

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

December 2009/January 2010

From the Desk of the President

By Stephan G. Fugate

Rotating Closures

If you've been around long enough, you would have experienced rotating closures of some form, degree and duration at least five times now, and the general public attention and media reaction has been muted by the repetition. We've held rallies, conducted marches, lobbied elected officials, done countless interviews in both the print and broadcast media and all with the seemingly same result; a collective yawn.

One not intimately familiar with the Fire Service in general and that in Baltimore City in particular might rightly ask "why is it different this time and why should I be concerned by it"? The answer, of course, is to be found in several interdependent issues. First, in between bouts of rotating closures through the years, the overall size of the Department has shrunk as well which exacerbates the danger in 2009 to a greater degree than in 1989. Simply stated, fewer units to select from for temporary closure creating larger pockets of under protection.

Second, the City of Baltimore is still approximately 81 square miles and the demand on services belies the loss of population of nearly 300,000 from the 1950 Census figure of 949,000. Despite the dramatic population decline, our Department responded to 235,000 emergency calls for service last year and we'll likely surpass that number this year.

As a result, we are left with fewer units overall responding to increasing calls for service and decreasing that number of units through rotating closures overtakes what's left to a degree that entire sections of the City are virtually without fire protection. The number of units closed on a rotational basis does not, by the way, include those other units out of service for everything from training to preventive and routine maintenance. To imply that there are "a maximum of five" units out of service at any particular time is simply not true.

The supposed redeeming logic is that upwards of eighty percent of our responses are for Emergency Medical Services and not fires, so fewer fire suppression units have no real effect on the delivery of services. If fire suppression units were not an essential component of Emergency Medical Services for everything from Medic stand-by to providing Advanced Life Support, that "logic" might fly. If fire suppression units were, in fact, sitting idle in station ready and waiting for a report of a fire, the current practice MIGHT be less hazardous but, again, that too is simply not true.

Most offensive among the untruths, however, is the oft repeated mantra that reducing the availability of fire suppression units has "no effect on response times". Every time I hear that, I thank goodness that Maryland continues to deny its citizens their Second Amendment rights. If you REALLY believe a dearth of suppression units, regardless of the underlying reason, has no impact on response times, ask our Brother who was a recent fire victim in his business in South Baltimore. Look the man in the eye and tell him it doesn't make a difference.

Since July 8th, we have been warning of imminent tragedy, and we can only be grateful that the events of November 27th and several others did not result in a loss of life. Truth be told, we do sincerely hope that we'll be proven wrong and when the rotational closures come to an end, someone in Headquarters or City Hall tells us "YOU WERE WRONG!". That, I can live with because it means that the rest of our Brothers and Sisters will have lived as well. The unfortunate reality, however, is that the likely end to rotational closures will be permanent closures and the downward spiral will continue.

The only mantra I can subscribe to at this point is "Stay safe, Brothers and Sisters, stay safe". Your families are counting on you coming home at the end of a shift.

Pension System Review

Our Pension System has been a subject of my writing for the last six bi-monthly newsletters and that streak will probably not end any time soon. While nothing overly dramatic has taken place as yet, the wheels are turning and there are at least two independent reviews currently under way.

First, everyone should know by now that the Greater Baltimore Committee, prompted by City Council President Rawlings-Blake, has been engaged in what now appears to be an exhaustive review of the entire Plan with a preliminary report and, presumably, recommendations forthcoming sometime in early 2010. It is my belief that the preliminary report will be reviewed by all interested

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From the President's Desk.....

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parties and that a final report will become something of a blueprint for reform. That reform will likely address everything from Board Governance and Investment Policy to benefit structure.

Allow me to add, by the way, that all three of those issues are very clearly defined in existing Policy and legislative edict, so there should be NO concern that ANYTHING inappropriate has taken place at any point. I continue to hold that the issues affecting our Plan could easily have been handled but for the Global Market meltdown of 2008 and 2009. It may be a bit premature, but if you want some insight into how mutually dependent the US and Global Markets are, wait and see what the turmoil created by the Dubai World credit crisis. I certainly hope I'm wrong, but it seems to have many of the same early warning signs of the US Mortgage crisis and we know where that led us.

But back to the GBC. On November 16th, Mr. Donald Fry, President of the GBC called to ask if the Pension Board would approve the use of the System actuary (Mercer) to value "five or six" proposals that had been developed. The logic was that it made more sense for the actuary of record to determine the costs and/or savings of any proposal. The fact is that any such proposal that might ultimately make it to legislation would HAVE to be valued by Mercer anyway, so there was an advantage to approving to use of Mercer in a preliminary setting. The costs associated with the work Mercer will do for the GBC will NOT be paid for by the Pension System but will be paid by the City and/or the GBC. There has been some concern that I have been told of the nature of the "five or six" proposals and that I am withholding that information. That is NOT true. I have no idea what it is that the GBC is considering, and I happen to agree with Mr. Fry's view that it makes no sense to reveal something that may not make it as a final recommendation only to cause unnecessary concern or angst.

