

MICHIGAN PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTER

The official publication of the Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union

Volume 28

Number 2

Spring 2003

INSIDE

Letters	2
President's Message	3
Legal Counsel	4
Secretary-Treasurer	5
District Reports	6-8
International News	9
Around the State	10-11
In the News	12-15
Guest Editorial.....	16-17
Events.....	18
Advertising.....	19
Photo Gallery.....	20

Battle Creek Firefighters Win Staffing Grievance

By Charles Asher
Battle Creek Local 335

Last January, a phone call from Ron Helveston brought good news to Battle Creek Firefighters. The city of Battle Creek's appeal of an arbitration award had been denied by a ruling of the Michigan Court of Appeals, bringing a four-year battle to a close.

It started in January 1999, when after having worked 19 months under an expired contract, our bargaining committee entered into a tentative agreement with the city for a four-year contract retroactive to July 1, 1997. As an improvement, we were able to get a minimum-staffing clause that required one officer and three firefighters on each engine, except for those housed at multi-company stations. The effect of this was that the staffing of five engine companies was to be increased by an additional firefighter. With all apparatus in service our daily minimum staffing was increased from 23 to 25.

We were excited with this improvement. However, our excitement soon dissipated when upon ratification of the contract the city refused to make the staffing changes. Its claim was that a gentleman's agreement had been reached during the negotiations that allowed them to delay action until the Respiratory Standards Act—with its 2-in-2-out clause—was adopted by MIOSHA. We admitted to having discussed a grace period. Yet, this discussion did not result in any provision for a grace period being included in the tentative agreement. That being a fact we felt that the city was prepared to implement the change upon ratification. The city felt that they had time. The result of the dispute was that the city was in violation of the staffing clause of our contract from February 3rd through April 19th or a full 82 days.

In response we filed a policy grievance. The city denied it. We then filed for binding arbitration as provided by P.A. 312. We estimated our damages by the expense in overtime wages for the city to have staffed each engine to comply with the contract. Over the 82-day period we estimated that to be approximately \$150,000. Yet the real

damage was the city's refusal to honor our contract.

In late summer of 1999, the arbitrator heard arguments from the city and Local 335. In November of 1999, we won an award from the arbitrator that said a 30-day period would have reasonable amount of time to implement the staffing changes and that the parties were to meet to negotiate a settlement. We thought we had won and as it turned out we would win, but not yet.

The city appealed the arbitrator's award. Their basis was that in ruling that a 30-day grace period would have been reasonable the arbitrator had exceeded his authority.

The city claims that the arbitrator should have either awarded the full 82 days in dispute to either the union or the city. An all or nothing decision but not a modification.

The appeal was heard by the Calhoun County Circuit Court in June of 2000. It was brief and the judge denied the city's appeal. We once again thought the matter had come to a close. Yet, much to our surprise, the city elected again to appeal which brought the issue before the Michigan Court of Appeals.

Being on the Michigan Court of Appeals docket is like being in limbo only more time consuming. Our case remained on the docket until the spring of 2002 when the court decided not to hear oral argument from the contesting parties. The city appealed this decision and the court caused us great concern when they reversed their ruling and elected to hear oral argument. We were afraid that our staffing grievance would finally be doomed in front of an Engler appointed court.

The hearing was delayed until the fall of 2002, which soon became winter. When arguments were presented our side was argued by our attorney Ron Helveston and again, nearly four years later, we won.

The issue of our staffing grievance evolved over time from a grievance over contract violation to a battle for binding arbitration in the state of Michigan. We are proud to have served in this capacity and when the city decided not to contest the Court of Appeals ruling we were able to negotiate a \$75,000 settlement under the guidelines of the arbitrator's original award. We are now in the process of deciding how to divide this among our membership. That's another story! ■

IAFF Legislative Conference



Michigan firefighters with Senator Debbie Stabenow at the 2003 IAFF Legislative Conference.

LETTERS

To Whom It May Concern,
My name is Heather Ross and last year I was one of five recipients of a MPFFU scholarship worth \$1,000. I am writing to say thank you for helping me begin an amazing adventure in college. This thank you letter is a long time coming and for that I apologize, but I would like to update you on my status in college after almost completing my freshmen year.

My plans on majoring in Athletic Training are on track as I intend on applying for the program in the fall. Classes are going extremely well and I made the Dean's List my first semester here at Central Michigan University and am on my way to making it two semesters in a row this spring.

One class that I have this semester is *Responding to Emergencies* which is something that you, as firefighters, are all trained to do everyday. Once in a while you will hear someone say something along the lines of, "How can certain people just jump at any given moment to help save lives of individuals they don't even know?" When someone says something related to that, I just think, my dad does that everyday. He puts himself on the line to save others that are in need of help. We have all seen replays of September 11 and read the stories. No matter how many times I have heard the same story or seen the same video, it always leaves me with my jaw open and goose bumps on my arms when it talks about those that gave their lives that day. It really gives me, even as a daughter of a firefighter, an appreciation for a job that is sometimes not recognized unless disaster strikes.

Although I do not want to become a firefighter personally, I want to dedicate what I do in life to helping others as well. Athletic Training allows me to work with many individuals in sports and other recreational activities. It gives me a chance to be involved in something I love, being around other people and helping them in whatever way possible. Recently, I have decided to extend my education. After get-

ting my Bachelor's Degree in Athletic Training, I plan on going to Graduate School to become a Physical Therapist here at CMU. This will take another three to four years of schooling. Again, it is a chance for me to do what I love and in the process help people of all ages.

I'm sure you know that college is expensive for four years. Now I have decided to extend my schooling to almost eight years. It is not going to be cheap and any money that comes my way is greatly appreciated. That scholarship that I received was a tremendous help and very much appreciated. Thank you again for all your help on making my education possible. And I would also like to say thank you for all that you do everyday, putting your life on the line when it matters most, it does mean more than words can say! God Bless!

*Sincerely,
Heather Ross*

Paul,
I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Terry and the rest of the executive board for sponsoring a hospitality room during the two firefighter ski weekends at Treetops resort in Gaylord. Many

of our members turned out for what has become a great winter getaway.

This year we started a couple of fundraiser events to benefit the Great Lakes Burn Camp. The Hose race event only attracted four teams and the nastar race only a few participants, but along with a raffle held at the hospitality room we were able to raise about \$600.

Hopefully, next year we'll get a better turn out for the races. It was a great way to help out the burn camp as well as a good time for those who participated. Thanks again to all those who helped out and see you next winter!

*Sincerely,
Karl Kuss
Southfield local 1029*

Dear MPFFU,
I'm writing to thank you for putting on such a great Collective Bargaining Seminar. This was my first time to a state union function as I was just elected in January to be the secretary of my Local (Alpena Local 623).

*Thanks again,
Andy Marceau
Alpena Local 623*

Moving? Change of address

For fastest service, attach old mailing label in space. If mailing label is not available, print your old address in this box, with the ZIP code.

Print your NEW address here:

NAME _____ LOCAL # _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Mail to: Michelle Chesney
MPFFU, 1651 Kingsway Court, Suite E, Trenton, MI 48183-1959

OFFICERS



President
Paul Hufnagel
1651 Kingsway Court, Suite E
Trenton, MI 48183-1959
734-675-0206 (office)
734-675-6083 (fax)
phufnagel@mpffu.org



Secretary-Treasurer
Terrence H. Chesney
1651 Kingsway Court, Suite E
Trenton, MI 48183-1959
734-675-0206 (office)
734-675-6083 (fax)
thchesney@aol.com

Vice Presidents



First District
Kevin Pirlot
603 W. Fleshiem St.
Iron Mountain, MI 49801
906-774-8214 (home)
906-774-0623 (work)
906-774-8654 (fax)
kpirlot@uplogon.com



Second District
Michael Onthank
P.O. Box 13
Lake Ann, MI 49650
231-275-7780 (home)
231-633-5619 (cell)
231-274-0552 (pager)
mpffu2nddistrict@chartermi.net



Third District
Greg A. Weisbarth
15430 Nelson Rd.
St. Charles, MI 48655-9767
989-642-5730 (home)
989-295-3587 (cell)
989-837-3425 (work)
989-642-6662 (fax)
gweisbarth@aol.com



Fourth District
Daniel F. McNamara
243 W. Congress, Suite 344
Detroit, MI 48226
313-962-7546 (office)
313-962-7899 (fax)
Dmcmamara344@aol.com



Fifth District
W. James Leve
10016 West J Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
269-375-9301 (home)
269-375-2551 (fax)
269-720-8499 (cell)
mpffuwp5@aol.com



Sixth District
Ed Rigley
5118 Leland
Brighton, MI 48116
810-229-8722 (home)
810-227-0226 (fax)
810-923-0237 (cell)
erigley@aol.com

What Have Unions Done For You?

- Eight-Hour Day
- Five-Day Workweek
- Health Insurance
- Good Pensions
- Paid Sick Leave
- Fair Treatment for Women, People of Color and Workers with Disabilities
- Higher Wages
- Overtime Pay
- Job Safety
- Paid Holidays
- Job Security
- Severance Pay
- Paid Vacations
- Family and Medical Leave

— FYI —

Magazine Editorial Deadlines:
Summer 2003 7/15/03
Autumn 2003 10/15/03
Winter 2004 1/15/04
Spring 2004 4/15/04

All material must be sent to the State office by these dates. The address is:

MPFFU
1651 Kingsway Court, Suite E
Trenton, MI 48183-1959

Note: I also wish to remind you that it is the policy of the MPFF editorial staff to not publish any information that is sent anonymously.

The Michigan Professional Fire Fighter (USPS 318-670) is published by the Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union, organized November 23, 1933. Subscription rates are \$1 per year for members. Non-member subscriptions are accepted only from recognized public safety agencies and government officials. Foreign subscriptions are not accepted.

Known office of publication: 1651 Kingsway Court, Suite E, Trenton, Michigan 48183. Phone # 734-675-0206, Fax # 734-675-6083. Second-class postage paid at Plymouth, Michigan, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
Michigan Professional Fire Fighter
1651 Kingsway Court, Suite E
Trenton, Michigan 48183-1959
(voice) 1-734-675-0206
(fax) 1-734-675-6083
www.mpffu.org

Staff

Editor Terrence H. Chesney
Circulation & Account Manager Michelle Chesney
Layout & Design Mike Marinelli
Advertising Sales Mike Marinelli

MPFFU
1651 Kingsway Court, Suite E
Trenton, MI 48183-1959
(voice) 1-800-886-7338
(fax) 1-800-454-1757
www.mpffu.org

PRESIDENT

President's Message

National, state, and local economies are struggling through the current recession that began several years ago. Threatened cutbacks in staffing, wages and benefits are testing local firefighter union leadership at the bargaining table. It has been a long time since many of our local unions and their members have faced difficult economic times like we are experiencing now. Times like these remind us of the reasons why workers organize and join unions.

Brief reviews of the history of the trade union movement and the attributes of successful unions provide insight into the operations of an effective organization and what role members need to play in their local unions.

Trade unionism in Michigan has a long and rich history that began in the early 1900s and grew stronger with the passage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935. The NLRA was passed during one of the most difficult economic struggles this country has ever faced. There were no jobs and those that were available paid workers barely enough to support a family at the poverty level. Following the passage of the NLRA, private sector unions were able to establish a strong foothold in Michigan, providing jobs that paid fair wages and benefits and raised the standard of living for workers in Michigan.

The IAFF was formed as an international union in 1918. Shortly after that many cities across the United States and Canada began to organize as local unions even though at the time they did not have the right to collectively bargain and represent their members. In the early days of

unionization, firefighters were threatened with the loss of their jobs for simply being a member of a union.

Intense lobbying by MPFFU and other public employee unions in the 1950s and 60s, along with the support of the Michigan AFL-CIO, convinced the Michigan legislature to pass the Public Employees Relations Act (PERA) of 1965 giving public sector unions the right to meaningful collective bargaining. PERA mirrors the NLRA and gives public employees the right to bargain over wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment. Even though the Michigan legislature had passed laws in the 1940s addressing the rights of public employees to form unions, it was not until the passage of PERA that unions were able to bargain and establish effective contracts.

In 1969, following numerous strikes by firefighters across the state, the Michigan legislature passed Public Act 312 giving firefighters and police officers binding arbitration to settle contract disputes while making it illegal for firefighters to strike. Since the passage of P.A. 312, one of the most effective public employee binding arbitration laws in the country, firefighters in Michigan have made significant progress in workplace safety, hours, benefits and pay for one of the most dangerous jobs in the world.

One of the problems that can accompany the success we have enjoyed since the passage of P.A. 312 is complacency in the union membership. We sometimes believe that continued success will occur whether or not we have educated, trained leader-

ship and the active participation of union members. Of course, we know the opposite is true. When times are tough it is even more important to have strong leadership along with an active and supportive membership to meet the challenges that your union faces everyday.

Local IAFF/MPFFU firefighter unions are autonomous, democratic organizations that provide the opportunity for all members to participate. Successful firefighter unions are organizations built on a foundation that includes the following:

- An effective constitution and by-laws that sets the framework for day-to-day operations of the union. It also protects the rights of members, determines how the officers of the local are elected, specifies how grievances are resolved and it outlines how union meetings will function. Local unions need to insure that their by-laws are current and address the important needs of the local. The local constitution and by-laws are the bill of rights for the membership and should encourage their participation in the union.

- An atmosphere that encourages the union membership to actively participate is vital to developing a successful organization. Some of the firefighters hired today have never belonged to a union and they may not fully understand the role it plays in the workplace. MPFFU's recently developed Union Member Orientation seminars are open to all of our members. These seminars provide an opportunity for union members to learn about the history of firefighter and private sector unions and the battles they fought to obtain the ben-



President
Paul Hufnagel
1651 Kingsway Court,
Suite E
Trenton, MI 48183-1959
734-675-0206 (office)
734-675-6083 (fax)
phufnagel@mpffu.org

efits we enjoy today. The seminar also explains the role of union members and encourages them to take active roles in their union.

- Support for the union's elected leadership is important in the operation of a local. Many times we elect union officers and fail to provide them with assistance and support. Local unions need members who are willing to attend union meetings, serve on committees, assist with special projects, and vocally support union issues.

- Local unions need to foster the development of members who will be prepared and ready one day to assume future leadership roles in the union. We need to make sure that we provide the opportunity and encouragement for interested members to get the education and training that they will need as future leaders of our local unions. MPFFU and the IAFF provide many seminars to assist locals in preparing their future leaders.

