are not of recent times but the cumulative affect of many years creating an economic "drag" on the pension system assets to the extent that the base benefit itself is clearly being influenced in a negative manner. It is not our intent to create any panic or concern but merely to advise of the efforts to address what appears to be a problem and, again, we hope to provide much more detailed information as the issue develops. There is absolutely NO need to be concerned or alarmed but you do need to be aware.

Christmas '08

Here we are once again at what has always been my favorite time of year and on more than one occasion, I've bored you with stories from the past and my thoughts of this "Most Wonderful Time Of The Year", but I'll spare you this year. Quite frankly, I'm not in the mood anyway and my guess is that you might not be either. We do face some challenging times ahead whether you're an active or retired member and no amount of good cheer or well wishes from me or anyone else will change that.

We have, however, been through difficult times before and we've always managed to endure and even prosper and you can call me Pollyannaish if you will but heck, what do you expect from someone who reached the speed-limit this year (yes, I'm now 55) and still believes in Santa Claus?

So, I do wish you and yours a

**VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
(HAPPY HOLIDAYS if you prefer)
and
my hope for a
brighter, healthy future for us all!**

God Bless!!!

From the Desk of the 1st Vice President

By Michael Waldner

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year !

By the time this issue reaches you, the Holidays will be in full swing. I'm hoping everyone got all their wishes granted by Santa Claus. My only New Year resolution is to be more patient and less cynical about the future of our Department. We have taken some positive steps, but seem to regress in other areas more quickly than we move forward. I am hopeful that the New Year will bring progress and success to our Department and we will be spared any dangerous and foolish budget cuts that will endanger our members and the citizens of our City. Our Department declared that we are all about Safety on the job and for the City but we do not want to pay the price for that Safety. Those words are ringing hollow from what policies and cuts are being proposed and enacted.

Join us for Installation of Officers on January 19th for the celebration of the new terms for our reelected E Board members and Board of Directors from the September nominations and elections. There will be food and drink, plus fond remembrances with current and former members of our Local. These affairs are always worth the effort to get out on a cold winter's night and the price is always right for what you get for the money.

Heart/Lung Scans and Physical Assessments

The mail out mentioned in the last issue of this Newsletter was canceled due to the declining use of our program and the reduction of the hours of availability. Do not wait to avail yourself of this important preventative medical procedure as the handwriting is on the wall of its future termination.

New hours are in place for our program due to the declining usage and creation of another outpatient program.

The Heart/Lung scan program is now being offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1100 – 1200 hours for scans only.

Our full testing program is now only offered on Tuesdays between 1200 – 1400 hours at the Fitness/Rehab Center. This 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 offered to **ALL** interested members, **active and retired of both Locals (734 & 964) and their spouses and widows.** The results will be available only to you or a Doctor you designate. **There will still be a fee of approximately \$150 for the scans but the assessment is free.** The entire program including the heart/lung scan will take less than 1 hour of your time. 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 (734 & 964), their spouses and widows.** Please take advantage of these appointments while they last.

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 RETEST INSTRUCTIONS

Guidelines recommended for the most accurate test results:

- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. Sneakers preferred.
- Avoid food, tobacco, and caffeine for at least 3-4 hours before testing.
- Abstain from alcohol consumption within 48 hours of the assessment.
- Avoid moderate or vigorous physical activity within 12 hours of the assessment.
- Ingest no diuretic agents, including caffeine, prior to the assessment.
- Get an adequate amount of

sleep (6 to 8 hours) the night before the test.

- Drink plenty of fluids over the 24-hour period preceding the test to ensure normal hydration prior to the testing.