The second and not so well-known review is being conducted by Saul-Ewing, a prominent Baltimore Law Firm,

and paid for by the Fire Unions and the FOP. The objective is to have, in hand, what may well be a counter to whatever the GBC may produce should we be forced to oppose any part or all of the GBC effort. There is no firm time-frame for the completion of this second review, but Saul-Ewing is very much aware of the potential time-table for the GBC report, and I believe they'll be guided accordingly.

While the Unions have participated in and observed some of the activities of the GBC, we have not been party to the closed sessions of their work. Our only involvement with the Saul-Ewing effort has been in a single meeting with the principals and in assisting with information gathering. Simply stated, the Unions will have had NO impact on the results of either review, and we have and will continue to remain neutral observers of both processes and respond accordingly if and when necessary.

If ANYONE has any questions about our Retirement System, please keep in mind that I am the elected Trustee of the Plan for ALL active Fire Department members, not just members of Local 964. I regularly address pension issues at 964 Union meetings and attempt to be present at most 734 Union meetings, but if I miss one or you're unable to attend, please just call me and if I don't know the answer, I'll find out.
410.908.0199

Furlough Days

There is really no reason why anyone would not have already seen the text of the "Addendum Agreement" outlining the terms and conditions of the recently agreed to furlough policy. A copy was mailed to every active member's home and also made available at the two ratification meetings conducted on October 28th. Very recently, the Department published the Agreement in total but just to close any gaps, the complete text of that agreement is reprinted elsewhere in this issue. It is critically important to know and understand the parameters of what it is we've agreed to as it forms the base for our MOU's of FY'10 and FY'11.

The only issue that I believe has not been made clear is how overtime is treated in conjunction with furlough days. We believe it is safe to say that

the only thing you CANNOT do is work overtime on an actual furlough day. Beyond that, there should be no limitation or preclusion to working overtime. Having seen at least three versions of the official City Furlough Policy, each one contains a provision that prohibits working overtime during "the work week" that includes a furlough day. For all practical purposes, the Fire Department has a blanket exemption to that particular provision, and if there are any problems with that, please call any Executive Board member for assistance.

Social Security Issues

Sometime in early 2010, those of you not already receiving or having filed for a benefit will receive a multi-page document from the Social Security Administration entitled "Your Social Security Statement". This Statement typically arrives in late January or early February and it contains a life-long earnings record reflecting, by year, total earnings subject to Social security Taxes and provides an estimate of what your benefit WOULD be at ages 62, 66 and 70. I emphasize "WOULD" because as a current or future recipient of pension benefits from a governmental pension plan from earnings NOT subject to Social Security taxation, you will be subject to either or both of the offsets currently in place.

1. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) will apply to benefits due to based upon YOUR employment before, after, or supplemental to your Fire Department service and reduces your Social Security benefit depending upon those earnings, the number of years which you paid into Social Security, and the year you become age 62 or become disabled. The amount of reduction is specific to the individual and does have a maximum which was \$372 for 2009.

2. The Government Pension Offset (GPO) provides for a similar reduction of spousal benefits that you may be entitled to based upon your spouse's earned benefit. This offset can indeed reduce your proportional monthly benefit to zero though it will not make you ineligible for Medicare coverage at age 65 based upon your spouse's record. This offset is also individual specific but

there is no maximum currently in place and, again, can reduce your benefit to zero.

Since 2007, the annual statements have included brief outlines of both of these offsets, typically on page two of the document. In addition, web site addresses are listed as well as publication numbers for additional information. The important thing, however, is to be aware of the impact of these offsets and NOT rely on the estimated benefit amounts also listed on page two. Those amounts are estimates only and the Social Security Administration has no way of knowing that you are a participant in a stand-alone pension plan and the offset amounts are determined as of the date of commencement of benefits and cannot be calculated in years in advance.

If there are any questions or concerns, I will be more than happy to try and address them. I am NOT an expert in Social Security issues, however, and if I am not absolutely certain of the answer, I will get confirmation from those I know who are expert in the area. Again, the important thing for now is to be aware of the offsets and NOT be surprised by them when you do file. **410.908.0199**

Newly Elected Officers

Finally, I'd like to congratulate George Jones on his election as First Vice-President, Tom Nosek on his reelection as Recording Secretary, and Tom Tosh as Trustee.