A local union's strength is its membership. By attending local union meetings, expressing opinions on issues and supporting the leadership of the local, we ensure the continued strength and effectiveness of our unions. ■

Be a member of the...

Michigan Professional Firefighters Union FIREPAC!

Protect the wages, rights, and employment you enjoy through Political Action!

Choose your level of support!

Erie...\$25.00

Your name in the MPFFU News and a MPFFU Fire PAC Lapel Pin

Huron...\$50.00

Your name in the MPFFU News, MPFFU Fire PAC Lapel Pin and a MPFFU Window Cling

Please make your voluntary contribution to the MPFFU FIRE PAC FUND today. Send personal checks only to:

MPFFU Fire PAC Fund
1651 Kingsway Court, Suite E
Trenton, MI 48183-1959

Michigan...\$75.00

Your name in the MPFFU News, a MPFFU Fire PAC Lapel Pin, a MPFFU Window Cling and an MPFFU License Plate Frame

Superior...\$100.00

Your name in the MPFFU News, MPFFU Fire PAC Lapel Pin, MPFFU Window Cling, MPFFU License Plate Frame and a Short Sleeved MPFFU Henley Shirt.

LEGAL COUNSEL

Free Speech Rights of Public Employees

As Americans we know that Freedom of Speech is one of our most fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The First Amendment protects the speech rights of all U.S. citizens. The Frenchtown Township case reminds all of us that firefighters are included within the scope of this protection.

In *Intr'l Ass'n of Firefighters Local 3233 v. Frenchtown Twp.*, several Frenchtown Township firefighters and their wives complained about safety issues at a public board meeting in 2001. The complaints resulted in a MIOSHA investigation and seven violations were cited. In response, the township enacted a gag ordinance to prevent the firefighters from speaking out again in the future. An existing ordinance was amended to state that only the fire chief was authorized to release facts regarding the fire department to the news media. Anyone found to have violated the ordinance could be subject to a fine up to \$500 and/or a jail sentence of up to 90 days.

The firefighters filed a motion to prevent enforcement of the ordinance. In response, Frenchtown brought up the existence of a Fire Department Personnel Policy that the township claimed prohibited communications with persons not connected to the department unless authorized by the fire chief. The firefighters pointed out that Frenchtown had not previously enforced this policy in this way and that Frenchtown was now broadening the scope of the rule to punish these firefighters and silence future complaints about safety issues.

The firefighters sued Frenchtown Township alleging that the ordinance and the Fire Dept. policy created unjustified prior restraints on the firefighters' First Amendment rights to comment on matters of public concern. Frenchtown Township argued that the restrictions did not constitute prior restraint because "they did not prevent speech before the fact, but merely put employees on notice of the potential repercussions of that speech."

The court did not buy Frenchtown Township's argument. The court held that the firefighters had shown that the restricted speech addressed a matter of public concern, specifically public safety. Further, the court held that the interests of the firefighters, on behalf of the public, outweighed the township's interests in regulating the speech to maintain discipline. In fact, the court held that "Frenchtown has provided *no* evidence that its interests are seriously threatened by the speech it seeks to restrict." (Emphasis added). Also, the court found that the restrictions the ordinance created would not actually advance the asserted interests of the township.

While the Frenchtown case is good news, especially to the firefighters in Frenchtown, we need to be careful not to assume that the First Amendment's protections of "free speech" protect verbal "free-for-alls." There are certain types of speech that are not ever

protected by the First Amendment. The most obvious types of illegal speech are actually considered verbal "acts" and not "speech." Examples of illegal verbal acts include: threats of harm or death, slander (or its written counter-part, libel), and racial and/or sexual harassment. No citizen can expect First Amendment protection for speech that is deemed a verbal act. Further, "speech," including books, magazines and photos, which are deemed "obscene" are not protected by the First Amendment.

In addition, other types of speech that are normally permissible can be restricted if the restrictions are limited and can be categorized as "reasonable time, place, and manner" restrictions. These types of speech restrictions include a school's prohibition of the use of profanity in the school, during school hours, or an employer's "zero tolerance" policy for speech of a sexual or racial nature. These restrictions are acceptable because they only limit speech in certain contexts. The school's restriction does not prohibit students from swearing outside of school property. The employer's speech restriction is permissible because the employer, who can be held liable for an employee's actions, has the right to control the work environment in ways that do not interfere with employees' rights to report unsafe, unhealthy, or illegal conduct.

Firefighters serve a dual role as both citizens and as public employees. When they speak as citizens, their speech is protected to the extent that any other citizen's speech is protected. When firefighters speak as Union representatives on Union matters they are protected by PERA. However, when firefighters speak as employees, their right to speech is balanced against the employer's right to "efficient and effective" operations. If the employer's rights prevail, the employee can sometimes be disciplined or discharged because the speech will not be protected.

As leaders of your locals, you need to know the difference between protected and non-protected speech. Speech by public employees is only protected if it satisfies certain requirements. First, the speech has to involve a "matter of public concern." Second, the employee's interest in speaking on the matter of public concern must not be outweighed by the employer's interest in "promoting the efficiency of public service." This balancing test makes some speech questionable and the courts are left to resolve the issue. However if you want to decrease your chances of ending up in court, some speech should clearly be avoided. For example, if you are going to accuse a city councilman of embezzling money, you must have good proof that this is true. Unsubstantiated station house rumors of the councilman's embezzlement are not protected by the First Amendment from charges of slander or libel.

On the other hand, speech involving matters of "public concern" including,

health or safety issues and information intended to educate the public is generally protected because these are issues the public needs to know about. As demonstrated by the *Frenchtown* case, courts have held that speech exposing unsafe and illegal activity is protected, even if it makes public officials look bad. So if your city or township is violating MIOSHA or other laws, or if your equipment is in such poor repair that it might interfere with your ability to fight a fire, you can talk about these things among yourselves and to the media. This type of speech is also protected by PERA.

Exposing unsafe practices is a type of complaint that fairly easily implicates public policy concerns. However, determining the level of protection afforded to other types of complaints can be more complicated. Gripes about your chief being a jerk are not protected. Also, racist, sexist or other prejudiced speech are not protected by the First Amendment. Gripes about who got promoted and who didn't are only protected if the promotions are unfairly motivated by age, disability, religious, racial or gender prejudice. However, in order to help insure that the speech is protected, and that the employee's concerns are addressed, it is best for the employee to complain to the appropriate supervisors and Union representatives, not just to co-workers.

Institutional prejudice is illegal. Institutional prejudice can create a hostile environment where certain individuals do not feel that it is even worth applying for a particular job because the individual assumes they will not be hired or will be mistreated if they are hired. For these reasons, institutional prejudice is a matter of public concern. However, in cases involving other types of complaints, it is always important to remember that in order for the complaints to be protected speech the subject of the complaint should focus on how some situation will affect the public, and not just your members. For example, if the complaint involves a safety issue you could say to a reporter, "If the aerial on this truck gives out again, a firefighter could get hurt." Although this *should* concern the public, it is not obvious how this actually affects the public. Instead you should say, "A broken aerial will interfere with a rescue, and citizens could be injured." This makes it a "public concern" and more likely to be protected speech.

Having said all of this, it is also important to know that what *motivates* the speech will also be a factor in determining whether or not the speech will be protected. Even speech involving a safety issue that affects the public may not be protected if it can be shown that the speaker was motivated by a personal issue. Some employees who have a personal gripe about work will try, literally, to "make a federal case out of it"

Legal Counsel

Ronald R. Helveston
3327 Cadillac Tower Bldg.
Detroit, MI 48226
313-963-4637 (voice)
313-963-3249 (fax)



by writing letters to the newspaper or city council complaining about everything they can think of just to get even with the boss. Even if some of the complaints might involve matters of "public concern," if his or her real motive for speaking is purely personal, the speaker will not be protected from the consequences of the speech. So if you want to raise a "public concern" issue at a council meeting, or to the media, don't pick for your spokesperson the "station-house lawyer" with the discipline file full of paperwork.

In general if your speech is true, if it involves something the general public cares about, and not just your members, and if it is delivered by somebody who does not have another agenda, your speech is a matter of "public concern." But this is not the end of the analysis because the speech *still* may not be protected by the First Amendment. The speech is only protected if the employee's interest in speaking is greater than the government's interest in avoiding disruption in the workplace.

In practice, this means that the speech should not cause an uproar in the station house, or poison the relationships between people who have to work together. In one case, a Madison Wisconsin firefighter wrote a press release complaining that his training officer assaulted another firefighter. He claimed that the fire chief refused to discipline the training officer because of the alleged sexual orientation of the fire chief and the training officer. The court held that the press release did involve a matter of public concern, because it alleged favoritism, and misconduct by government officials. However, the court also held that the press release was not protected speech because of the uproar caused when the firefighter publicly, unnecessarily, alleged that the two officers in the department were of a particular sexual orientation. The lesson is that even speech that the general public would care about may not be protected if it causes so much disruption in the station house that firefighters can no longer work together as a unit.

Because you are public employees, you have a First Amendment right to speak about some of the things that happen at the station and at the fire scene. But that right is nowhere near as broad as many people think. As always, when in doubt, call your lawyer. ■

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Welcome

By now, most of you know that we have two new locals in the Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union. They are Madison Twp (5th District) and Huron Twp. (4th District). Congratulations on becoming members of the brotherhood of professional, union, firefighters. Hopefully, after a dispute between the employer and the IAFF is resolved, Oxford (6th District) will also be joining the MPFFU. Please contact the MPFFU office if you know of any other departments that have at least three full-time members. We would be happy to meet with them to see if they have an interest in joining the IAFF and the MPFFU.

New MPFFU License Plate

The Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union vehicle license plate has been changed by the Secretary of State office. All organizational plates will have their emblem painted on the plate rather than using a sticker like before. You can replace your old plate for one of these new ones by going to your local Secretary of State office and paying ten dollars. The new plate will be mailed to you in approximately seven business days. If you want to keep your old plate, you may want to ask for a new replacement sticker while they are still available. When their supply of IAFF stickers is depleted, no more will be produced. If you see a non-member of the MPFFU with one of our organizational plates, please copy the plate number and contact the MPFFU office. The Secretary of State will demand that the plate be returned by the non-member.

Member Orientation Seminars

There are two Member Orientation Seminars scheduled in the next few months. There is one in Southfield on May 29 and one in Grand Rapids on September 9. There is no cost to attend this seminar and any member is permitted to attend. Attendance is limited to 50 people at each location. Visit our website at www.mppffu.org or call the MPFFU office for more information or to register.

Listen Up!

Have you ever bought something at the store that was unassembled and when you got it home you attempted to put it together without following the instructions? Of course you have. Most of the time, many of us are able to proudly finish the job on our own without taking a peek at the instructions. On the other hand, have you ever had to start over because you did something wrong or because you ended up with an extra part or bolt? I would wager that, at one time or another, you have even secretly admitted to yourself that maybe

you would have finished the task sooner and more professionally if you HAD read the instructions?

Well, with a little imagination, the above analogy could apply to being a good union member. Most of the time, you can just show up and be able to successfully participate in monthly meetings, nominations and elections. But do you know that there are instructions for being a union member? These instructions are your local union's Constitution and By-Laws. The instructions (by-laws) should be available to every member of every local. And they should also be updated on a regular basis.

Lately, there have been several incidents in locals across the State that were complicated by the fact that their Constitution and By-Laws were out of date or non-existent. Experience has proven that trying to write the instructions at the same time you are trying to resolve a problem is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

I urge all of you to ask for a copy of your Local's Constitution and By-Laws. Read them and make sure they are up to date. Do it **before** a problem occurs in your local.

Oh, one more thing; have you ever been lost but refused to stop and ask for directions? Most of us have stubbornly made that mistake a time or two. If you are a local union officer, and could use some assistance, all you have to do is ask for help. Please feel free to contact your district vice president or the MPFFU office **anytime** you need assistance or advice. That's what we are here for.

Budget Cuts

Many communities across the state are being forced to cut their budgets for a variety of reasons. More often than not, the fire department budget is adversely affected by these cuts. It has been a very long time since so many locals have faced staffing cutbacks through attrition or lay-offs. Over the years, most departments have taken on additional duties without any increases in manpower. Most were already spread way too thin. But, being the dedicated and professional people that we are, we sucked it up and did the best we could. Now it is coming back to haunt us for not demanding additional staffing when we took on all these extra assignments. It is ludicrous for elected officials to expect that they can decrease our daily staffing levels and expect that services to the citizens will not suffer or that firefighter safety will not be jeopardized.

Unfortunately, there are no easy solutions to this issue. The International Association of Fire Fighters has developed an educational program to assist local unions that are dealing with staffing issues. The MPFFU intends to offer this program in

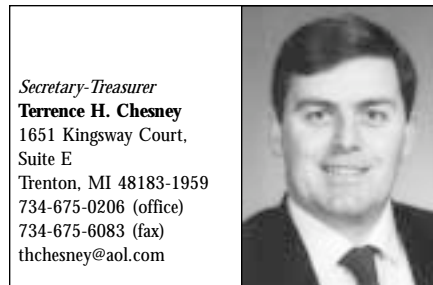
Michigan sometime in the near future. In the meantime, listed below is an excerpt from the IAFF *Staffing for Safety* handbook. You can use this list of factors to help decide what staffing levels are appropriate for your community.

Fire Fighter Health and Safety – Numerous studies have demonstrated there is a statistical link between firefighter safety and staffing levels. Although fire fighting is inherently dangerous, a community should not increase the level of risk to firefighters by reducing staffing below safe, minimum levels. Firefighter health and safety should be a top priority when making a staffing decision.

Community Expectations – Citizens in our communities expect a certain level of life and property protection. Yet, most citizens don't know about the impact of insufficient staffing on fire suppression or emergency medical services. Education of citizens is vital to ensure their support as political pressure is applied. When making a staffing decision, it is important to understand the level of service that the community expects and gain their support for adequate staffing to provide those services. Community expectations should play a significant role in staffing decisions.

Political Climate – Citizens trust politicians to make informed decisions regarding their protection. Politicians need to be made accountable for adequate fire service delivery to protect the well being of their citizens. Regardless of the fire protection level chosen by the citizens, elected officials should not have the right to jeopardize the safety of firefighters.