Directions to Fitness Center

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

For questions regarding the assessment test and scheduling contact:

Rebecca Winch at 410-554-2167
(Please note that this is a new number)

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 (parents/siblings, friends 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. If Union Memorial is not convenient for you, contact Franklin Square Hospital (sister hospital 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.**

Remember, if I am your second due Chief (and I usually am), I am your Safety Officer and I will have your back. I will look out for you, but most importantly, you look out for you. Remember too, this is your Union. I can be contacted to answer any ques-

tions or try to help with any problems at (C) 410-908-2179, (H) 410-879-4545, or (W) 443-984-1737 and I promise to return your call ASAP or email at captal@aol.com.

From the Desk of the 2nd Vice President

By Mike Campbell

I hope everyone had a very Happy Thanksgiving! Our family celebrated without our son Jason for the first time in 23 years. Jason joined the U.S. Army and is currently in Fort Jackson, S.C. for Basic Training and will be entering Officer Candidate School sometime in February '09. I want to thank everyone for their well wishes for Jason and our family. We truly appreciate it! Jason will be home for Christmas and we are greatly anticipating his return! Jason is an extraordinary young man and my wife, Leisa and I are extremely proud of him! I hope everyone has a joyous Christmas and gives their family members a little extra hug during the Holidays. Please say a prayer for all of the men and women who are currently serving and who have served in the military along with all of the brave fire fighters who put their lives on the line day in and day out. May God keep a watchful eye on each and every one of them!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

I am happy to announce that BOX 414 Association finally has a payroll deduction slot. They have been trying to attain this for over 10 years. Members of BOX 414 will be visiting all of the companies during Battalion Training and will have cards at all of their functions. I cannot say enough about this group. They are there at fires, funerals, ceremonies etc. all in a volunteer capacity. If every one of us gives at least \$1.00 a pay they will be on solid footing for many years to come! Recently, both Unions took part in a training session called Interest Based Bargaining. This is where both

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2nd V.P.

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sides come together to resolve an issue or issues as Labor and Management along with a Federal Mediator. I can see some benefit to this in non-monetary issues, but still believe in our past negotiating practice for most of what we do. Chief Clack has reestablished the old Civil Service committee that had gone by the wayside by the past Administration's apathy and lack of respect for the Unions in general! It is my belief that this Human Resources Committee will be a positive for our members. I have attended two meetings so far and look forward to working with the Administration and representatives from the City's Human Resources department on these issues that have a dramatic effect on our membership. The Office of the Fire Marshal saw the first of its promotions since the reclassification of the seven Lieutenant positions. I was inundated with many questions concerning these promotions. I will answer two of the most asked. Those members who have been promoted cannot transfer to Suppression as Lieutenants nor can they take the Suppression Captain's exam. I will leave it up to President Fugate to bring you up to speed on the Battalion Commander issue in his article. Chief Clack has proposed changing or eliminating MOP 355 – (Promotions Involving Retirement). The Chief is proposing to eliminate projecting promotions while members are on their 90 DTL. In essence what this change would mean is that promotions would be made up to 2400 hrs. of the last day of a promotional list. This MOP change would be prospective only and would not alter the practice for existing lists. To fully implement this change would take about 2 years. There are still details to be worked out. I want to stress that **ALL CURRENT LISTS WILL NOT BE AFFECTED!** The Fire Department finally released the study material for the upcoming Suppression Lieut. and Capt exams. For the life of me I cannot understand why it took so long, but at least it is done. After numerous back and forth discussions, Chief Clack has informed me that the exam will be a multiple choice written exam as past practice. I have a feeling that

this may be the last for these types of exams. Chief Clack has expressed many times that he doesn't believe that a written test should be the only determination of a final score. Stay tuned! The exam date is June 6, 2009. Both lists expire on July 2, 2009. This year's Suppression Battalion Chief's exam included a written exam based solely on both Locals MOU. This was a first for our members and from what I heard our members didn't have an issue. Congratulations to all who participated. Steve and I are currently working with FDHR to see that an EMS Battalion Chief's exam is forthcoming. Chief Weigman has been tasked with assembling a committee for future Medals Day and Memorial Services. We want these functions to be about the members and for the members. If you have any suggestions, give me a holler. Contract negotiations are fast approaching. If you have any suggestions, send them to any of your Executive Board members! The 964 store is up and running and will be open at Union meetings in the future along with other Social Affairs. Items available: shirts, decals, patches, license tags etc. I have included a flyer in the Newsletter detailing the Holiday Train Garden at E45/T27. Thanks to all of those members who have given of their time to see that this continues for everyone's enjoyment! ***All members should make themselves aware of MOP-113, Electronic Communications Policy. The City computers should be used only for City business, not for any personal business.***