The duties of a Trustee are rather clear and fulfilled at the direction of our Secretary-Treasurer; the duties of our Recording Secretary are also fairly well defined and Tom has assumed MANY additional duties, and I could not ask more of him. The duties of the Vice-Presidents, however, are at the total discretion of the President, and the "First" and "Second" designations matter only in terms of succession in the absence of the President.

George will be given duties and responsibilities commensurate with his willingness and ability to perform and while I have NO doubt about his ability, willingness includes a significant commitment of time and energy. Suffice it to say that I'm looking forward to his assuming office.

From the Desk of the 1st Vice President

By Michael Waldner

Merry Christmas and Happy New Years!!!

This issue should reach you in time for the Holidays as we have rushed our article deadline to right after Thanksgiving. Hopefully, everyone had a fine turkey day and managed to work off all the extra calories before the next onslaught of Christmas cookies and goodies. I wish the best of everything to you and yours during this wonderful time of the year!

I know the Baker family will be rejoicing as BC1 John Baker has worked his last shift and will never miss a Holiday gathering again. It was a pleasure working and playing alongside John throughout our careers. John has been my "C" shift counterpart in the 1st Battalion, as we popped through the Tunnels to support each other since I promoted to BC. His common sense approach and good nature endeared him to all that had the pleasure to work with him. He was one of the good ones and will be missed. I also had the pleasure of playing softball with John in our earlier days in many IAFF tournaments and have now recruited him to play with the Firehouse Tavern and Harford Senior league teams as well as the "over forty" IAFF / MDA tournament team. I will try to help him occupy all that new spare time he has on his hands. Sorry to see you go, but enjoy your deserved retirement to the fullest for as long as you served (40 years) and then some!

Condolences are extended to Rick Hoffman (E23, now T6) on the loss of his kitchen and apartment at his tavern "Banners" in Locust Point. Thankfully, the bar survived and was reopened within days. It appears the rotating closures have come back to bite one of our own. Rick is now a taxpaying resident and business owner of Baltimore City who was ill-served by this form of "Russian roulette". I know there will be more to come on this issue as Rick will be heard

loud and clear as a concerned citizen at Headquarters and City Hall, much the same as he was heard at Steadman for close to 20 years as a Fire Fighter. I hope we can all pitch in and support his cause, as it is also our cause and the cause of every citizen of Baltimore City.

Furloughs

I know, it sucks! Furloughs have begun as of November 18th and the pay reduction commences with the first pay of December. This is not good news by any stretch of the imagination, but who would have imagined this recession/depression. The choices were not palatable to say the least, and we managed to reduce the damage as best we could. I am sure no one is happy with the result, but it could have been worse. We will maintain all our benefits through the next year with a contract extension and have to hope further furloughs are not necessary in the next budget year. I must admit that I never saw this coming. I would have liked to fight this plan, but with our past defeats in Arbitration and the ability of the City to disguise/lie about their fiscal condition in past Arbitration cases, I knew we didn't have a prayer of winning a judgment. The fiscal condition of the entire country, state by state, city by city would have worked against us. This was a very emotional topic, but in the end common sense ruled that we make the decision to limit our losses to as little as possible under the conditions.

Use your 5 furlough days as soon as possible and bank the five vacation days that they will replace for future enjoyable events in your life. If you are like me, these are 5 vacation days I wouldn't have been able to access until next March. Dark clouds? Silver linings? You never know what the future will bring, so make the most of the present.

Elections

Congratulations to the winning candidates in the recent Local 964 election term. Tom Tosh has joined the Trustees after running unopposed and confirmed by a single vote cast by Treasurer Anita

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From the 1st V.P.'s Desk.....

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Hatoff. She sure has good taste in men. Good luck to Tom, and I am confident he will serve the membership faithfully in his role as a Trustee, and in any other position he aspires to attain.

Congrats also go out to Tom Nosek, re-elected to another term as Secretary, after a tough runoff with Pat Macken. Tom will continue in his capacity on the EBoard and serve the membership to the best of his ability as always.

And finally, I want to extend my heartiest congratulations and support to my opponent and victor, George Jones. As the next 1st Vice President of Local 964, I am completely confident and proud to pass on the title to George. I endorsed George early on in the election and stand by that decision as I know he will do a great job for many years to come. I endorsed George because after thinking about the 3 year term, I was sure that I will not be able to continue to watch the Department crumble onto itself in a disgraceful collapse of everything we knew and loved for very much longer. I am now a lame duck short timer with the EBoard and this Department. I am proud to have had the opportunity to assist George to assume this important position because I know he will serve the membership to the best of his ability in whatever capacity he is allowed to participate. Hopefully, his duties will be more than mine, but I will assist him in any and all ways possible. It is comforting to know who your successor will be and be confident in him so much that you could endorse him in good faith. Best of luck to you George, give 'em Hell!