Industry Standards – Many studies and standards, including NFPA 1710, have set a benchmark for minimum staffing levels. Since these studies use empirical evidence to support their guidelines and since they support each other's findings, they should be strongly considered when making a staffing decision. A reduction in the industry standard regarding the appropriate level of staffing would be justified only in those circumstances when the nature and



Secretary-Treasurer
Terrence H. Chesney
1651 Kingsway Court,
Suite E
Trenton, MI 48183-1959
734-675-0206 (office)
734-675-6083 (fax)
thchesney@aol.com

number of tasks to be accomplished at any given structural fire were also reduced.

Financial Resources – As staffing levels are considered, communities need to take into account the costs they will incur and their municipality's ability to fund appropriate staffing levels. If there will be substantial additional costs, citizens and elected officials need to determine if an increase in taxes or implementation of a user fee might alleviate the strain. In any case, decisions regarding staffing should not boil down to simplistic arguments in a local budget battle; they should be made with full understanding of the relationship between staffing levels, public safety, property conservation, and firefighter health and safety.

Existing Organizational Goals – Every fire department should have service delivery objectives that outline the services it will provide. These objectives need to be examined to ensure they are set in accordance with industry standards; anything less is unacceptable. Any service that is offered by a fire department must be adequately staffed.

In closing, I would like to encourage all of you to work with your local union leadership. During these difficult times it is imperative that we all work together. It is also important to work at developing a better working relationship with your fire Chief. You will need his help in your battle to insure safe and adequate staffing levels. He will need your help as well. This is a battle that will only be won if you are all working on the same page. Remember, read the instructions and ask for directions.

Have a fun and **safe** summer. ■

Contributors to the
Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union
FIRE PAC program for 2003
January 1, 2003 - April 30, 2003

Superior – \$100 Contribution

Paul Hufnagel – MPFFU

Terrence Chesney – MPFFU

Scott Bala – Roseville Local 1614

Al Dragone – Dearborn Local 412

Mark Fankhauser – Plainfield Twp. Local 3890

William Harp – Detroit Local 344

Stephen Parsell – Detroit Local 344

Huron – \$50 Contribution

Tony Beurkens III – Grand Rapids Local 366

Arnold S. Brodie – Ypsilanti Twp. Local 1830

William Smith – Grand Rapids, Local 366

Erie – \$25 Contribution

Mark Hogrebe – Allen Park Local 1410

Patrick O'Leary – Sterling Heights Local 1557

HOT NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS

1st District

Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation – This act, if passed, would help our brothers in the states that do not currently have collective bargaining by guaranteeing the right to join a union, collectively bargain wages, hours and conditions of employment. The legislation would outlaw strikes and relies on negotiations and mediation to resolve disputes.

Fire Fighter Staffing – SAFER act would provide grants to localities to hire firefighters. The federal government would pick up the majority of the cost of the salary and benefits for the first four years that firefighters are employed.

Economic Stimulus – Tax cuts that will stimulate the economy. Provide aid to states and localities. This would help with the shortfalls that most states are facing because of the economy. It would also increase spending on Homeland Security.

Homeland Security/Fire Act – The IAFF supports the full funding of \$900 million for the FIRE act. It would also support a first responder initiative that provides money specifically for firefighter and law enforcement officer preparedness against terrorism.

Federal Presumptive Disability – This would provide disability presumption for federal firefighters. 38 states have some form of presumption but federal firefighters are not covered.

PSOB for Heart Attacks – This would create a rebuttable presumption that a firefighter who dies from a heart attack or stroke while on duty, or within 24 hours of responding to an emergency or partici-

First District
Kevin Pirlot
603 W. Fleshm St.
Iron Mountain, MI 49801
906-774-8214 (home)
906-774-0623 (work)
906-774-8654 (fax)
kpirlot@uplogon.com



pating in a training exercise is considered to have died because of a job related injury. This would allow the family to be eligible for the federal death benefit of \$250,000.

Many of the Michigan representatives where supportive of the agenda, regardless of being Democrat or Republican. Senators Levin and Stabenow have been avid supporters and sponsors of the IAFF's agenda. The Upper Peninsula is represented by Bart Stupak and I am happy to report that the congressman was very supportive of the IAFF legislative agenda. He currently is a co-sponsor for several items and is willing to become a co-sponsor for several others.

The MPFFU has been very busy here in Michigan, offering many programs such as: New President Training, Collective Bargaining Training, Member Orientation, and Local Union Administration Training. All of the events have been very successful, with many locals in attendance. When this is published we will have already had Michigan's first ever *Legislative Day*. I believe this event will be every bit as successful as the International—thanks to Terry, Paul and all the active members throughout the state.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer. ■

2nd District

Well, the district meetings are behind us and spring seems to be around the corner (in most places). Up here, in the north, it seems it can't quite make up its mind. I would like to thank all 11 locals that came to the district meeting and hope that our brothers and sisters from Belding, Big Rapids, Cadillac, Fruitport, Manistee and Muskegon Heights will be able to join everyone at the fall district meeting. It is my goal to have 100 percent of the district locals in attendance.

I would like *everyone* to go to the Grand Rapids Local 366 website at www.iaff366.com. Click on **hot topics**, read about what's going on and help out our brothers and sisters. Let city government know, how reducing staffing, will create dangerous situations for the residents and our brothers and sisters.

I would like to speak to everyone about being politically active. It seems that it's a never ending battle to keep the funding and programs in the fire service from being axed. I just received an e-mail which I will

Second District
Michael Onthank
P.O. Box 13
Lake Ann, MI 49650
231-275-7780 (home)
231-633-5619 (cell)
231-274-0552 (pager)
mpffu2nddistrict@chartermi.net



share with you, just to let you know how the present Federal Administration thinks of the fire service. Last week, the NFA & EMI, this is under FEMA which is now under the Office of Homeland Security (OHS), has been cut 11 percent until September 30, 2003. This cancelled 36+ classes at the NFA.

Under the new OHS, there is no budget, nor recognition of the USFA or an administrator. There was a meeting with trainers from members of the Justice Dept. (DOJ), Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP). When asked if fire training facilities will receive funding for fire & terrorism training, the response—*unlikely*. Would state training systems be able to bid to become a DOJ training consortium re-

sponse—*unlikely*. And on and on it goes. This is just a part of the e-mail I received. I will post the entire e-mail on our MPFFU website. There will be the members of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on this e-mail and it is time to e-mail these people and let them know how you feel. It is more important than ever that you *all* start to become more aware of and *act* on our issues that so profoundly affect our ability to do our jobs and the safety of our members and the citizens we serve.

The IAFF national issues book can be downloaded from the IAFF website (www.iaff.org). There are six main issues which are:

(1) H.R. 814 Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act – This allows all firefighters in a union to have collective bargaining rights.

(2) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Act – This will help fire departments become more in compliance with NFPA 1710, 2/3 of the nations fire departments are understaffed.

(3) Economic Stimulus – We support

proposals which aid states, and spending on Homeland security, tax rebates, and fiscal responsibility.

(4) Homeland Security/FIRE Act Funding – We support the full funding of \$900 million this provides funding directly to fire departments.

(5) Federal Presumptive Disability – This will amend the FECA to help disability presumption with regard to certain cancers, infectious diseases, which are job related.

(6) PSOB for Heart Attacks – This would create a rebuttable presumption if you die from a heart attack or stroke while on duty or within 24 hours of an emergency response.

I would like to encourage every brother and sister to go to the IAFF website and look over and make a copy and call your member of congress and let them know that you support our issues. The more voices they hear from the better chance we have to make our members safer in the work place.

Stay United, Be Safe, Be Strong! ■

3rd District

A springtime "hello" to all the members of the 3rd District and the MPFFU, trusting that you and yours are well.

As the war with Iraq draws to a close, I ask that you continue to join in supporting the Reservists and Guardsmen of the IAFF and MPFFU who were called to duty. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them for a safe and fast return.

Conflict Resolutions

Since being elected as your district vice-president, I have had many opportunities to work and assist locals in areas of contract negotiations, grievance arbitration, and conflict resolutions.

It is the last topic that I would like to address—conflict resolution. Often, calls will come in from either a fellow brother or sister with feelings of misrepresentation by their local union. Frequently, a member feels that he/she has either been denied benefits or opportunities under the current contract or that proper procedure within the union has not been followed.

As for the first, contract violations, each of us must first understand the intent of the language within the contract and how a specific article within the contract is being interpreted. One of your first steps is to approach a member from your executive board and ask your question. Often times, answers and resolutions can be clarified at this point, I suggest that this be your first step prior to filing a grievance.

Understanding the contract language and how the language is applied will assure that the contract is being equally applied to all members of the bargaining unit. Each member owes it to his or herself to

Third District
Greg A. Weisbarth
15430 Nelson Rd.
St. Charles, MI 48655-9767
989-642-5730 (home)
989-295-3587 (cell)
989-837-3425 (work)
989-642-6662 (fax)
gweisbarth@aol.com



become educated with the language contained in their contract. However, if you feel that you have been denied these benefits and opportunities then grievances will have to be filed. You should also understand the grievance process contained within the contract. There will most likely be time deadlines that must be met along with procedural guidelines that process that the grievance in the correct fashion.

As for parliamentary procedures and the feeling that these procedures have not been followed each member should have to look no farther than a copy of their local unions Constitution and By-laws.

The Constitution and By-Laws (C&B) will govern how the local works. It will contain the duties and responsibilities of each officer, member of the local. Prescribe in the C&B will be articles detailing how the daily business of the local will be carried forward.

I strongly suggest that each local keep their C&B up to date. Periodically, revisions will have to be made in order to facilitate and administer the work of the union. If you have not updated your C&B in some time, forming a committee to do undertake this task would be advisable.

When beginning the process of updating your C&B, you can greatly assist yourself by obtaining a copy of the IAFF Constitution and By-law, Model Language. You

HOT NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS

will find language that has been written so that you will be able to tailor it to your locals need. After completing this process your local will need to vote upon the revisions and changes. Then you will need to send a copy into the International for their approval.

Once the process is completed a copy of your Constitution and By-Laws should be distributed to each member. As with your contract, an understanding of the C&B will go a long ways in avoiding conflicts.

News Around the District:

Owosso Local 504 continues to negotiate with the city of Owosso. The health care issues have been resolved—however—wages, contract duration, agency fee and paramedic pay continue to be the sticking points.

Midland Local 1315 was unable to come to settlement for a new contract with the city and has now entered the beginning stages of Act 312 Arbitration.

Flint Twp., Local 1425 continues to struggle with the township over matters of Act 78, PERA and contract violations. The local is working with the MPFFU, IAFF and their attorney in hopes to resolve these outstanding issues.

Saginaw Local 102 faces the loss as May 1, 2003, of no longer having their Rescue apparatus in service. The city cites reasons of overtime, manpower and emergency response to fire alarms as reasons for the elimination of the two rescue units. Personnel from the rescue units are being re-assigned to the engines and ladders.

Good News from the Fourth District:

The news from Dan McNamara is that he is progressing along well. Dan has endured a very tough road to recovery but it looks as if he has turned the corner. Dan, we continue to miss you and look forward to having your leadership back.

Please, take time for your families and stay safe on the job! ■

months. I am on the curve now and getting better every day but I don't know how to begin to thank each and every one of you for the cards, calls, support and strength you have given to Mary (yes, we finally went and got married in September) and I. We will always be deeply indebted to all of you for helping push me through this.

Special thanks to my brothers on the board who stepped up and serviced the 4th District during this time. Each vice president ended up with a piece of the 4th and did tremendous service. Thanks especially to Paul and Terry who channeled all these problems and still had time to check

in on me frequently and made sure the 4th still ran smoothly, even when it took them so far away for so many times. I am a fortunate person to be working with people like this and truly thankful.

I can't go without thanking another person who means so much to all of the MPFFU—Tom Miller. He made sure to check on me and with Paul to make sure that the State ran smooth and see what he personally could do to help. What a brotherhood!

As I strengthen up I will be back around to catch up with everyone and I still have my trusty phone and e-mail. ■

5th District

I would like to report on an article that was written by the Public Safety Chief of Kalamazoo, Dan Weston, in Easter Sunday's paper.

The headline for the article was "*Public Safety strives for 'wow' service.*" I will just report on the part about firefighters.

"In 1983, Kalamazoo's police and fire departments were combined, so officers serve as both police officers and firefighters. Why? For greater efficiency and better public safety.

This cross training saves Kalamazoo about \$3 million a year, Weston said. For example (you're going to love this one) only one firefighter is needed to ride in a fire truck. When an emergency fire-related call comes in, a public safety car goes to the scene first. The police officers in that car take off their jackets and hats, put them in the trunk and don firefighters' garb. They are immediately ready for initial medical service or whatever is required, usually well before the fire truck arrives.

So you don't need six, eight, 10 firefighters sitting around the firehouse waiting for a call. Our public-safety officers are already driving around ready to swing into action to deliver wow customer service.

The national guideline for the speed of answering 911 phone calls is 30 seconds. In Kalamazoo, the response time is 4.8 seconds."

Of course, Weston comes from the police side of public safety and there are only five (5) firefighters left in department. So he could care less if they are ticked off. I also didn't realize that all we do is sit around

Fifth District

W. James Leve
10016 West J Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
269-375-9301 (home)
269-375-2551 (fax)
269-720-8499 (cell)
mpffuvp5@aol.com



4th District

I hope that everyone has enjoyed the holidays that have passed since the last magazine. Many events have unfolded that are having a profound effect on all of us since then and almost every member of the MPFFU is seeing their local go proactive politically and economically.

It is a wonderful thing to have a Democrat in charge of the state but, I am afraid, without her majority in the lower houses and the economic dilemma she has been left to deal with, progress for us will be hard fought.

This is not to say that we do not have friends on both sides of the aisle, because we do. We just do not have a climate right now conducive to allow our friends to stand up and give economic aid to us. Belt tightening is everywhere but our assets at home and in Lansing are working everyday to keep what we have and find those extra pennies we so badly need.

Some locals are doing better than others but revenue sharing and other austerity bills are cutting a wide swath through the state. Also, it seems that the Federal government has decided on a smaller involvement for us in homeland defense and the current wars going on. I do believe that this will eventually be revisited but, until then, we are being pointed out by every taxcutter out there.

We all need to make sure that our taxpayers see us, see us perform professionally and garner their support person by person. We may have to hold on to what we have in some communities by passing referendums and bills. We should not allow anyone to think of us as a "given" anymore but as a crucial portion of our community whose roles cannot be lost.