I attended the Deferred Comp. meeting on 11/24/08. Segal Advisors has done a search to replace the Legg Mason Large Cap Growth Fund, but because of the markets volatility advises the Committee to wait another quarter. Brown Capital International Fund has been given another quarter to improve as well. They will be kept on the Watch list for now. The Committee voted to place The Fidelity Balance Fund on the Watch List for four quarters to monitor their results. The Julius Baer Fund changed their name to Artio in October. This will not affect your portfolio! If you have questions or concerns, contact the Deferred Compensation Plan Office at 201 E. Baltimore Street, Suite 120 or

call 410-332-0809. Their hours are Monday thru Friday from 0800 to 1700 hrs. If you have a pay issue, please let me know and also e-mail the Dept. at BCFD.Etime. I am handling the Fire Officer organizational automobile/motorcycle tag applications. If you need applications for either auto or motorcycle, drop me a line. When you receive your tags please remember to send back the letter that is provided and include your tag number. Please keep abreast by logging on the Fire Officers website at www.iafflocal964.org.

Please keep Frank Schlosser, Donald Crusse and Bill Kern and their families in your prayers. Frank, Don and Bill lost their dads recently. May God bless them and their families!

Health Care

It appears that with every passing of the calendar year, Open Enrollment becomes simpler for our members. I only had to handle a couple of issues this year and would like to thank the folks at Employee Benefits for their hard work in resolving our members' problems in a timely fashion -- especially Ms. Julie Colucci. If you have any problems, don't hesitate to get in touch with me. You can access Employee Benefits online at <https://www.baltimorecity.essbenefits.com> or by calling 410-396-5830.

Safety and Health

The Joint Safety & Health Committee meeting was held on 11/20/08. It is getting more and more difficult to get the monies that are needed for all of our member's safety and health needs. The FD has been told to cut about 7 million dollars from next year's budget. With that said, the Safety/Health committee along with the FD agreed that the diesel exhaust issue and making sure the stations have heat this time of year are of paramount concern. Chief Clack has agreed to install 2 Ward Diesel systems a month and remove those Plymovents that are in place along with repairing the Plymovents that he can with what little money has been provided. The fly in the ointment with regards to the diesel exhaust issue is Fleet Maintenance. They don't want their members handling the

Ward Diesel filters and are dragging their feet on installations. Thanks to Ernie Trimper we are moving ahead with the installations nonetheless! By the time you read this E44, T8 and T25 should have the filters installed. Jim Bellamy has transferred back to the field. I would like to thank Jim for his tireless efforts on behalf of our members! The Fire Dept. is awaiting architectural drawings so they can get back to replacing the remaining roofs. Next in line are E52, E51, and E36 & T15. On November 24, 2008 a Federal Law went into effect requiring all workers within the right-of-way of a Federal-aid highway to wear an ANSI 107 Class 2 or 3 high-visibility vest. A vest has been chosen and as with all other issues we are pressuring the Dept. to come up with the funding to properly fit our members. I am being told that asbestos removal has been completed at SQ11/T20 and E45/T27. Also, furnaces have been installed at SQ47, E20/T18 and E45/T27 should be completed by the time you read this. E55/T23 and E45/T27 are in need of lead paint removal. Personal hand lights and apparatus hand lights will be field tested soon. **I know I've said this before, but it needs repeating. If you have a safety related issue, then you need to contact me as well as the normal process. I can't help if I don't know!**