I also want to thank all those members, retired and active that still voted for me in this election or followed my advice and voted for George for me. Your support over the years has meant a ton to me, and I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart (yes, I do have one). I have had the pleasure of serving our membership as a Trustee and as 1st Vice President and the pleasure was all mine. I served with some great leaders in the past that mentored me and helped me to be a better person and Union Officer like Uncle Phil Waldner, Bob Cavero, Donald Wilson, John Seiss,

Frank Uhlhorn, Joe Machovec, Ben Alder, etc. They always put the membership first, above all personal considerations. That is what Union brotherhood is all about, it's the membership that comes first, doing their bidding and giving them your all, even if you don't agree on an issue. Thanks again to all my supporters over the years, and trust me, I will support my successors in every way possible. Best of Luck in the future to the new EBoard and Trustees, I think you will need it!

Softball

This Spring, I will again have a team entered in the Monday Perry Hall Slo-Pitch softball league open to all ages playing double headers beginning at 6:00 PM. Also, I can put those of you 47 years young and over in contact with the Harford County Senior Slo-Pitch leagues playing in the Joppa / Magnolia area on Tuesday and Thursday nights. We are also again entered in the IAFF MDA "over forty" tournament for next September (2010). Contact me if you are interested in playing next year in any of the Leagues or the tournament.

Heart/Lung Scans and Physical Assessments

Give yourself and your family the gift of continued good health this Christmas. Use the Heart / Lung scan program to protect yourself and your spouse / partner from any possible undiagnosed tragedy. Do not wait to avail yourself of this important preventative medical procedure as this program will not be available forever. If you haven't done the scans since the beginning of this program (4-5 years ago) check with your cardiologist or principal health care provider about refreshing your profile and participating again. This will allow you to also take part in the physical assessment portion of the program that was not offered in the initial start up of the program.

I will try to keep these notices running in the future newsletters and update the info as necessary after this issue, if permissible.

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

Our full combined Heart / Lung scan and Wellness 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 **only Union 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 only open to active and retired members of 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 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" (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

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.

Community Outreach Program

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.

In these trying times, we are being asked to do more with less, yet again. I know we have always accomplished our mission, but now our resources are so minimized that I fear the conditions are becoming unsafe in much shorter time frames due to fire spread before that first line goes in service or that first truck ventilates the premises. Please 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. All I want is for everyone who comes to work, to return home in the same condition. I don't want to be the next Battalion Chief who loses a member (and it will happen if

things don't get better) due to the manpower shortages. So if the order to back out is given, DO IT. Lives are at stake, and they are your lives and your crew.

Remember too, this is your Union. Be active, attend meetings and support others who strive to take an active leadership role and advance the causes and protect your rights and benefits. For the remaining month of December, it is still my privilege to serve the members, and 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 and I promise to return your call ASAP or email me at captal@aol.com. After George Jones assumes my duties and title, I will still be reachable at the above sources if needed (no changes in contact info expected).

From the Desk of the 2nd Vice President

By Mike Campbell

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Locals 964 and 734 came to agreement with the City and the Fire Department as to the Unions "hit" on the deficit reduction for FY10. I am quite sure that President Fugate will go into depth concerning this, so I will only add my thoughts on the process and the outcome. We were told to find a way to address our portion which was \$2.9 million by way of the City invoking Article 36 B of our MOU. For this process, President Fugate added Lt. Sam Darby E8, to this year's Contract Negotiating Team. Through many meetings with and without the City in attendance we looked at various avenues to reach the \$2.9 million with the least amount of impact for our members. We hammered out an agreement that in turn had us invite the entire Active membership to two special meetings to vote on either the City's plan which was a 3.08% across the board wage reduction, go to Arbitration and allow an independent individual to rule one way or the other or accept the Addendum Agreement which included tak-

ing five furlough days for the remainder of the Fiscal year and settle the MOU for FY11 allowing for another five furlough days only if AFSCME, CUB and the FOP do likewise. By a resounding majority of 80%, the membership voted to accept the Addendum Agreement which included the five furlough days and the settling of negotiations for FY11. Now the Unions have taken some very direct shots because of the Agreement because we were asked our position as a Committee and as a Committee recommended the Agreement over Arbitration. I am more than willing to offer my reasoning here. We had just come off of losing our ass in contract Arbitration and since that time the economy had tanked further. AFSME, CUB and MAPS had already either agreed or been dictated to that they would accept furloughs as their cost-cutting measures. In my opinion, with those decisions as a backdrop it made our job of winning in Arbitration that much less of a chance. We have also been asked by some not to give our opinion when presenting packages for a vote by the membership. Nothing would make me happier than to offer two or three suggestions and then leave it in your hands, but I don't believe I would be doing my job as an elected official of this Union who took an oath to serve the members and look out for their best interests, but if that is the will of the body it only needs to be brought up for a vote. I have included the full Addendum Agreement in the Newsletter.