Fourth District

Daniel F. McNamara
243 W. Congress, Suite 344
Detroit, MI 48226
313-962-7546 (office)
313-962-7899 (fax)
Dmcnamara344@aol.com



Already, some locals have taken big hits. We need to come to each others aid when the call comes out and stand as one. Look around and see what has already happened out here. Ask the Ann Arbor local what they just faced in closing a station and staffing. Ask most any other local and see the problems on their doorstep.

Still in America

One local in the 4th District that has faced repeated problems for years is Frenchtown Township. From protracted contracts to everyday intimidation they have stood together and faced them down every time.

Their newest problem was what they could or couldn't say as members of the department on certain job issues. This time they, their attorney Alison Paton and the ACLU took on the leadership of the township over simple American labor rights and prevailed! Hard to believe that they had to do this but what a tremendous victory and what a great example of a local banding together to fight for the rights of any other American.

Hats off to a strong and dedicated group who will dig in when the going gets tough. We can all learn a big lesson from the Frenchtown local. Thanks

Thank You!

If you all don't know by now, I have been a bit under the weather for the past few

the fire station waiting for calls. I guess training, inspections, vehicle maintenance, station chores, reports and other activities that we routinely perform are not considered by Mr. Weston.

If I am not mistaken, about 10 years ago, there were 33 or so public safety departments in Michigan and now there are 23.

Durham N.C. was the "Leader" of public safety and the largest in the country and has gone back to traditional separate department "BECAUSE IT DIDN'T WORK"

Mr. Weston also fails to check with his own people to see how they feel about cross trained dual roles. I have trained with them (when the city allows it) and many do not think their system works. My department trained with KDPS last summer at some houses that Portage was going to tear down and we were told that training was the most about firefighting that they have *ever* had. This should give the citizens of Kalamazoo a great sense of security if their house ever catches on fire.

If anyone is interested in commenting on Mr. Weston's interview please feel free to send me an e-mail or letter. If I receive a good number of them, I will contact the Gazette or the Kalamazoo City council with our responses to him. ■

District Meetings

Sept. 12..... 1st District Meeting in Marquette
Sept. 15..... 6th District Meeting in Warren
Sept. 16..... 5th District Meeting in Lansing
Sept. 17..... 3rd District Meeting in Midland
Sept. 18..... 2nd District Meeting in Traverse City
Sept. 23..... 4th District Meeting at Metro Airport

More District News on next page



HOT NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS

6th District

Spring is a good time of the year for me, and I hope for you as well. Spring is also a time to make plans in our unions. To ask ourselves what we have been doing right or wrong. Whether we are politically active enough and whether we have enough dues money to pay for members to attend educational seminars provided by the MPFFU and the IAFF, to ensure that we are prepared for the battles ahead with our city fathers.

As union representatives, we also should evaluate our own personnel interest and energy in order to determine whether to continue in the important positions we hold in our unions, and realize that if we do not have the interest, we should step down and let another player have a turn at bat. If our union activities are to continue moving forward, we must make that commitment to our members to continue working in their best interest.

The state of Michigan will face some tough times ahead with plants closing, money getting tight in our cities and townships with the losses in revenue sharing, workers being laid off and other obstacles that face the working man and woman in this state.

The leadership needs the full support of the membership to do its job if we are to enjoy the benefits we now have. Let us go into this year with a positive attitude that supports union leadership and by working together we will solve these problems and prevail in the future.

6th District Contracts

Most of the locals in the 6th District are under contract. *Madison Heights, Birmingham, and West Bloomfield* are in mediation.

Sixth District
Ed Rigley
5118 Leland
Brighton, MI 48116
810-229-8722 (home)
810-227-0226 (fax)
810-923-0237 (cell)
erigley@aol.com



Warren is still in Act 312. *Pontiac* settled a two-year contract for 6% and 3% and created a comp time program.

Mt. Clemens settled a four-year contract at 3%, 3%, 3%, and 3%, a pension escalator of 2% per year with a cap or 20% after 10 years, and did away with their 2 tier health insurance.

Harper Woods signed a one-year extension for 3% and added Blue Cross Eye Care for current employees and retirees.

New Fire Pac Program?

The Political Education Committee has proposed to create a new Fire Pac program. This program has been discussed at the recent district meetings, advertised in the Michigan Professional Firefighter and mailed to all locals. The program involves members making monthly contributions to the MPFFU Fire Pac fund by automatic deductions from their bank or credit union accounts. The committee has also developed an incentive program similar to the IAFF Fire Pac program.

Legislative Day

Just a reminder on May 13, the MPFFU will be conducting a Michigan Professional Firefighters Union Legislative Day at the State Capitol in Lansing. Registration will be at 8:30 a.m. and it will end at 3:00 p.m. We need representatives from all the locals in the state to make this event a success.

Contact me or see the MPFFU website for any additional information. ■

Education and Training

*By Shaun Abbey, Chairman
Kentwood L-3174*

One of the goals that came out of the MPFFU strategic planning and the 2002 Convention was to develop better education and training for the members and union leadership across the state. While firefighter education and training is in the good hands of the Health and Safety Committee, the Education and Training Committee is tasked with developing a plan to educate members about unionism and how to operate their locals more effectively. Some locals have leadership and members that have been around for a long time and have all the tools to manage their local. Other locals are new to the game and need some help along the way. In either case the committee is focused on delivering quality programs that can benefit everyone.

Committee Members:

Shaun Abbey (Chair/Kentwood L-3174)
Dan McNamara (Vice-Chair/Detroit L-344 and 4th District Vice-President)
Ryan McMenemy (Secretary/Brownstown Twp. L-4112)
Tom Colombo (Southfield L-1029)
Ed Hosmer (Westland L-1279 and Eastern Trustee)
Rex Lewis (Adrian L-1511)

This committee was put together shortly after the last convention and met in Lansing to decide what direction to take over the next year. There are members from all different size locals from all across the state to help get

a good cross section of our membership. The committee used this diversity to help drive the curriculum. One of the first projects was to put together the New President Orientation Program. This program was given a test run in Southfield in December. The program is complete and from now on, when a new president is elected their MPFFU district vice-president will deliver the program to them in person. This includes a bag full of information and resources. The committee has also been working to finalize the Member Orientation Program. This program is very informational and helps members understand exactly what the union does and has done for firefighters. Other programs include the Collective Bargaining Seminar and the Local Union Administration Seminar. Currently the committee is starting to work on classes dealing with local constitution and by-laws, duty of fair representation and pensions. The MPFFU Political Action Committee is holding a *Legislative Day* in May that will be very informative. A PAC class is in the works dealing with how to manage your PAC. This will include how to endorse, how to survey and how to finance.

Hopefully, this committee has covered something that will benefit you and your local. The members of this committee are dedicated to providing worthwhile educational opportunities to the members of the MPFFU. If you have any questions or ideas please contact any of the members listed above. The next meeting is on July 10, 2003 at 1000 hours at the AFL-CIO building in Lansing. ■

Is this really what we want our kids doing?

I am quite concerned over an important issue to all of us. Have you seen the recent TV commercials they are broadcasting with teenagers and/or young adults doing tricks with Zippo lighters? The commercial alone raised some concerns with me until I went to their web site at www.zippotricks.com. I was blown away with what I read and saw. They list about 522 different tricks you can do with a Zippo lighter, yes that is 522 (five hundred and twenty-two). They are quite pleased with the fact that they have set a milestone in passing 500 tricks. Not only do they list each trick, they have a short video clip to show you how to do each trick. Well why not? The kids have to learn somehow!! Other things that can be found on the web site include a membership sign-up, tour information, screen savers and wallpaper to download for your computer, and much more. They even have "bloopers" clips showing what happens when things go wrong. One such blooper clip shows a boy catching his hand and lower arm on fire!! I am in total shock and disbelief that this is even out there and is targeted towards teen-

agers and young adults.

Is it me or is this ludicrous? We all work to teach the importance of "Fire Safety" and not to play with matches or lighters and then this comes along. Basically this web site and commercials glamorize and show how cool it is to play with lighters. Is this really what we want our kids doing?

I am sending this out because I think something needs to be done to stop this idiotic behavior. But what can be done? Anything? I am looking for support and input about this. Please visit the web site for yourself at www.zippotricks.com and check it out. For those who have the power to put this letter in a magazine to put the word out, please do so. I think that we as Fire Safety Educators need to take a stance against this. Please let me know your feelings on this or relay any ideas you may have. I would greatly appreciate any input. ■

Together in Fire Safety,

Lt. Ron Mills

Flint Township Fire Department

810.230.7181 or BigRon1425@juno.com

EMS EDUCATION

For Fire Service EMS Professionals

Baker College, an accredited non-profit co-educational institution established in 1911, is pleased to announce the opening of our EMS Division in Westland. The division is coordinated by the same team that built EEI, and offers both credit and non-credit EMS programs at the Westland facility, and at Baker campuses and client locations statewide. 90% of our EMS faculty are IAFF/MPFFU members—professional firefighters who understand the learning styles and needs of professional firefighters. Programs include:

- **EMT, EMT-Specialist, Paramedic**
- **EMT and Paramedic CE/Refresher Training**
- **BLS, ACLS**
- **Hazardous Materials Awareness / Operations**
- **Custom programs for client needs**

(734) 326-0920
www.ems.baker.edu



Capt. Bill Forbush
EMS Division Director
Garden City FD Local 1911



M
P
F
F
U
.
C
O
R
O
.
G
R
O

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

FIRE Act Saved...Again

March 7, 2003 – The FIRE Act grant program has been saved once more, this time from the long knives of Administration budget hawks.

A high-stakes game was played out behind the scenes this week in Washington, as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), a White House agency, tried to move most of the \$750 million appropriated for the FIRE Act into the President's first responder program.

"Some people clearly look at the FIRE Act for its political value only," said General President Schaitberger. "To them, this money can be moved around - or even zeroed out - at will. But thanks to our key allies on Capitol Hill, and the professionals at the Department of Homeland Security, we have once again defended this vital resource."

The first hint that something was afoot was an announcement early in the week that, due to "technical" problems, FIRE Act applications could not be submitted. Meanwhile, FEMA and the USFA were learning that up to \$500 million had been identified by the OMB to be converted into large block grants to states.

House members, including key committee chair Rep. Jim Walsh (R-N.Y.), reacted swiftly. The IAFF weighed in as well, making it clear that the program should be administered as formulated - and not siphoned off or double counted for political purposes.

The IAFF's position remains that the FIRE Act is a vital source of funding for basic fire department operations and that new federal money is required to help communities deal with the full range of terrorist threats.

Details of the inter-agency squabble were not made public. Suffice to say that on March 6, 2003, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge made clear public announcement that the "technical" problems were cleared up and FEMA was ready to accept applications for the full \$750 million.

"If we have learned nothing else the last couple of years," concluded Schaitberger, "it's that we have to fight to defend every dollar we squeeze out of the bureaucracy - and never turn our backs on the bean counters in the background." ■

Congress OKs Smallpox Compensation Bill

April 15, 2003 – The reluctance of many IAFF members to take the smallpox vaccine has sent a strong message to national leaders. Over the weekend, Congress gave final approval to a compensation package for anyone harmed by the inoculation.

"The IAFF recognizes that its members will be among the first victims if smallpox is used as a biological weapon," said IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger. "In the meantime, the International must protect its members if they suffer adverse side effects to the vaccine. With this legislation, Congress has taken an important step toward that goal."

The program, which will now go to President Bush for his consideration, includes a \$262,000 death benefit, modeled after the Public Safety Officers Benefits Act (PSOB), and compensation for injuries that result in lost wages. The lost wage compensation is two-thirds of a given salary for a person with no dependents, and three-fourths of a given salary if a person has dependents.

Lost wage compensation is capped at \$50,000 per year and \$262,000 total, but the caps are waived for a person who is deemed to be permanently and totally disabled. The federal government will also pay the cost of required medical care.

The payments will be secondary in nature, meaning that fire fighters in states that cover smallpox injuries as job-related will not benefit from both programs. State payments will be made first, and the federal government will pay the difference between state compensation and federal benefits.

The legislation requires education and screening for response workers prior to receiving the vaccine, and mandates medical monitoring afterward.

This legislation establishes, albeit indirectly, the principle that the act of receiving the vaccination is related to employment, assuring that any adverse medical reactions will be treated as occupational injuries. This allows employees to recover any associated medical cost that their jurisdiction's program does not provide.

Also, the bill prohibits employers from discriminating against anyone who declines to receive the vaccine. However, it does not insure full continuation of pay during any medical absence not tied to personal or sick leave. Finally, the bill does not address coverage for family members.

The IAFF has researched smallpox and the side effects of both the disease and the vaccine. For more information go to: <http://www.iaff.org/safe/content/smallpox/home.htm>. ■

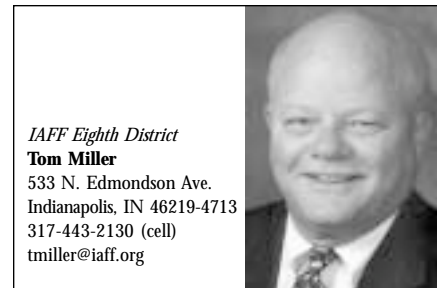
IAFF 8th District Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
I hope this edition of the *Michigan Professional Firefighter* finds each of you in good health.

Despite many of the challenges several of our locals are facing, the members of the 8th District are standing strong together, and sparing no effort to protect the rights, jobs and benefits of our people. As a testament to our efforts, our district is quickly approaching 640 locals with a membership of almost 39,000.

Organizing the unorganized is still a top priority for me, our state associations and the entire International. Our people are constantly talking to our brothers and sisters working in full-time, fully paid fire departments who are not yet organized. If you know or know of a fire department that is not organized, please contact me, Paul, Terry or your own district vice president. I will not be satisfied until every full-time, fully paid firefighter in Michigan is a member of the IAFF and the MPFFU.

We had some tragic news in the IAFF family when 16th District Vice President Nick Davila died in a horrific auto accident in San Antonio, Texas in January. Vice President Davila was a very respected member of the IAFF Executive Board who represented federal firefighters in the United



IAFF Eighth District
Tom Miller
533 N. Edmondson Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46219-4713
317-443-2130 (cell)
tmiller@iaff.org

States and Canada. He will be greatly missed.

A special election was held to fill the vacancy for the 16th District. In a close election, Jim Johnson of the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Local F-88, outside of Dayton, Ohio was elected to fill the unexpired term. Congratulations to Brother Johnson. It is nice to know that we have a brother from the 8th District who will assume these duties.