Make sure that you e-mail the Safety Office at (FDSO@baltimorecity.gov) if you have any safety related issues along with contacting me. If you are e-mailing Health and Safety Officer Bill Jones, you must e-mail William H. Jones, not William Jones! You must also continue sending in Special Reports as is policy. The next meeting is scheduled for 12/18/08. Contact me with any issues. **BE SAFE!**

President's Club

I will be canvassing those members who have yet to sign up for the PAC Fund. Stay tuned! Retirees cannot contribute by way of dues deduction, but can still donate the full amount of \$100.00 by way of cash or check to be included in the President's Club! Please make checks out to: Local 964 PAC Fund! The PAC Fund is our most important tool to have the local politicians lis-

ten to our concerns. The Fund can only be used for Local and State politicians and cannot and will never be used for Federal politicians, (President, Senator etc.) If you contribute \$4.00 or more a pay you are automatically included in the President's Club. Thanks to those who have contributed and to those who haven't, contact me if you need a dues deduction card.

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

Cell – 443-629-0216

Work – 410-396-5773

E-mail: capttain16@hotmail.com

Words to twirl by...

Dear Mr. Fantasy play us a tune
Something to make us all happy,
Do anything take us out of this gloom
Sing a song, play guitar make it snappy!

Traffic

From the Desk of the Secretary-Treasurer

By Anita Hatoff

I hope everyone was able to spend some time with their families on Thanksgiving. My good friend Bill worked for me so that I could enjoy Thanksgiving with my family. Bill, thank you for the many holidays and other times you have been gracious enough to work for me so that I may enjoy time with my family. I felt it appropriate to take the time to thank him since I was speaking of Thanksgiving. I feel it's always a good time to let those you care about know how you feel. Life is short and enjoy it while you have the opportunity.

Things are coming along well with the building. The Bank of America ATM is now up and running. Garceau Realty is open for business and as I have stated before they are very willing to help out those in the fire service. The Daily Grind is being renamed to Firehouse Coffee Company in January. Stop in for a sandwich, cup of coffee or dessert.

The end of the year is upon us and it seems like it just flew by. My first year

as your Treasurer has been a great learning experience. Bob Jordan taught me a lot. I don't think any of us truly knows what someone does until we walk in their shoes, and I can tell you that it was much more than I had expected. I am up for the challenge. I continue to learn and have had a lot of pleasure working with Steve Fugate, Mike Waldner, Mike Campbell, Tommy Nosek, George Jones, Kevin Rock and Harvey Webster. I am truly grateful to Bob for all that he has shown me and for his patience. Bob thank you for letting me intrude even after your term was over. He never got mad at my phone calls and always had the answer. I want to thank his wife, Char, for letting me intrude on her time with Bob. Thanks to the E-Board, Board of Directors and membership for a fantastic first year. I look forward to completing my next two and hope that I will be worthy enough to continue after that.

Christmas is just around the corner, and I hope everyone takes the time to thank God for all they have been given. Even when I feel down, I think of those who have been dealt a difficult hand and I thank the lord for my good blessings. I want to say Merry Christmas to everyone! I hope everyone stays safe and has the best Christmas ever. I want to say thank you to my family for always being there for me. You make my life easier by being in it.

Sick and Injured

By Bob Hatoff

Wendell Howell is in a nursing home in Pennsylvania. He's been fighting a very serious staph infection.

George Hammond had successful surgery at Hopkins Hospital on 10-25 to replace a heart valve.

George Ray got a pacemaker in March and is feeling great.

Mike Dalton continues to improve and was able to play golf. He and his wife, Marsha, went on a Caribbean vacation.

Bob Hatoff had a root canal. He was a good boy and the dentist gave him a lollipop.