The rotating closures and transfer of units into closed houses continue which can be anywhere from 2 to 5 companies both day and night. Chief Clack has stated that if things don't improve we could see upwards of 6 companies closed on a rotating basis. We have seen a negative impact with this practice as far as the morale of our members, and now we have seen the devastating outcome what with the fire at Banners Pub in Locust Point on 11/27/09, which is owned by Fire Fighter Rick Hoffman E26. It won't be long before we are faced with a serious injury to one of our own or death to a fire fighter or civilian because the City refuses to fully fund our Department! We are constantly petitioning the City Council for their assis-

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From the President's Desk.....

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tance and will continue until we are successful. You cannot continue to make the claim that closing companies doesn't affect a response when we all know that it most certainly does! With all of that said, we must look out for each other in these difficult times. Chief Clack has remarked as had Chief Goodwin, that we need to change the culture of the BCFD. To this day I still don't agree with that statement, but what I do agree with is that IF YOU DO NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES ON SCENE, DO NOT ENTER THE BUILDING UNLESS THERE IS A CONFIRMED REPORT OF PEOPLE TRAPPED! I saw a post on our Forum some time ago complaining that an individual was on the third floor of a vacant dwelling taking a beating and the truck wasn't there yet to open up. This was a vacant dwelling without a report of people trapped. WHY??? Go ahead and tell me that this is what the BCFD should be and I'll tell you that you are correct, but what should I tell your spouse and children at your funeral? No one wants to hear it, but the 70's and the 80's are over. In my view, we will never see those times again! Please take care of each other because your family wants you to arrive home just as you left it! Ski, go ahead and remove my soapbox. I'm finished! Hope everyone has a Merry Christmas!

By the time you receive this, we should be back to full promotional opportunities for all grades. The last double-filled Captain position will be reconciled by the retirement of Ct. Jimmy Bryant in the beginning of December. Paramedic Bonnie Mathews has been Conditionally Promoted to EMS Lt. which will bring a conclusion to the two Suppression Lt reclassifications to EMS Lt. spots. Steve Horchar has come up with a Christmas ornament that the Local will be selling at Union meetings and at various other functions. The cost is \$15.00. You can view the ornament on our website. Locals 964 and 734 are also selling red "We Support Our Troops" shirts. The cost is \$15.00 and they make a wonderful gift along with providing donations to the Wounded Warrior Project, Fisher House and the Baltimore branch

of the USO! Give me a call. 443-629-0216

Please keep the families of "Big Ed" Kilcoyne and Jimmy Smith in your prayers this Christmas season. May God Hold Them In The Palm Of His Hand!

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

Great-West became our Deferred Comp. provider on 12/1/09. If you are a Plan Participant you should've received a letter from the City of Baltimore's Director of Finance mapping out the transition from ING to Great-West. 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. Please keep abreast by logging on the Fire Officers website at www.iafflocal964.org.

Health Care

Now that Open Enrollment has concluded please see below for any changes that you may need to make to your Health Care.

Family Status Change: The 2-Step Process

What Life Events Qualify As A Family Status Change?

Birth
Divorce
Adoption
Loss of Coverage - Employee, Spouse or Dependent Child
Legal Guardianship
Gain Other Coverage - Employee, Spouse or Dependent Child
Court Ordered Dependent Child
Termination of Domestic Partnership (Same Gender)
Marriage
Dependent Child No Longer Eligible
Death of a Covered Dependent
Change in Dependent Day Care Fees

The 2-Step Process

If you experience a family status change, you must update your health benefits enrollment status online by logging onto BOSS at www.baltimorecity.essbenefits.com and submitting the required documentation to Employee Benefits within 60 days from the date of the change. For example, if your family status change is the birth of a child, then the date of the qualifying event is your child's date of birth. You will have 60 days from the date to make changes online and submit the child's birth certificate to Employee Benefits Division.

Step 1

- Log onto BOSS using your social security number and your 4-digit PIN.
- When you reach the Main Menu, click on menu option "Family Status Change".
- Enter the 8-digit date of your family status change.
- Choose your family change event from the drop down box and click continue.
- Then follow the prompts to enroll or remove dependents for each benefit plan.
- Be sure to click "Submit" to save your changes and print your confirmation.