On another sad note, Local 48 Cincinnati, Ohio Firefighter Oscar Armstrong III died in the line of duty on March 21, 2003. Brother Armstrong was caught in a flash-over and severely burnt. He died just a few hours later. The 8th District was well represented at his funeral service.

May God rest his soul and may God protect each and every one of you on the job and off. I hope everyone has a very safe and enjoyable summer. *Strength in Unity.* ■

UFA Wins Court Order Against Staffing Cuts

April 29, 2003 – In a significant victory, Uniformed Firefighters Association New York Local 94 has won a court order temporarily barring the Fire Department of New York from reducing staffing from five to four per shift on 49 engine companies covered by the union's contract.

The UFA acted to obtain the stay order from on April 25, 2003 after learning about city's plans to cut staffing this week in order to save about \$12 million in the budget. Reductions in fire fighter staffing would result in increased risk to residents and FDNY fire fighters.

The New York State Appellate Division ruled that the city couldn't invoke its right to reduce staffing until the appellate court reviews a lower court order that allowed reductions in December 2002.

"This is just the beginning of a pitched battle on behalf of New York's bravest, and we will prevail," commented IAFF General President Schaitberger. "This International will stand strongly behind its New York fire fighters until final victory is theirs."

A 1996 labor contract allows the city to reduce staffing to four from five fire fighters in certain engine companies if FDNY's medical leave rate exceeds 7.5 percent. The current rate, which exceeds 8 percent, apparently convinced city lawyers that it had a firm legal position.

"The September 11 attacks and Ground Zero clean-up by improperly equipped fire fighters have left many of our members injured and with respiratory problems that have increased the number of fire fighters on medical leave," UFA president Stephen Cassidy pointed out. "Although there are no specific provisions in the contract that talk about catastrophic events, it seems brutal to punish our members for responding to the unforeseen."

New York fire fighters and members of the New York City Council organized a rally on Tuesday in Brooklyn to protest Mayor Bloomberg's plan to shut down eight engine companies, five of them in Brooklyn alone. ■

AROUND THE STATE

Valentines Dance for MDA



The Northville Township Firefighters IAFF Local 3961 members with MDA kid Andrew Sapienza and Mother Karen.

The Northville Township Professional Fire Fighters Union, IAFF Local 3961, held their first annual Valentines Dance on the evening of February 14, 2003 to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

The event was held at the Italian American Hall in Livonia.

The night consisted of dinner, dancing, silent auction including anything from sports memorabilia to jewelry to a child fire engine bed, raffle, and gifts for all ladies in attendance.

Our small local of 13 firefighters raised close to \$7,000. All monies raised went

directly to the MDA.

The dance lasted six hours with more than 100 people coming out to support a cause that has become very important to our local.

This event was a success due to all the members of our local, their families, and all of the generous business people in and around Northville Township. Many have already pledged their support to next years event and we are looking forward to hosting the second annual Valentines Dance for the MDA. ■

St.Clair Shores Local 1744 Training Drill for Ice Rescue



Detroit Firemen's Fund Award



Left to Right: Deputy Chief East Edward Huyck, Trustee Fred Anderson, Firefighter Selakowski, Reverend Allan McNeeley and Deputy Chief West Gregory Pearn.

Warren Firefighter James Selakowski has been an avid supporter of the Detroit Firemen's Fund for the last 10 years. The fund has honored him with a Meritorious Service Award for his efforts.

Fred Anderson, trustee of the Firemen's Fund, along with Reverend McNeeley (Department Chaplain) and Deputy Chiefs East (Edward Huyck) and West (Gregory

Pearn) sponsored a lunch at Engine 1's quarters in Warren, where Selakowski was presented with the award.

The Detroit Firemen's Fund Association has been in existence for over 137 years and with supporters like Jim Selakowski they will continue to thrive and grow well into the future. ■

Landing Zone Training with the Wayne Fire Department



Wayne Fire Department and St. Joe Hospital Medic Flight
 Back Row: Firefighter Bill Thomas, Scott Knepshied, Firefighter Troy Marewitz.
 Front Row: Patrolman Kurinski, Lt. Richard Berger, Firefighter Sean Bell, Firefighter Cindy Boring, Patrolman Hughes, Lt. Andrew Stager, Captain Kenny Jo Hines, Deputy Chief Mel Moore and the chopper crew.

AROUND THE STATE

Livonia Firefighters Keep Kids Puzzled

By Tom Kiurski, Fire Safety Education
with Livonia Firefighters Local 1164

When it comes to fire safety education, the last thing firefighters want to do is keep their audience "puzzled." Just hearing the term brings out thoughts of people unsure what to do in emergency situations, possibly leading to panic or other inappropriate behaviors. That is **not** the kind of "puzzled" behavior that Firefighter/Paramedic John Bargowski had in mind when he put together the fire truck puzzle board.

The idea for a puzzle came to John quite by accident. He noticed how intrigued young kids are with puzzles. By watching his own son (Tyler) amuse himself with puzzles, he decided that a fire truck puzzle was just the thing to help kids piece together their fire truck knowledge. But if the puzzle were to be used at our open house events, it would have to stand out among many other fantastic displays. So John decided that it had to

be big enough to be lots of fun. Fire Engine #1 was chosen as the subject due to its location in the center of the City of Livonia.

The fire truck that kids piece together is a giant flexible magnet that measures six feet long and stands two feet high. The giant flexible magnets, which you may have seen affixed to the sides of vehicles as advertisements, can be made up in any size you want. Look in your local phone book for sign making shops and ask them if they can do this. We took a side-view picture of Fire Engine #1 with a digital camera and took it to the sign printing shop. We got it back in a few days, built to our dimensions. John then took an exacto knife and cut the magnet into seven large puzzle pieces.

A piece of sheet metal is needed for the magnet to stick to. John got a piece made up slightly larger than the puzzle so it would be a bit wider on the edges. The sharp edges of the sheet metal were securely anchored out of reach behind a



wooden frame that is mounted around the puzzle area.

The puzzle idea can be modified to highlight different aspects of firefighting, such as listing the equipment carried in each compartment on the truck right on the sheet metal for families to talk about

as they put together the puzzle. Another idea is to make the magnet much smaller and put all the apparatus at every station on individual boards. However you do it, get started in plenty of time to have it at your next open house. The kids will be glad you did. ■

Detroit Lions Robert Porcher Visits Kentwood Local 3174



From left: FF Jeff Bouwkamp, Lt. Mike Muller, Robert Porcher, FF Mike Navetta and FF Todd Bacon.

Michigan Firefighters at the U.S. Senate



IN THE NEWS

Fire Department rolls out its "motor medic"

April 27, 2003

By Anne Sullivan, *The News-Herald*

TAYLOR — Firefighter paramedic Carl Dowell was all smiles Wednesday afternoon as the Fire Department's motor medic motorcycle rolled out of the Motown Harley-Davidson dealership.

It is a bright red, 2003 Harley-Davidson Electra Glide equipped with emergency medical equipment.

Dowell is one of several firefighters on the department who ride motorcycles. He isn't sure why he was selected, but said he's ridden for 12 years and has experience on the big bikes.

Dowell will tour town on the bike and use it as a fire safety and emergency medical services public relations tool.

It also will be seen around Heritage Park during the city's annual fireworks display.

The Taylor Fire Department is the first in the state to add a motor medic motorcycle to its fleet. They are used in other departments, including Nantucket, Mass.; Daytona, Fla.; Pittsburgh; and New York City, which has used motorcycles since 1931.

The specially equipped motorcycles often are used as first responders to accident scenes where there is a traffic backup and fire trucks and ambulances can't get through.

The motorcycle comes equipped with an automated defibrillator, a miniature oxygen tank, a portable fire extinguisher and compact medical equipment, such as a collapsible traction splint and a first aid kit to assist in treating medical and traumatic injuries.

Fire Chief Kenneth Costella said the Fire Department obtained its motorcycle



in a way many local police departments have.

It has a five-year lease and pays \$1 a year to the Motown dealership to use the bike. After the year, it is returned to the dealership and the Fire Department will get a new motorcycle, Costella said. More than 40 police departments lease motorcycles from Motown.

Getting the motor medic was the brainchild of Bob Tompos, firefighter and emergency medical services director. He had researched them six years ago when he worked for a private ambulance firm.

"It can cut response time down at a big event," he said.

He decided to call the dealership and inquire. Since Motown Harley-Davidson had done it with about 40 police departments, they signed on to the motor medic proposal.

Tom McGannon, director of marketing at Motown Harley-Davidson, said the company hopes it gets more requests for this type of motorcycle.

The bike will be on display at the EMS Expo in Grand Rapids May 1 through 4. It will return to Grand Rapids June 15 and be displayed at the Fire Service Expo. ■

Firefighters vow to continue unionization plans

February 22, 2003

By SVEN GUSTAFSON,
The Oakland Press

Despite nearly uniform opposition from members of its overseeing agency, full-time firefighters with the Oxford Fire Department say they'll press on with plans to unionize.

Oxford Fire Lt. Terry Roeher told representatives of the Oxford Public Fire and EMS Commission Wednesday that the four full-time firefighters of the department had voted to join the International Association of Fire Fighters, an AFL/CIO-affiliated union. He was on hand to ask the commission to recognize the union as the firefighters' sole bargaining representative. After extensive discussion, the commission did not recognize the union.

"Seeing as what happened to the police department, we just want a little bit of representation," Roeher said, referring to the former Oxford Police Department, which was disbanded Jan. 31, 2000. "We've got the village and the township always not getting along, and we still don't know who's going to run the fire department."

Currently, the Oxford Fire Department is overseen by the 12-member fire commission, a joint operation of the village and township. Control of the department has long been contested between the two municipalities.

However, the unionization request did not sit well with fire commissioners, who questioned the motives behind the plans. One commissioner expressed indignation, saying the fire department had never had a request turned down by the commission.

Others expressed concern that unionizing would open the door for additions to what some considered already generous benefits packages. They said joining the union would necessitate more consultation from commission attorneys, which would siphon money from the fire department budget.

But Roeher told the commissioners the firefighters wished to join the union not to add benefits or increase wages, but merely to "maintain the status quo."

Commissioner and former chairman Steve Allen noted that if commission board members changed, or if it were decided to use an on-call, part-time fire department, a union would offer no job protection. He said his concerns were based on his experience as a paid, on-call firefighter in Mt. Pleasant.

"The people that were not unionized were left to do the things that the union guys did not want to do" at fire scenes, he said.

In the end, the commission voted to ignore the firefighters' request to recognize its union membership, authorizing commission chair Bill Dunn to contact the Michigan union representative.

Interviewed later, Roeher said the firefighters approached the union after commissioners discussed cutting their benefits at a recent meeting without the firefighters' presence. "We're not looking to cheat the community in any way," he said. "We're just looking to cover our butts a little bit."

He added that the board's decision to ignore the union would merely postpone the membership for three to five weeks. ■

Harrison Township fire union agrees to concessions

March 03, 2003

By Mitch Hotts,
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

Looking to save money for their cash-strapped community, Harrison Township firefighters have agreed to take a pay freeze next year and launched a department reorganization to save money.

Members of Harrison Township Professional Firefighters Union 1737 recently ratified a letter of understanding with the township that gives up a 3 percent salary raise that was included in its 6-year contract, which expires in 2010.

The move, which takes effect June 1, will save the community between \$160,000 and \$180,000. The township employs 27 firefighters.

"We want to provide as high a level of service as possible to our residents and be even more cost-effective than we have in the past," said union President Lt. Frank Share.

The adjustment comes at time when the township continues to try to balance its budget despite a financial crunch caused by the failure of a millage package and state revenue reductions.

In November, the township board was forced to make \$800,000 in cuts, including elimination of the parks and recreation department.

Union leaders and Fire Chief Ken Staelgraeve worked out a re-organization plan aimed at reducing costs. An assistant fire chief and an inspector will return to firefighting ranks, leaving their administrative duties to Staelgraeve.

Also, the department is going from a two-platoon system to a three-platoon rotation and will alter the 24-hour schedules, a move expected to reduce overtime by about \$140,000 each year.

Harrison Township voters have defeated several millage packages in recent years, forcing the township board to implement a one-year special assessment tax. Officials hope the public will take note of the department's actions when another tax plan comes before voters later this year.

"This is phenomenal," said township Clerk Charles Pierce. "I'm very appreciative of their efforts. It's a massive undertaking for the department to take these steps."

Supervisor Mark Knowles knows the sacrifice the union made, because he also

works for the Detroit Fire Department. "It's a tremendous change because it impacts their personal lives and any side jobs they may have going," he said.

"We've had millages failing continuously," said Staelgraeve, the fire chief. "I believe this department is doing whatever we can to be financially prudent. I think this says something very positive about the quality of people we have here."

A starting firefighter in Harrison Township earns \$29,000, said Share, the union leader.

"This is a much leaner way of running the department," Share said. "But we need to be safe as well. We don't want to compromise safety over dollars." ■

IN THE NEWS

Chili contest aids homeless

Shelby Township firefighters help raise money for Solid Ground, Inc

April 9, 2003

By Jiquanda Davis, The Detroit News

SHELBY TOWNSHIP — Things were smoking last week for some Shelby firefighters, but the blazes were in their mouths not in houses.

The firefighters competed March 27 with personnel from 14 other Metro Detroit fire departments at the first Chili Battle at the Carpathia Club in Sterling Heights.

Firefighters supplied the chili. The fundraiser's \$5 admission fee will go to Solid Ground, Inc., which sponsored the event.

"We couldn't turn down a good cause," Shelby fire Lt. Gene Shepherd said.

Solid Ground will use proceeds from the Chili Battle to refurbish the former Red Cross building at 11 Mile and Gratiot in Roseville.

"The house will be for homeless families with children, the elderly and people

with disabilities," said Dee McCardle, executive director of Solid Ground Inc. "There is a need for a transition house in Macomb County."

The building will house at least 50 people. Tenants will be able to live in the house for up to 18 months, McCardle said.

The Chili Battle is one of several fundraisers Solid Ground hosts. This year's event was the first of its kind, but organizers hope to hold it again next year.

"We thought it would be fun to get the competition started with the fire departments," said Beth MacLeod, fund-raiser committee chairwoman.

Shelby Township residents George and Isabelle Adams said they enjoyed the chili at the fund-raiser.

"We did the whole round," Isabelle Adams said. "We had so many cups (of chili) in front of us.