From the Desk of the Recording Secretary

By Tom Nosek

I would like wish both all active and retired Fire Officers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Please take time to enjoy the holiday season with your family, the people that mean the most.

Please try to make the holiday party sponsored by both Local 964 and Local 734 on December 17 from 4-8 pm. The holiday party will be held at Schooners restaurant and lounge located at Belair Rd and the Beltway. Food will be served and the "hat" will be passed for drinks.

On Monday, January 19, 2009 Local 964 will hold installation of elected officers. The swearing in will take place at the second scheduled union meeting, hot food will be served. Please make the effort to be there to congratulate President Steve Fugate, 2nd Vice President Mike Campbell and Trustee Harvey Webster for being reelected to serve as YOUR Union officials.

In late January the Local will mail out the annual raffle tickets to support OUR VEBA fund. The drawing will take place at our annual retirees dinner/dance which will be held in Spring 2009. More details on the dinner/dance will be in the February/March newsletter. I am asking each member to make the effort to sell their chances to support the VEBA fund.

We are always looking into fundraisers to support the VEBA, we are currently working out the details for our first ever "poker tournament", watch for the flyers in the firehouses.

OUR union hall's renovation was completed and meetings began again in our hall last February. We officially dedicated the hall in March at Social Night. Fr Ross Syracuse the pastor at St. Casmir's was kind enough to bless our meeting space. The hall is still being decorated, furnished and made to be functional. We still need to install a fire box, working gong, some old firehouse clocks, a pegboard and plaques. Hopefully by spring we will be able to furnish the lounge, put up window blinds, install an awning for the first

floor entrance and paint and carpet the utility room. I may be calling on members to assist in these tasks. I would be remiss in not thanking Steve Fugate, Mike Campbell and Bob Jordan for their efforts on getting the building to the working condition it now is.

In early February 2008 the Executive board of Local 964 was notified of a press conference at City Hall to announce the new Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department. I would say we were taken back by the hiring of the first Chief of the BCFD who did not come from the ranks of the BCFD. Yes, an outsider, our new Chief was from the mid-west. Mr. James S. Clack was a 20-year veteran and Chief of the Minneapolis Fire Department. You got it "HON", he wasn't from "Bawlmar". With that said, in my tenure as a Union official, I have not met a management official so open to include the UNION in dialogue, opinions and input to how the BCFD is run. Chief Clack has again opened the monthly labor management meetings, met with members at union meetings and even conversed on web sites. We may always not agree with management, but it is a pleasure to have a seat and voice at the table.

With the above said, we will need such a relationship. 2009 presents us with a RECESSION, BUDGET CUTS AND A HORRIFIC ECONOMY. The Mayor has announced a 7 million dollar BCFD budget cut for FY 2010, we, every member of the Union will be asked

for ideas on how to help solve this dilemma. There are a lot of BCFD members who have never been through fiscal times that we will be facing, be open to dialogue and remember in "UNION there is strength".

I did not attend this years Medals/Memorial day, due to late notification by headquarters. I had made family plans prior to notification of the date. Many members voiced their displeasure of the event. TAKE NOTE, CHANGES ARE COMING!!!!!! Shift Commander Steve Weigman, C shift has become the new chairman of the Medals/Memorial day committee. We have already had a meeting on November 25 and a second meeting is scheduled for December 15. The main idea coming from the meeting so forth is that Medals/Memorial day is for the members by the members. One of our main task's is to have a firm date and location by winters end.

Christmas? My own personal belief is that "Jesus is the reason for the season" with that said members of the BCFD for the past few years have gone to hospitals to spend time with children and delivered Christmas presents. These same members have also presented food and presents to the less fortunate. These BCFD "Santa" helpers will be going out on December 18 and 19 to do their good work anyone wishing to donate money to purchase new toys and food for this effort feel free to contact me cell 410 499 5441.