Step 2

Once you have made your changes online, you must submit support documentation to Employee Benefits within 60 days from the date of your family status change. Please refer to the Required Documentation Form posted on the website by clicking on the FORMS LIBRARY link. If you do not make your benefit changes online and submit the required documentation to Employee Benefits Division within 60 days of your family status change, you will have to wait until the next annual open enrollment period to make your benefit changes.

Safety and Health

I attended the Safety/Health meeting on 11/19/2009. Items discussed were as follows: The highway Safety Vest MOP has been released. If you need additional vests call Fire Supply. Facial burns are on the rise. Make sure you are wearing all of your protective gear. If the light on the console comes on for the Ward Diesel system, call Oscar ASAP! The FD is looking to institute a policy beginning in January of 2010 of mandating that members must possess both a state issued drivers license and City permit to remain employed. If a member loses one or the other of these they will be suspended without pay and given 180 days to reclaim what it is that they lost or be terminated. The Unions will be looking at this closely to see if it violates our member's rights. STOP AT ALL RED LIGHTS AND STOP SIGNS!

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 12/17/09. Contact me with any issues. **BE SAFE!**

President's Club

If you have an idea for next year's President's Club item, please e-mail me and if you need a size change, I need to be made aware of this prior to the order going in. Thanks! Retirees cannot contribute to the President's Club by way of dues deduction, but can still donate the full amount of \$100.00 by way of cash or check! Please make checks out to: Local 964 PAC Fund! The PAC Fund is our most important tool to have the **local** politicians listens 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 – 410-396-5682
E-mail: capttain16@hotmail.com

Worlds to twirl by...

All that you touch, all that you see, all that you taste, all you feel.
All that you love, all that you hate, all you distrust, all you save.
All that you give, all that you deal, all that you buy, beg, borrow or steal.
All you create, all you destroy, all that you do, all that you say.
All that you eat and everyone you meet, all that you slight, and every one you fight.
All that is now, all that is gone, all that's to come, and everything under the sun is in tune but the sun is eclipsed by the moon.

"There is no dark side of the moon really. Matter of fact it's all dark."

Pink Floyd

From the Desk of the Secretary-Treasurer

By Anita Hatoff

Well it has been a year of struggles it seems for everyone. Negotiations, arbitration and negotiations again. The economy is hurting everyone. I know it's no consolation but, especially at this time of year, I try to reflect upon what I do have rather than what I don't. I thank God everyday for my son, my family and my friends. I am thankful I have a job where I have been able to work with many wonderful people through my 21 ½ years of service. I strive to do the best job I can at work and for the members of 964. I have had to make decisions on things that I never would have thought I would have to. I know there are many who are not happy with the outcome from the re-opening of negotiations. I will continue to do the best that I can and welcome all suggestions, concerns and questions. My email and phone number are on the website for you the members whom I serve.

I hope that you and your families have a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Baltimore City Fire Officers Union Hall for Rent 1020 S. Linwood Ave. In the heart of Canton Square!!

- small parties
- weddings
- showers
- birthdays
- business meetings
- etc.

The hall is currently not handicap accessible, no kitchen facilities. Capacity 100 plus , two flat screen televisions , bar , ice provided.

If interested call Tom Nosek 410 499 5441, or any Eboard member.

From the Desk of the Recording Secretary

By Tom Nosek

Starting this week, we will be taking a pay cut. We will be taking 5 furlough days as per our contract which we all voted. I know no one is happy about the situation, especially the members who represent you and who tried every way possible to resolve the dilemma. Both Unions brought in non Eboard members into these negotiations to get a different perspective and to witness the City's point of view. We tried every way possible to cut the FD budget (our budget) so no one would lose money from their take home pay. I personally feel the City and FD could have made more of an effort to alleviate the problem. We continue with rotating closures which places us and the public in a unsafe environment. We saw this with the fire at Brother Hoffman's bar in Locust Point on 11/27. Truck 6 was transferred out to a company who was closed leaving Locust Point and historic Fort McHenry unprotected.

I have said this before, Mayor Dixon **emphasized SAFETY** after the death of Racheal Wilson and Chief Clack at the press conference two years ago announcing him as the new COFD, **emphasized SAFETY**. Rotating closures are **UNSAFE!!!** They are unsafe for business owners (like Rick's bar), citizens and us Firefighters!! I pray that no one in the public or the BCFD gets seriously hurt in this asinine policy. We wear a patch that reads **Pride Protecting People**, I know we have the pride just not sure if we can protect the people. I understand those are strong words, but by continuing to cut companies (Truck 2) and rotating closures, the City and HDQS are sending the message that fire protection is not a priority.