"It's a nice turnout for the homeless." ■

Firefighters in Flint get new trucks

Friday, April 18, 2003

By Edward L. Ronders
Flint Journal Staff Writer

Flint - The Flint Fire Department will accept the keys today to two new fire trucks, the first purchased in seven years.

Interim Fire Chief Dandre Williams will accept two 2003 KME engines that cost \$300,000 apiece. Federal grants paid for the vehicles, Williams said.

"This is huge for our department," Williams said. "We have six trucks for six stations. This will help us regulate our repair schedule for our older trucks, and it will allow us to introduce a new culture to our department."

The new engines are a welcome addition to an aging fleet. A study of the department, conducted by Dorsey-Pages LLC Management of Lathrup Village, recommended replacing its trucks over the next 10 years.

Today's delivery marks the first step, Williams said.

The city plans to buy another new fire truck next year.

It has been a constant battle for the financially struggling department to keep its aging fleet on the road. Engine 41 hit the scrap heap in December when it caught fire and was destroyed while parked outside a grocery store.

The department has not had spare trucks to cover for others being repaired, creating a heavier workload for the trucks that work, Williams said.

Drivers will undergo training on the new vehicles, another plus in the program, Williams said.

The current trucks are 7 to 17 years old.

The new trucks will be assigned to Station No. 6 on W. Pierson Road and Station No. 4 on Industrial Avenue, Williams said.

"They'll do yeoman service," he said. "Hopefully, we can continue to build on this progress (and obtain more new vehicles)." ■

Holland hails new fire truck

February 21, 2003

The Grand Rapids Press

HOLLAND — At a cost of nearly \$1 million, the Holland Fire Department's new aerial ladder truck is one of the most expensive pieces of equipment owned by the city.

Holland Fire Chief Dan Henderson figures it will be worth every dollar.

Firefighters began using the high-tech truck about two weeks ago, and continue to train with it.

Among the features is a 118-foot ladder with a 23-foot boom at the end that allows flexibility in reaching fires or objects.

"We can reach over the top of trees or wires and come back down," Henderson said.

A platform at the end of the boom swivels 45 degrees.

Henderson said the ladder should come in handy for various emergencies and fires, not just at tall buildings. He envisions us-

ing the truck on residential fires when firefighters need to chop ventilation holes in roofs.

The swiveling platform should allow firefighters to cut the roof holes without stepping onto the roof, increasing safety.

"When you have two guys on a roof where there is a fire underneath, there is a danger of collapse," Henderson said.

The ladder and boom also are capable of extending downward into holes or pits if necessary. The truck also has a pumping and spraying capability of 1,750 gallons per minute, more than other trucks the fire department owns.

"Obviously, this will increase our capability on the taller buildings, but it is a machine we can use on normal structures as well," Henderson said.

The ladder truck, which cost \$943,000, replaces a 29-year-old truck with an 85-foot ladder. The Graafschap Fire Department recently bought the old truck for about \$55,000. ■

Eastpointe uses grant to buy new 'arson dog'

Pet is trained to locate accelerants used to start fires

February 20, 2003

By Edward L. Cardenas, The Detroit News

EASTPOINTE — Eastpointe's Fire Department has received a grant to buy a new "arson dog" that will help investigate suspicious blazes in the city and throughout Macomb County.

The dog, trained to locate accelerants used to start fires, will make Eastpointe the only department in Macomb, Oakland and St. Clair counties with such an animal.

Detroit and Dearborn in Wayne County also have arson dogs. Dearborn's dog, Logan, has found evidence leading to 18 arrests in five years, said firefighter Charles Geno of that city.

Eastpointe is hoping for similar success. "The dog will be another tool to help us investigate," said Jeffrey Wallace, the Eastpointe fire marshal.

Wallace said trained dogs significantly reduce the time it takes to find a fire's cause. A good one can find a fire's origin in minutes, he said, compared with days for human experts.

Lenox Township Fire Chief Dennis Fouchia said the dog will be an asset to Macomb County.

"Fires occur every day of the week in this county and we know that they are not

all accidents," Fouchia said. "If you can prove (the presence) of an accelerant, you have another piece to prove cases."

The dog is being bought through a \$12,000 grant from State Farm Insurance to cover training fees, the cost of acquisition and travel costs for a five-week training session in Maine.

The dog will be trained in scent and bomb detection, officials said.

Once training is complete, the animal will live with Wallace in his home and be required to be recertified annually.

Eastpointe isn't the only community to use dogs in public safety. Recently, Liberty and Justice, two German shepherds, were sworn in as police dogs at the Warren Police Department.

Attacking the dogs would be equivalent to an attack on a human officer under the law, Warren officials said.

Justice is 1 1/2 years old, and he has already saved the life of an 82-year old woman, nabbed fleeing suspects and sniffed out narcotics that have led to more than 50 arrests in Warren.

The dog's heroic efforts haven't gone unnoticed. He has won nine service awards from the U.S. Police Canine Association.

Warren's other dog, Liberty, is 1 1/2 years old and has also uncovered narcotics. ■

In the News

MPFFU is dedicated to providing you with news articles to stories of interest to Michigan Professional Fire Fighter Union members. Please visit mpffu.org and view "Off-site News" links to read up-to-date articles on-line.

IN THE NEWS

City honors firefighters Waterford adds 13 to firefighting team

February 7, 2003

By Stephen Frye, *The Oakland Press*

PONTIAC — City leaders honored four fire officials Thursday night for their life-saving efforts in pulling a man from his burning house.

The four—two firefighters, an engineer and a captain and members of Pontiac Fire Station 5 - were brought before the City Council, which passed a resolution honoring their heroic efforts with letters of meritorious service.

Honored were firefighter Phillip Leonard, firefighter Dion Wade, engineer Anthony Coney and Capt. David Fields.

They were the first to arrive at 7:24 a.m. on Jan. 26 at a home at 14 Utica Road in Pontiac, which was fully engulfed in flames. Seventy-year-old Paul Lopez was trapped inside.

"They made a tremendous save to get him out," Pontiac Fire Marshal Dan Durham said.

Lopez was severely injured in the blaze, and he is recovering from those injuries at an area hospital.

Before he was trapped in the burning house, Lopez saved the lives of his wife and 18-month-old grandson. They were asleep upstairs when the fire broke out in the base-

ment. After waking up and discovering the fire in the basement, he helped get them out in time, but the heavy smoke slowed him down.

If Lopez had not rescued his family members, firefighters would not have known how many people were inside nor where to begin looking as the blaze spread and filled the house with smoke.

The cause of the fire was accidental, Durham said, and it destroyed the house.

Fire Chief Wilburt "Skip" McAdams praised the fast-acting crew for saving Lopez's life. He said they exemplify what it means to be a firefighter, or even a public servant - to protect and serve the community.

"They entered the building without water to make the rescue attempt," McAdams said. "They performed to the highest standard."

He said Wade and Leonard put their lives at risk as Fields and Coney helped make the rescue successful, including providing immediate medical attention to Lopez. Once Lopez was out of the house, firefighters began putting water on the flames in an effort to save the property.

"I'm extremely proud of these men," Pontiac Mayor Willie Payne said. "They are heroes." ■

February 4, 2003

By John Wisely, *The Oakland Press*

Seven years after he became a firefighter, Dennis Leppan is learning to be a rookie again. Leppan is one of nine former Flint firefighters who started working for the Waterford Fire Department on Monday.

"Waterford is great," Leppan said. "It's a progressive department. It's growing. Flint is going in the opposite direction."

Waterford added 13 new firefighters this year to staff a third rescue unit in the growing township. The unit and the people to staff it will be paid for by a millage approved last August by Waterford voters.

"We're very flattered to have the support of the community," said township Supervisor Carl Solden. "We've been providing quality service and people recognize it."

Flint's loss is Waterford's gain, said Fire Chief Dennis Storrs.

"We are really fortunate to pick the guys up because of experience in Flint," Storrs said. "We had set March 1 for a deadline, but we're a month ahead of schedule because of their experience."

Storrs said the Flint firefighters had to learn the procedures in Waterford but their firefighter and emergency medical technician skills were well honed.

Some of them were laid off and others worried they could be next. Leppan gave up seven years of seniority in Flint to come to Waterford.

In exchange he said he gets better equipment, better training and more job satisfaction.

"You get more respect, from the administration on down," he said. "They take pride in what they do."

Jay Coomer worked for five years in Flint before he was laid off. He worked for

a year in Bay City before signing on in Waterford. He said he realizes that Waterford offers different challenges for firefighters.

Flint is an urban environment that was geographically small. But it also had an older housing stock and a lot of abandoned buildings. Waterford has two-lane roads around the lakes, which present drowning hazards and other work for firefighters.

"I'd do a stabbing or a shooting a day in Flint," Coomer said. "I'm excited, the department has been nothing but great so far."

Ronald Stevens is one of the few new firefighters who has not worked in Flint, but he's close. He previously worked as a sheriff's deputy in Genesee County and wanted to get back into firefighting, which he trained for in the early 1990s.

"I wanted to get into fire," he said. "I would test for it but there would always be 500-600 people trying for one or two (job) postings. I've never heard of a department hiring this many at once."

Stevens grew up in Waterford and graduated from Kettering High School in 1991. He now lives in Auburn Hills, but still has family in the township.

Storrs said the new rescue unit will operate out of Station No. 1 at the corner of Crescent Lake and Hatchery roads. He hopes to eventually move the unit over to station No. 2 on Walton Boulevard between Sashabaw and Dixie Highway.

The third unit should reduce the township's reliance on private ambulance services to take medical calls.

"A lot of times we'd have two rescue units out at once and we'd have to rely on them," Storrs said. "Now, for the most part there will always be a rescue (unit) available when we receive a call." ■

You too can be a contributor

It's very easy to do. Just send us a story, a picture, or both. It can be about anything that is going on in your Local or general information that has something to do with unionism or being a firefighter (union event or of fire, rescue or EMS incidents involving local members) and we will publish it on the web and/or magazine.

Mail to:

MPFFU, 1651 Kingsway Ct., Suite E, Trenton, MI 48183

Cusac named top firefighter

January 16, 2003

By Paul R. Pace

Farmington Observer Staff Writer

You could say Paul Cusac has firefighting in his blood.

His dad was a paid on-call firefighter for Farmington Township back in the early 1950s and it wasn't unusual for Cusac and his siblings to be taken along on runs.

"Back then, you brought your kids along for things like grass fires," said Cusac, a career firefighter with Farmington Hills. "He wouldn't let us go on house fire runs."

That was in the days when the tiny township had only about 100 fire department calls a year, compared with 6,500 today.

Cusac was named *Firefighter of the Year* at the annual Farmington Hills Fire Department award ceremony held Friday at Vladimir's.

"It was a shock to me," Cusac said of the honor. The award recipient was not announced until the very end of the ceremony. "I didn't think anything I did was more than normal."

Fire Chief Richard Marinucci said every fire chief who served the department promoted Cusac at least once during his nearly 30-year career with the city.

"He was named VFW firefighter of the year in 1981," the chief said.

Marinucci commented that Cusac prefers to work behind the scenes, but plays a

vital role in the department. In addition to being an inspector, Cusac keeps the fleet running with repair requests to the manufacturers and the DPW.

"He's a consummate team player. He's one of the most dedicated people to our cause," the chief said.

Cusac was a paid, on-call firefighter from 1974 to 2001 and became a career firefighter in 1977.

In 1978, he was given a citation for a search and rescue, having pulled two victims out of a burning building. He was part of the first group to be licensed by the state as an emergency medical technician and has scores of appreciation letters from those he has helped.

Cusac and his wife, Donna, have two adult daughters, Amanda and Stephanie.

The firefighter said helping people and having a challenging job is why he's glad he chose his profession.

"My wife supported me in everything I did," he said.

Cusac has also been a captain and a district chief with the department.

He has received three life-saving awards, eight unit citations, a chain of survival award, a certificate of merit, a certificate of appreciation and 27 letters of appreciation. ■

IN THE NEWS

Elation follows judge's ruling

A gag order over Frenchtown Township firefighters' issues was ruled unconstitutional and fire union members are talking about safety concerns.

January 30, 2003
By JOSHUA KENNEDY
Evening News staff writer

Frenchtown Township firefighters are elated this morning, thanks to a federal court ruling that's cleared the way for public discussions about fire department issues.

Federal District Court Judge Marianne O. Battani ruled that the township's so-called gag ordinance is unconstitutional. Twenty-one full-time firefighters were suing the township for the right to openly discuss matters they felt were of public concern.

"I'm on cloud nine," said Robert Gerlach, president of the firefighter's union. "It's pretty bad when you feel that elated about something you should have had all along."

The court's ruling effectively ends nearly two years of silence forced on the firefighters by a gag ordinance installed by the township board after several firefighters and their wives complained about safety issues.

The complaints at a public board meeting in 2001 resulted in a Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) investigation that found seven violations. Two weeks after the firefighters spoke, the board enacted the ordinance.

Mr. Gerlach said the township reacted

poorly in enacting the ordinance when the firefighters wanted only to fix their department for the safety of the public.

"Look at what the outcome has been," he said. Instead of investigating the firefighters' claims of problems, the township "strengthened its ordinance to keep us quiet. Work with us, for crying out loud.

"All we wanted was our rights back and the ability to talk to (the public)," Mr. Gerlach said. "I should have the right to tell you what's going on within my department. I'm not here to tell lies or fabricate stories. I'm here to tell the truth."

The gag ordinance, 158-2, basically said that if the firefighters spoke publicly about any issues relating to the fire department, they'd be fired and possibly jailed. The firefighters' challenge of the gag ordinance suffered a setback in September when the same judge stayed an injunction.

Arguments then were that the firefighters hadn't challenged the ordinance and so no harm had been caused. But when applied to the standard of free speech, the township's arguments failed, the judge wrote in her 16-page ruling.

"Frenchtown's arguments... are unpersuasive," she wrote in part. "(The township) spent a great deal of time at oral argument trying to narrow the scope of its 'fact restriction' basically contending that the ordinance was drafted only to prevent

firefighters from making unauthorized statements."

But the burden of proof that such statements would negatively affect the department rests on the township.

"Government must come forward with actual evidence of harm to its interests, not merely a theory of some potential threat," Judge Battani wrote.

Supervisor James K. Spas said this morning he's not pleased with the ruling, but "I think we can fix it."

Mr. Spas' interpretation of the ruling is that the judge has deemed the ordinance too broad to pass constitutional muster.

"I think we can fix it," he said, adding that any appeal would be subject to board approval. "I'm sure the attorney will bring something before the board to look at."