**Your Executive Board
and Board of Directors**

**wish you and your families a
"HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON"**

CITY OF BALTIMORE
Sheila Dixon, Mayor



Baltimore City Fire Department
James S. Clack -
Chief of Fire Department
401 E. Fayette Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Fire Chief Opens Doors to Annual Holiday Train Garden

On Saturday, December 6, 2008 at 10:00 am, Fire Chief James S. Clack will meet and greet the members of Engine Company #45, Truck Company #27 and visitors from the community to signify the opening of the Fire Departments' Annual Holiday Train Garden.

The Holiday Train Garden, now in its fifty-second year, can be viewed at the fire station located at 2700 Glenn Avenue in the Park Heights/Cross Country Community. The train garden is opened to the public until January 4, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. till 9:00 p.m.



This year the garden will feature virtual themes relative to the fire service, holiday, outdoor recreation, ski slopes, ice skating and waterfalls. The garden will also highlight childrens' favorite cartoon characters, fire apparatus, harmonic holiday songs and several real life action figures and much more for everyone to see. The Train Garden occupies over half of the station and is expected to draw thousands during the holiday season.

The members of engine company 45 and truck company 27 have committed many hours to the preparation and assembly of this phenomenal train garden display.

There is no charge for admission. For additional information and directions, enthusiasts should call (443) 984-1529.

The Holiday Train Garden display has been viewed by thousands of visitors since its inception. This display has become an intricate part of the annual holiday festivities for over fifty years.

For additional information and directions, contact (443) 984-1529 or the Fire Department's Public Information Office at (410) 396-5616.

Tired and Retired

By Bob Hatoff

Fans I have to open with a confession. I did not receive any orders for my 8X10 pictures of the scar on my knee. I was planning on using the profits for Christmas shopping. So to raise some money I have recorded a CD, "Captain Bob Sings Love Songs of the 40's". As Vice President of the Retiree's I have access to all of your names and addresses. Every one of you will be receiving the CD in the mail. If you want to spare yourself, yes from listening to my off key howling, just send me \$1.00 and I won't send you the CD. This is an offer you can't refuse!

I got a call from Chuck Nolte and I found out why he never answered my calls. It was because I had the wrong number. Those of you in my age bracket can understand how that can happen.

Thankfully I have recovered from my knee surgery and have no reports of anything I missed. I'm back on the road again and the proof is Janice and I were able to attend the 70th birthday of my old friend Fred Rafferty. It was a surprise party and we actually surprised Fred. All of his friends were there. We held it in a phone booth. We had a great time and his family really put out a nice spread. I remember my 70th birthday, one of my kids got me a card. Fred's wife, Nancy, is one of my big fans. So I'm mentioning her name in appreciation of her faithful readership. Nancy is having problems with her knee and may need a replacement. She wanted to see my scar, but Fred wouldn't give her a dollar.

Attention Hugo Warns: Fred said he remembers you!

I haven't heard from Bucky Muth, but one of the men in my church said he saw him. Bucky told him to say hi to me.

Attention Bucky Muth: I ran into Steve Barnaba and he said he remembers you!

I got a letter from retired Lieutenant George C. Ray. He and his wife, Betty, are bursting with pride because their son, Bob, was promoted to Chief of Anne Arundel Fire Dept. on 10-01-08. He is only the second man to reach this position by coming up through the ranks. Congratulations Bob, we're proud of you too!

If any of you have a famous child, let me know and I'll publish it.

Charlie Williams, our president, the Union presidents and the President of the Police retiree's are meeting with the city in an attempt to secure an annual pension increase. Talks are continuing with no results yet. Porky spoke at our November meeting and said our pension fund is in good shape. He is still working tirelessly for us!

In closing our families will be gathering together to celebrate Christmas. There will be plenty of presents, but that's not what the holiday is all about. The reason for the season is our savior Jesus Christ. He died for us and what gift can be greater than that? I hope you all have a blessed Christmas. Something you can look forward to next year is that I will continue to write!

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

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