Pension issues, in the coming weeks we anticipate hearing from the GBC (Greater Baltimore Committee) on their recommendations on OUR pension system. They are to report such to the City Council. I am sure Steve will have more to say on this issue, but be ready to battle to protect our benefits.

The Union Hall will be getting blinds in the near future and gas line work is planned to have separate meters for upstairs and downstairs. Some light painting and Union logo's are planned for the coming months. We were successful in renting the hall a few weeks back and our hall can now be rented for certain affairs.

Christmas decorating; if you have some Christmas ornaments, lights wreaths etc, bring to the next meeting so we can let Santa know where to bring the presents. Brother Horchar is selling Christmas ornaments to benefit the VEBA fund, cost \$15.

Local 964 held elections this past fall and I would like to congratulate my friend and FA classmate George Jones on being elected First Vice President of Local 964. I would also like to congratulate Tom Tosh as our newest Trustee, welcome aboard Tommy. I would like to thank Mike Waldner for his years of service to the Local and wish him the best in the future.

I would like to say **THANK YOU** to all the members both active and retired who voted and supported me, thank you for re-electing me as your Recording Secretary. I will continue to work hard in every endeavor to represent and serve **YOU** the membership. Big thanks to Tom Skinner for his help.

Congratulations to our Second Vice President Mike Campbell, Mike was elected to Vice President of the Professional Firefighters of Maryland. The PFF of Maryland is the group also known as the State Association; they represent all members' interest at the State level. They

lobby for our benefits and rights at the General Assembly in Annapolis. Watch out Annapolis here comes "Iron Pants".

Mark your calendars for Installation of Officers, such will take place at our second meeting in January, January 18. We will be serving hot food and cold beer. Plans are under way for our annual dinner/dance to honor the 2009 retirees, watch for the annual raffle tickets they will be mailed out in mid January, proceeds benefit the VEBA fund.

Members of the First Battalion and throughout the Department bid farewell to a gentleman and one hell of a firefighter last week. Battalion Chief John Baker worked his last night November 18; thanks to all who helped make his last dinner a night to remember. Thanks to the packed house the night before at the Firehouse Tavern it was a pleasure to see all the members both active and retired. Best wishes for a long and healthy retirement John, thanks for being one hell of a boss.

Reminder Bob Jordan's spring fling golf outing in Ocean City will be May 11, 12 and 13.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all, enjoy your family during the holiday season and please stay safe during the winter months.

Keep "Big" Ed Kilcoyne's family in your prayers over the Christmas holiday It seems like yesterday that Ed had my back as a rookie detailed to AT102, I will always cherish the fishing trips and ballgames.

Ed, may the good Lord hold you in the palm of his hand, rest in peace my brother.

Sick and Injured

Provided by Bob Hatoff

Sadly I must report that big Ed Kilcoyne lost his long battle with heart disease. I have no idea how many times it caused his hospitalization. I will tell you that every time I visited him or talked to him on the phone, he never complained. He remained up beat and happy through it all. Goodbye old friend, I'll see you later!

Max Powers continues to suffer the pain of his back problems. It has become apparent that he will need surgery to bring him relief.

George Keefe is suffering with kidney stones.

Please keep these men in your prayers!

Addendum Agreement

This Addendum Agreement between the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, Baltimore Fire Officers, Local 964 a/w IAFF, and Baltimore Fire Fighters, Local 734 a/w IAFF is made to take effect upon ratification by the Unions and subsequent notation by the Board of Estimates of the City of Baltimore, which action by the Board of Estimates shall, effective on the date of notation, modify and amend the Fire Unions' Memorandum of Understanding for FY'10, and it shall adopt the respective Memorandum of Understanding for FY'10, as amended, as the operative Memorandum between the Mayor and City Council and each Fire Union for FY'11.

1. A total of Five (5) unpaid furlough days for all members of both bargaining units will be applied for the remainder of FY '10. In the event that layoffs, furlough days, or wage reductions are applied to all other bargaining units (FOP, AFSCME, & CUB) for FY '11, both bargaining units agree to a comparable reduction, up to a total of Five (5) furlough days for FY '11. The employees represented by both Fire Unions shall not receive any terms which are less favorable than those subsequently offered to any other bargaining unit (FOP, AFSCME, & CUB) in regards to wage increases, wage reductions and/or furlough days.