He didn't specify a timeframe. In the meantime, Mr. Gerlach said the firefighters want to educate the public about their safety concerns within the department. Among them are staffing and chain of command issues.

The staffing of three firefighters at each of the township's three stations isn't adequate, Mr. Gerlach said. A recently enacted two-in-two-out firefighting rule limits attacking firefighters from entering a burning structure to fight flames unless four men are on site.

Mr. Spas deferred comments on man-

power issues to Chief Ronald Whipple. The two-in-two-out rule does not prevent rescues when fewer than four firefighters are on scene, only firefighting.

Chief Whipple said there's always a need for more manpower, but departmental protocol ensures that at least six firefighters roll on every working fire call.

"I'd be a fool to say I don't want more firefighters," he said, but normally fires aren't burning longer because there aren't enough firefighters.

Mr. Gerlach disagreed and said chain of command structuring also hampers the department's efforts. There are 21 full-time firefighters and 19 paid-on-call firefighters in the department. The paid-on-call members hold all of the command positions outside of the chief's office.

Mr. Gerlach said sometimes paid-on-call firefighters might not be as comfortable with operations or incident command functions as the firefighters who put in 56 hours a week.

"There are no officers in the full-time ranks," Mr. Gerlach said. "That's ludicrous. Maybe there was a time when that was okay, but it's time for a change."

That's also a matter that's tying up contract negotiations between the township and the firefighters. ■

City, firefighters settle 3-year pact

January 16, 2003
By Carol Marshall
Livonia Observer Staff Writer

Livonia firefighters and the city have hammered out a three-year contract, in nearly record time.

"This really was a milestone for the city," said Livonia Mayor Jack Kirksey. "Typically contract negotiations can go on for a year and a half or two years, and we often wind up in binding arbitration. But we settled this contract just 45 days after the last contract expired, which I think is remarkable. It's close to a miracle."

The civil service commission approved the contract Monday morning before passing it along to the city council for approval Wednesday, Jan. 15.

The ratified contract will add an additional 10 percent increase in costs over the next three years, with the total cost of the wages and benefits for the city's 89 firefighters increasing from \$8.15 million (\$91,184 per employee) in 2002 to \$8.9 million (\$100,427

per employee) in 2005.

Firefighters agreed to a 3-percent increase in wages for 2003, 2 percent in 2004, and 1 percent in 2005.

They also agreed to an increase in their prescription drug deductibles - \$5 for generic and \$10 for brand name in 2003; \$10 and \$20 in 2004 and 2005. Medical copays will remain the same, as will their health insurance coverage. Dental reimbursement increased from \$550 per year to \$600 per year.

They accepted a small increase in food allowances—\$950 per year in 2003 to \$1,000 per year the next two years. Also included in the contract was an increase in the paramedic bonuses—up from \$2,100 to \$2,200 in 2003, and \$2,300 effective in 2004.

Firefighters also won modest increases in longevity pay, which ranges from \$300 for employees with five years of service to \$2,250 for employees with more than 21 years of service.

Although the city council is not involved in contract negotiations, council President Jack Engebretson said when the

council reviewed the contract, members were pleased.

"I'm glad on a personal level the firefighters will have their contract for three years. I can say the negotiation involved in reaching an agreement represents in my mind a realization by all parties about the reality of our city's situation," he said.

Kirksey stated the city—like nearly every community in the state—had to consider budgetary constraints when negotiating the contract, and the firefighters union was realistic in recognizing the city's predicament.

The contract, and the speed in which it was drafted, serves all sides well.

"Binding arbitration doesn't serve either party well—the city, or the employees, and especially the residents," Kirksey said.

Engebretson agreed:

"When negotiations drag on and on, you can count on it being bad for everyone involved. It sends a bad message, too, to the 100,000 people that live here and the 40,000 that work here." ■

News Briefs

Firefighters raise money for burned kids

The Dearborn Firefighters Burn Drive's recent raffle is expected to generate \$60,000 for holiday gifts to children in the burn wards of four southeastern Michigan hospitals. It will also provide seed money to start two new Burn Drive endowment funds to benefit the Phoenix Society and the Penrickton Center for Blind Children. (4/8/03)

Police give firefighters a \$2,300 defibrillator

The Ferndale Police Department donated an Automated External Defibrillator valued at \$2,300 to the Ferndale Fire Department at the City Council meeting. (4/8/03)

GUEST EDITORIAL

E-Juven 8

Programs to protect emergency personnel Police, Fire, & EMS

By William Rusty Scala M.A.
wscala@earthlink.net
407-679-7343

Do Physicians ever consider what goes on inside the body of:

- The police officer chasing a suspect?
- The firefighter responding to a fire call?
- The paramedic performing advanced life support?

The levels of cortisol (a potent stress hormone) in emergency personnel surge to provide energy to get them through a stressful event. But the body is designed to handle stress for short intervals, not the chronic day in and day out stress of emergency work. Is it any wonder, then, that police officers, firefighters and paramedic personnel have a higher rate of heart disease than any other group? Physical, emotional and mental stress all elevate cortisol levels. In small amounts the body can adapt to elevated cortisol, but when cortisol stays elevated for too long it becomes deadly to every system in the body.

It is when stress becomes chronic that the body starts to breakdown. Chronic stress weakens the immune system, strains the cardiorespiratory system, damages the neurological system, and redeposits fat at the waist rather than the hips and the buttocks (a risk factor for heart disease). Chronic stress can also accelerate aging, heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis and obesity.

It was just a short time ago that leading medical researchers laughed at the idea of stress causing illness. Now thanks to the science of psychoneuroimmunology, the study of how the brain is connected to the adrenal glands and how that connection affects immunity when a person is under stress, physicians for the first time are documenting illness caused by stress. When cortisol is elevated it can cause muscle wasting along with the reduction of two of the brain's calming neurotransmitters, serotonin and dopamine, affecting mood, behavior and causing depression.

For years the study of cadavers gave scientists little data, now, though, they are able to look inside the brain and monitor the stress response of live patients in real time using PET scans and a host of other neuroimaging techniques. The human body is a dynamic process in constant motion and psychiatrists, psychologists and mental health counselors will need to be retrained to use this biological model to help their patients. If an emergency worker is treated for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and is only receiving counseling or narrative therapy, it may be years before

any progress is noticed. But if the correct blood and saliva tests are ordered and deficiencies corrected, it could speed the healing process with less neurological damage. PTSD patients usually have high levels of circulating cortisol. Talk therapy and diet modification based on blood type, nutritional testing and customized supplementation can bring cortisol levels back to normal, increasing the brain's feel good chemicals serotonin and dopamine.

How a person handles stress can be influenced by their job, heredity, childhood experiences, diet, blood type, exercise, sleep patterns, personal relationships, income and social status. Researches have now demonstrated that physical, emotional, and mental stress can cause illness and disease by suppressing the immune system. Stress causes deficiencies in the disease fighting white blood cells along with vitamins, minerals, amino acids and essential fats. Adrenaline and cortisol, both stress hormones secreted by the adrenal glands, flood the blood stream during a stressful event. Stressful events, from those emergency workers face to being stuck in traffic set off a biochemical domino effect inside the body. The heart rate increases, blood pressure rises, respiration quickens, and oxygen flow to the muscles increases. If, for example, you get in an argument with someone this process kicks into overdrive. But when the stressful event is over the body sets off another group of responses that calms things down, restoring the body to normal. This process of equilibrium is essential for survival. However, as we age it becomes harder and harder to clam down after such events. That is why we see many more 60-year-old golfers than 60-year-old emergency workers. With this process in mind, think about the damaging effect a false alarm has on an emergency worker. The alarm sounds. The body is poised and ready. The brain calls to the adrenal glands and orders the liver to bump glucose and fatty acids into the blood stream to be burned for immediate fuel. But because it is a false alarm the body never gets put into motion. The glucose and fatty acids are not burned up. They become oxidized and find a resting place in one of the worst places—the coronary arteries that feed the heart. This was one of the main reasons educated fire administrators removed loud alarms from some firefighter's bunkrooms in the late 1970s.

This process can happen to very fit people. For instance, a man in his 40s who ran a 3 hour 7 minute marathon died when he crossed the finish line. His autopsy revealed that three arteries were 75% blocked and one was totally blocked. It was the to-

tally blocked artery that caused the deadly heart attack. He was a very fit person who ended up with cholesterol clogging his arteries because he was under constant stress that caused nutrient deficiencies and elevated free radical damage. Free radicals are like the sparks from a fire that fall on a carpet. For the emergency worker, this carpet is their arteries. Far too many physicians confuse thinness, normal cholesterol and fast race times with health. Police, firefighters and EMS personnel must raise their own standard of care by becoming educated and requesting the new tests and treatment protocols that are currently available.

When stress persists for too long or becomes too severe, the body breaks down. Emergency workers are at the extreme end of the stress continuum and should be taken care of with new and improved treatment protocols designed for their specific metabolism. New training on stress induced nutritional deficiencies and how cortisol and free radical damage can lead to undetected heart disease should be taught in fire and police academies to ready those who work on the frontlines. In one particular study scientists placed rats in small compartments where they added loud noise and constantly changed the temperature. Cortisol levels in rats began to elevate as their stress increased. After 21 days the rats were so anxious and aggressive that their immune system could no longer fight off sickness and brain cells atrophied in their hippocampus, the area of the brain responsible for short-term memory. Emergency workers need to understand there are new risk factors that most physicians are not aware of. So when it come time for a physical, they should ask to be tested for elevations in C-reactive protein, homocysteine, and cortisol. Far too many emergency workers get a clean bill of health and told their blood tests are normal when in reality they can be dangerously close to having a heart attack. Cholesterol is not the bad guy; it does not cause heart disease. If we train emergency workers as to how stress affects brain chemistry, immunity, heart disease and obesity, they can plug in early interventions so that they don't have a heart attack a year after retirement.

The constant stress of emergency work is severely debilitating to the brain, heart and immune system. New studies are looking at increasing the time off for people who work in stressful occupations so they can reset their body's immune fighting mechanism. Dr. Sheldon Cohen, professor of psychology at Carnegie Mellon University, has found that volunteers inocu-

“Everyday emergency workers walk out of the physicians office with a clean bill of health and normal blood work when they are dangerously close to having a heart attack. To give you an example, we found heart disease in marathon runners that their physicians missed.”

lated with a cold virus who reported life stressors that continued for more than one month, such as unemployment and family problems, were more likely to develop colds than those who were under less stress. The longer the stress persisted, the greater the risk of illness. The immunity of a person in their 20s is much more responsive than someone in their 40s. These critical biological differences need to be assessed so proper protocols can be established and placed in standard operating procedures in order to protect emergency personnel. These men and women daily come in contact with biohazards and their immune systems need to be functioning at peak levels.

Based on this new medical research, emergency personnel can begin to protect themselves immediately with new training in diet, customized supplementation, nutritional testing and special intravenous solutions made with Glutathione, a free radical scavenger made by the liver and depleted during stress. Glutathione can sweep away all of the dangerous byproducts floating around in an emergency worker's bloodstream after a particularly toxic and nutrient depleting year on the job.

It seems administrators have no problem with the blood mobile parking in front of city hall so employees can give up one of the most nutritious elements in the body, the red oxygen caring blood cells. These cells take 90 to 120 days to totally replace and their loss can compound an already deficient metabolism. Yet these same administrators wonder why sick time for emergency workers is up, and they are shocked when an emergency worker request better medical care or more time off. Taking care of these men and women early with training and testing will decrease medical costs later in their careers.

Continued on next page ➤

GUEST EDITORIAL

The Impact of Living Wage Laws in Michigan

*By David Reynolds, Ph.D.
Labor Studies Center
College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan
Affairs Wayne State University
March 21, 2003*

Change never comes fast enough. But emergency workers on the frontlines can speed the process along by educating themselves as to how stress affects their physiology. They need to be aware of the new testing available so they can hold their medical director to a higher standard. They can start to take care of themselves today and not wait for illness to strike. Firemen, police, and paramedic personnel are in a constant state of flight or flight. Their systems never get a chance to rest. They respond to calls, drink coffee, smoke cigarettes, eat donuts and never get enough sleep. All of these habits raise cortisol levels and breakdown the genetic protection that every day fights off bacteria, virus and cancer in the body.

City and county officials who are responsible for approving policy for emergency service personnel also need to be educated as to the stress related diseases that will affect a majority of those employed in their emergency service. If a person continues to respond to calls in a nutrient deficient state they will not only damage their adrenal glands, setting them up for chronic fatigue, but they will also damage their neurological system and cause brain damage. Dr. Joseph Le Doux of New York University states that when stress is chronic the brain is the target for damage. A decade of research has demonstrated that sustained stress and overproduction of cortisol can damage the hippocampus—the horseshoe-shaped brain structure involved in memory formation. Scientists say that the hippocampus plays an active role in registering not only events, but also their context, an important task when faced with danger. When the emergency worker is responding to a call, the hippocampus helps turn off the stress response when the call is over. But high levels of cortisol can cause nerve cells in the hippocampus to shrink and stop the creation of new brain cells. The evidence also links a smaller hippocampus with post traumatic stress disorder, depression and over training in athletes. But when was the last time a physician ordered a cortisol saliva test for an emergency worker when they were fatigued or sick? This simple and inexpensive test can be a lifesaver. The current blood work done only uncovers pathology and disease in its late stages.

City and county officials are conditioned to budget for vehicle maintenance each year. Supervisors make sure to change the oil and rotate the tires to increase the life of emergency vehicles. Now they just need that same commitment to protecting the lives of their police, fire and EMS personnel. ■

Editors Note:

William (Rusty) Scala is a former Firefighter/Paramedic. He is currently a partner in a Functional Medicine center just outside of Orlando. They do research and cutting edge genetic testing for people in high stress occupations.

The living wage movement arose in response to the steady growth of poverty-wages jobs over the past twenty years. In 1998, for example, half of all service sector jobs in Flint-Ann-Arbor-Detroit area and one tenth of all industrial jobs paid under \$7 an hour. At the same time, local government policy has shifted in three ways. First, public services have been increasingly privatized—with jobs contracted out to for-profit companies. Second, human social service delivery has been pushed onto the non-profit sector. Third, local economic development strategies have come to rely upon generous tax abatements. Such tax breaks are often negotiated behind closed doors and typically place few or no binding commitments on the companies receiving the public subsidies. All three shifts have increased the instances in which public funds end up being used to generate poverty-paying jobs.

Living wage laws aim to refocus scarce public resources in order to provide a way to raise rather than lower community standards. Proponents do not claim to offer a solution to the problem of poverty in their communities. Indeed, the number of workers directly covered by the laws can range from hundreds in smaller communities to thousands in larger cities. An estimate by researchers at Wayne State University placed the number of workers covered through Detroit's law at close to 6,000. The question is one of what kind of leadership local government provides to the broader community. Living wage requirements encourage covered employers to become models of long-term business success through family-supporting jobs. Advocates argue that higher wages reduce employee turnover, increases morale, and allow business to tap the benefits of workers' experience and training.

Local living wage ordinances require companies that receive above a certain amount of taxpayer money pay workers hired with these funds a living wage. The laws do not apply to workers employed at the same firm, but not connected to public funds. In Michigan, local living wage laws have generally set the wage near the federal poverty level for a family of four (\$9.03 in 2002) if the employer provides family medical coverage, or 125% of this amount (\$11.28) if not. The use of the federal poverty guidelines automatically raises the required wage to reflect increases in the cost of living.

By the end of 2002, at least fourteen Michigan municipal governments and close to 90 cities nationally have enacted living wage ordinances.

Living wage laws have been hotly contested wherever they have been proposed. Advocates come from the ranks of faith-based organizations, community groups, unions, non-profits, and some local small business people. Opponents are led by the local Chambers of Commerce. In some cases, specific non-profit staff and local small business people also have testified against proposed laws. Interestingly, businesses actually covered by proposed living wage ordinances have been generally absent from living wage hearings.

Since Baltimore first developed a living wage ordinance in 1994, numerous studies have attempted to measure the impact of such laws. Nearly a dozen studies have estimated the financial costs of implementing the living wage. Generally, the maximum cost to employers runs between nearly zero to ten percent of the funds received from the public. A majority of employers tend to have cost estimates under one percent.

Two studies examined the actual impact of Baltimore's law. Both came to the same conclusions: the law benefited the modest number of workers it was intended to help with no overall increase in contract costs to the city and no evidence of job loss. A Wayne State study of the one hundred non-profits covered by Detroit's law found that most had few problems in implementing the wage requirements. A minority, however, did face financial obstacles—generally the actual amounts needed were modest, but the organization's budget could not be easily adjusted. Researchers estimated that the city could provide financial assistance to the non-profits most in need at a small cost relative to both the city's budget and its grants to non-profits. A recent Center for Urban Economic Development examination of the impact of Chicago's 1999 living wage law found that estimates in a 1996 report commissioned by the City of Chicago and used by the opposition had proven completely inaccurate. The actual experience suggested that hundreds of workers had gained directly from the wage requirements without substantially increasing costs to the city or employers, or causing significant job loss. Reviewing this evidence, Chicago's Board of Alderman recently voted to expand the reach of Chicago's living wage ordinance, increasing the required wage.

In 2002, the Brennan Center conducted a survey of public officials in twenty-two municipalities with living wage laws—including several in Michigan. All officials gave similar feedback. They had experienced no noticeable increase in overall contract costs or employment levels. Some pointed to im-

proved quality in the firms bidding for contracts. Local economic development programs did not experience negative effects or reduced business interest in the city. In only one case, Oakland, did two developers actually turn down public subsidies due to the living wage requirements. Both were for retail developments. As the local officials argued in both cases the living wage policies actually worked by preventing the public subsidy of poverty-job generating projects. Over a dozen cities—including Los Angeles, San Jose, and Boston—have done internal reviews on the effects of their living wage laws. In every case the review resulted in recommendations and subsequent enacted legislation to strengthen and expand the laws.

To date the opposition has yet to produce any concrete evidence, from existing living wage laws in nearly ninety communities, documenting the negative effects they claim are produced. The opposition that claims to represent the interest of covered employers has done little to document the impact of living wage laws on employers—either by surveying or interviewing actual businesses or city officials. David Neumark, a researcher at Michigan State University, who had earlier been associated with the opposition, has more recently concluded (as quoted in Business Week 5/28/2000) that he would no longer reject such laws out of hand. His own research, which attempts to statistically compare cities with and without living wage laws in terms of employment levels, wages, etc. suggests that living wage laws deliver far more direct gains than any possibly small employment loss. We should note that some living wage researchers question whether Neumark's use of aggregate city data can really capture the impact of a law targeted at a relatively modest portion of the workforce.

Opponents frequently confuse living wage laws with increases in the minimum wage. Judging by this and by arguments made in favor of unsuccessful attempts to pass a state law banning local ordinances, we can conclude that the opposition is driven not mainly by the impact and workings of actual living wage ordinances. Rather, it sees in the living wage movement a threat of a broader political and economic agenda.

Living wage supporters and opponents differ on the proper roles of public policy and business. The opposition clearly wants business and the market to set the basic terms of economic development. Public policy pays a secondary, supporting role. By contrast, living wage supporters see economic development as a more collective process in which public debate and proactive public policy partners with business to promote a mutual vision of community success. ■

EVENTS

Fundraisers & Events

June 13-15

22nd Annual Detroit Fire Fighters International Benefit Softball Tournament at Ford-Rotunda Fields (Rotunda Drive and Schaefer). Tournament consists of 60+ teams from the U.S. and Canada. Kids' Games, Dunk Tank, D.J. and Dancing Friday and Saturday Evening, Food and Refreshments, T-Shirts, Hats, etc. Over \$500,000 raised for the Burn Unit of Detroit Children's Hospital of Michigan. Bring your family and friends for a fun filled weekend! For more information, please contact: Don Domin (313.961.2988) or Dan McNamara (313.962.7546).

June 14

3rd Annual Andy Ross Charity Motorcycle Ride

On July 21, 2000 the Trenton Fire Department suffered a tragic loss when Firefighter Andy Ross was killed in a motorcycle accident. Wanting to keep Andy's memory alive and to help other needy people on his behalf, the idea came about to have a charity motorcycle run. Hosted by Trenton and Trenton Police. See (www.andyrossrun.org) for more info.

June 25

10th Annual Tracy Williamson Memorial Golf Outing at Heather Highlands Golf Course to benefit Pontiac Firefighters Charities.

June 26

Taylor Firefighters Local 1252 14th Annual Golf Outing at The Woodlands of Van Buren. Cost: \$110 per golfer. Includes: driving range, 18 holes w/cart, drinks on the course, lunch at turn, steak dinner w/limited bar after, prizes, raffles, etc. 7:00 a.m. registration, 8:00 a.m. shotgun start. 4-man scramble format. Money due by June 9 to reserve spot. For more info, or to register contact 313.562.4940.

July 14

Detroit Fire Fighters Association's 10th Annual DFFA Burn Golf Outing at Lakes of Taylor Golf Course. Cost: \$115 per golfer. Includes: light breakfast with liquid refreshments, 18 holes of golf with cart, beverages on the course, lunch at the turn, dinner, prizes, etc. Proceeds to benefit the DFFA Burn Fund, which provides burn camp sponsorships, and medical equipment to local area hospitals. For more information, or to register, please contact 313.962.7545.

July 18-19

Brownstown Fire Fighters Union Local 4112 First Annual Softball Tournament. Bring the family...food, refreshments, and childrens playground and pavilion available on grounds. Registration deadline June 1, 2003. For more information contact Rodney Roberts at 734.941.8860

July 19

Axemen Professional Firefighters Motorcycle Club and Wolverine Harley Davidson of Clinton Twp. Announce the 2nd Annual "From Hell to High Water" A.M.A. Sanctioned Ride to Benefit Firefighters Charities. For more information or questions contact ride chairman Gary Honeycutt at 248.379.5062.

July 22

Southfield Firefighters Annual Charity Boat Cruise on the Detroit River. Call 248.827.0728 for more info.

July 25

The Northville Township Firefighters Union IAFF L-3961 are hosting an Hawaiian Luau to benefit the U of M Truama Burn Center on July 25, 2003 at the Italian American Hall in Livonia. For more Information contact Dan Dipple or Steve Leach at 248.348.5807.

August 14

2003 2nd Annual Sporting Clays Charity Skeet Shoot at the Metamora Hunt Club. Call Daryl Belding at 248.827.0714 for more info.

MPFFU CONCERTS

2003 Fall Concert Series

Marty Stuart with Baillie & the Boys

Brought to you by:

*The Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union
& Xentel, Inc.*

Xentel, Inc. is currently selling tickets, on our behalf, to the spring music concert series in many locations across the state. For ticket information, please contact 800.580.8538. The show dates and locations are as follows (NOTE: all shows are at 7:30 PM).

Thursday, November 20, 2003
Wendler Arena in Saginaw

Friday, November 21, 2003
The DeltaPlex in Grand Rapids

Saturday, November 22, 2003
Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek

Sunday, November 23, 2003
EMU Convocation Center in Ypsilanti

Please pass this information along to your members. It would be helpful if your members would verify to any citizens that this is a legitimate event. Direct complaints to our office at 800.886.7338.

Proceeds are used to offset some of the expenses of providing various services and programs to our membership. Feel free to call your State Union office if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Don't Forget...

- May 29*..... **Member Orientation Seminar** at Southfield Westin.
- June 11-14* **IAFF EMS Seminar** in Hollywood, Florida.
- June 18-21* **Michigan Fire Service Expo** at Grand Rapids Amway.
- June 19*..... **MPFFU Executive Board Meeting** in Grand Rapids.
- Sept. 9* **Member Orientation Seminar** at Grand Rapids Hilton.
- Sept. 9-10* **MPFFU Executive Board Meeting** in Lansing.
- Oct. 5-9* **IAFF Redmond Symposium** in San Francisco.
- Dec. 1-3* **Health and Safety Seminar** at Lansing Holiday Inn South.

June 18-22, 2003

Michigan Fire Service Expo

"We all need to come together and speak with one voice if we want anyone to listen." This event is in response to that need—to open the lines of communication between our 15 sponsoring organizations (including MPFFU), 1,075 fire departments and 30,000 + firefighters. It is our hope that this event will foster an atmosphere of trust and cooperation where we can come together as professionals and focus on resolving critical issues important to us all. Please visit the Michigan Fire Service Expo web site: <http://www.mi-fire-expo.org/>.

ADVERTISING

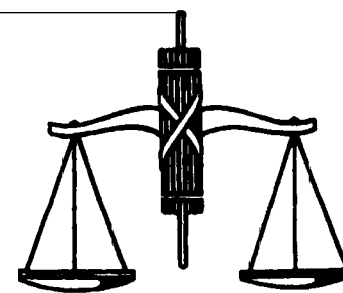
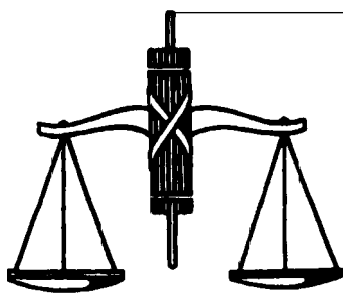
HELVESTON & HELVESTON, P.C.

Ronald R. Helveston • Mary Anne M. Helveston
 Amy L. Stirling • Charles T. Oxender
 Of Counsel: Michael D. McFerren • Deborah A. Bonner

General Counsel for the Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union Statewide Representation of Fire Fighter Union Locals

Specializing in:

Collective Bargaining • Grievance Arbitration • Act 312 Arbitration
 Unfair Labor Practice Hearings • Employment Discrimination
 Wrongful Discharge • Sexual Harassment • Handicap Discrimination
 Personal Injury • Family & Custody Law



3327 Cadillac Tower Building
 Detroit, Michigan 48226
 313.963.4637 (voice)
 313.963.3249 (fax)

MPFFU magazine advertising

Michigan Professional Fire Fighter magazine reaches over 6,000 firefighters and is the official publication of the Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union. Four issues are published each year. Advertising in Michigan Professional Fire Fighter can be an effective way to reach your target audience.

DISPLAY ADVERTISING

Due to the tabloid format of the newsletter, we offer advertising space per column inch, allowing advertisers flexibility in choosing ad size.

\$60 per column inch (width=4.667)

4.667" X 1" = \$60 (1 X \$60)
 4.667" X 3" = \$180 (3 X \$60)
 4.667" X 5" = \$300 (5 X \$60)
 4.667" X 7" = \$420 (7 X \$60)

\$30 per column inch (width=2.25)

2.25" X 1" = \$30 (1 X \$30)
 2.25" X 3" = \$90 (3 X \$30)
 2.25" X 4" = \$120 (4 X \$30=)
 2.25" X 7" = \$210 (7 X \$30)

Did You Know...

The MPFFU Scholarship Program was established in 1999 to encourage and support higher education. Awards are made on the basis of academic merit and potential, without regard to race, creed, color, gender, religion, national origin or disability. This scholarship program is administered by Scholarship Management Services, a department of Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of America, Inc. (CSFA). CSFA is a national nonprofit educational support and student aid organization that seeks to involve and assist the private sector in expanding educational opportunities and encouraging educational achievement.



ALISON L. PATON, P.C.

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW

Specializing in labor and employment law, with particular emphasis on the representation of firefighter locals. Experienced and effective representation in all aspects of labor relations ~ including unfair labor practice cases, grievance arbitration, Act 312 interest arbitration, contract negotiations, suits for injunctive relief, circuit and appellate court proceedings, etc.

1805 FORD BUILDING • DETROIT, MI 48226

PHONE: (313) 965-5000

FAX: (313) 965-5001

PHOTO GALLERY



Warren firefighters credit the recent purchase of Foam-Aid for helping extinguish this lumberyard blaze on April 15, 2003. (Photo by Bill Eisner)



St. Clair Shores firefighters battle a house fire right behind the fire station. (Photo by Bill Eisner)



Detroit firefighters battle a warehouse blaze as unknown chemicals exploded with loud booms at Gateway Additive on Detroit's west side. No one was hurt in the 3-alarm fire at Military and Linsdale. Firefighters and a hazardous materials team were dispatched to the blaze at 7:15 p.m. and it was brought under control around 9:30 p.m. (Photo by Bill Eisner)



St. Clair Shores Firefighters Local 1744 and Roseville Firefighters Local 1614 responded to this early morning rush hour car fire at Eastbound I-696 near Westbound I-94.



Fire in basement went thru roof at this vacant two-flat dwelling on the lower east side of Detroit on March 28, 2003. (Photo by Bill Eisner)



This Clinton Township apartment complex fire was started by papers near a fireplace (Photo by Bill Eisner)