2. Members shall utilize furlough days in conjunction with 1st choice vacation options, either with assigned Kelly number or optional first choice vacation days or nights. Day shift personnel shall utilize their furlough days as stipulated in existing City Policy with the addition of Friday, Feb 12, 2010 and consistent with existing City Policy for FY '11. Members must begin to utilize their furlough days by April 1, 2010. In the event they have not, the Department will begin to assign the furlough days, in conjunction with the member's vacation number, over the remainder of the fiscal year. The City shall confer with the Fire Unions in advance about when and how pay will be reduced in order to account for the furlough days implemented. No employee shall suffer a reduction in total annual salary on account of any furlough day(s); the total annual salary shall remain based on the wage scales appended to the Memorandum of Understanding, which shall not be reduced.

In addition, the parties agree to the following:

3. The city agrees to offer voluntary reductions in licensure to employees who currently hold ALS licensure, thereby reducing the total number of ALS providers to 500 by June 30, 2010. The Fire Unions and the City will work together to develop the parameters and rules around such reductions, which will be published by January 10, 2010.

4. The number of open-ended swaps (16) contained in the current labor agreements will be expanded to a rule requiring each member to work at least 50% of their scheduled day work and 50% of their night work every six months, inclusive of vacation, compensatory time, holidays and personal leave. The rule will be adopted as a new MOP, which MOP shall be discussed with the Fire Unions before it is officially published.

5. Members will no longer be required to wear a departmental uniform while off on sick leave or LOD leave

6. Members shall wear the work uniform during visits to PSI whenever previously required to wear the Dress Uniform.

7. The City agrees that it will not require additional furlough days from the bargaining units during FY'10 and FY'11, other than those set forth in paragraph 1 above.

8. The Unions and the City agree to put the \$2700 stipend provision for ALS refresher training on hold until July 1, 2011. The vacation option shall be the only remuneration for ALS training until July 1, 2011. Members who qualify under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding shall be given additional vacation credit as provided in the appropriate Article without needing to ask for it.

9. Members of both bargaining units may accumulate up to an additional ten (10) vacation days to their current leave "banks" under Article 30, about which procedure the City's Labor Commissioner shall work out the details with the Fire Unions.

10. This Addendum Agreement shall constitute full and complete satisfaction of MOU negotiations for FY '11 unless otherwise mutually agreed to. In addition, Article 36.B shall not be re-opened for the term of this agreement, through June 30, 2012.

11. This Addendum Agreement is concluded because of impact of the current recession on the Mayor and City Council. While the terms contained herein shall modify and amend the Memorandum of Understanding of each Fire Union for FY'10, and they shall also apply to FY'11, the fact of this agreement, and its terms, shall not be used as evidence of past bargaining history in any negotiation over terms and conditions of employment to apply subsequent to June 30, 2011, and it may not be offered or introduced as evidence in any proceeding about fiscal years subsequent to FY '11.

Tired and Retired

by Bob Hatoff

As you're reading this, we are rapidly approaching that wonderful time of the year, Christmas. You will see it listed in many places as Xmas. The X represents the elimination of Christ. Since we're celebrating Christ's birth, why can't we mention his name? In too many of our schools it is known as the winter holidays. They are politically correct, so they can't say his name. After all it might make an atheist feel uncomfortable. You'll find many of the stores you shop in have happy holiday signs. Also they won't let their employees say Merry Christmas. In cases like this, I ask for the manager. Then I tell him I can't possibly do my Christmas shopping in a store that goes out of its way to keep from saying his name. Your children and grandchildren can't wait to see Santa and tell him what they want for Christmas. They're full of excitement as they tear the wrapping paper off their presents to see what they got. Now us older people are just as excited to see the joy the presents bring the kids. Then we gather at one of the families houses for a great meal, pictures and memories of Christmas past. Do you ever wonder why so many people work so hard to spoil the day? I admit a lot of this bothers me, but their efforts cannot separate me from Christ!

I recently heard from one of my spies in Delaware. He told me he was working at nine engine, when they got a run to a dwelling fire. Charlie Williams found a dog behind a sofa that was unconscious from smoke inhalation. Being a hero Scoop immediately administered mouth to snout resuscitation. The dog came to and bit Charlie. Now I've heard many stories about his strange sexual encounters, but I just can't figure where this one fits in.

Notice to Jean Helfrich: I received your presents for my great granddaughter. Her parents and I were very pleased with them and we thank you. I have the same thing in wood and enjoy the puzzled looks I get from people who can't figure out what it says.

In closing I wish you all a blessed Christmas! Hug your kids and tell them how much you love them. After all they're God's gift to us.

As always I can be reached at 1805 Greencastle Dr., Baltimore, MD 21237 or 410-866-3235.
Please hold your fan mail until after Christmas!

THE BALTIMORE FIRE OFFICERS

Local No. 964

Meetings -- 1st & 3rd Monday

1030 S. Linwood Avenue

Baltimore, MD. 21224

PHONE: 410-276-6964

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