The Days Of “Business As Usual” Are Over!

The First Year with a New Fire Chief and New Union Leadership

by Steve Tufts
President
New Union President and New Fire Chief Meet

December 4, 2006 is a mark on my calendar that symbolizes two significant events. It was my first business day as the President of UFLAC and it was the day that Mayor Villaraigosa held a press conference to announce Douglas Barry as the Interim Fire Chief. The next day, the brand new Union President and the brand new Fire Chief had the first of what would become regular and numerous meetings.

The first item that the Chief and I agreed on was this: we would both be in a once in a life-time position where our actions could have a long range and positive impact on the members of the department. We assured each other that we would not conduct business as usual, that mutual destruction accomplished nothing, and whether we agreed or disagreed on issues, that we would show the mutual respect due to the humbling positions with which we were entrusted.

I spent much of that first meeting expressing to Chief Barry the most pressing need of the UFLAC membership: how important it was to spread the truth to the media, the community, and the world about the strong, hard working women and men of integrity that make up the fire department. The Chief and I also talked about what could be done to let the line troops know that they were trusted to do their jobs, that every decision they made would not be questioned, and to give our professionals the room to be professional.

After several hours of give and take, Chief Barry asked me to give him three issues that UFLAC wanted to tackle first. Two days later I got back to the Chief with those issues. Some times short with words but never short with ideas, I presented the Chief with a list of fifty-six items! The following are a few, but not nearly all, the issues that have been resolved:

Union submits list of issues to Chief
• A 3-Year Contract: After eight months without a contract, the UFLAC membership approved a three year deal with the City of Los Angeles on March 2, 2007. The ratified contract is set to expire in June 2009.
• Discontinuing the “Quick Launch” Program: The well intentioned but ill-conceived dispatch policy was causing more problems than it was supposed to solve.
• Ending Non-Cognitive Tests for New Recruits: The method by which new employees were being selected was deselecting candidates that were clearly desirable future firefighters.
• Ending Recruit Recycling: The practice of retaining firefighters in the Training Academy who were performing below the minimum standard was a cancer, eroding morale among Training Academy Instructors and credibility in the fire stations.
• Revamping Return to Duty Policy and Cancellation of Overtime: Maintaining our minimum staffing level each day is critical. The policies of canceling pending overtime days because a member had a short term illness or was caring for ill family members and the archaic way members were expected to put themselves back to duty afterwards were outdated.
• Automatic 1% Bonus for New Paramedics: Firefighters that became new paramedics no longer have to submit letters requesting their 1% Educational Bonus and wait for approval before being paid.

In Loving Memory…

Engineer Harry R. Correll

We the family of Harry R. Correll write this article with sudden hearts for the great loss of a husband, father, grandfather, firefighter, and a friend. We are all so proud of his life and we cannot thank everyone enough for all the nice stories they told the family and the tremendous amount of support we received and are still receiving.

We would like to thank all the members of UFLAC, the LA Firemen’s Relief Association, and all the men and women who visited and called Harry during his illness. We need to thank station 64, Ray and Lorraine Mayo, Wendell and Cindy Smith for all the respect at his service. The photos by Mike Meadows

In Memoriam – Harry R. Correll
Officer’s Reports
UFLAC History
New Orleans – The Forgotten City
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2007 Income Tax Information

In This Issue...

The Los Angeles Firefighter
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January/February 2008

Southern California Brush Fires
More photos on pages 7 and 14.
Photos by Mike Meadows

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The First Year with a New Fire Chief and New Union Leadership

Continued from page 1
• Apparatus Security: A good sense policy that took a long time to come to fruition, members are now trained to decide how to provide security for apparatus while they are out working in their districts.

• Transfer Request Policy: The arbitrary and some- times misapplied “one year in your assignment” rule was revamped so that mem- bers can more easily trans- fer according to properly completed transfer request forms. As a result of this change, members are no longer required to wait a year before the seatbelt law became effective in 1991, and members can now make requests to move to a position with better opportunities. The additional safeguards provided by the FFPBR are obvious to UFLAC members and members’ rights.

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• Firefighter Assignment: A good sense policy that took a long time to come to fruition, members are now trained to decide how to provide security for apparatus while they are out working in their districts. New Union Officer...
Penalty Guidelines for Sworn Members Effective January 1, 2008

by Frank Lima
Director

I hope everybody had a wonderful holiday season, and I wish you, your family, and your crew a great New Year. I wanted to take this opportunity to say “thank you” to the membership for electing me, I continue to enjoy representing the members of this great Fire Department.

Warning!
This article contains undisputed facts, and discusses areas of great public concern, about the majority of LAFD’s Deputy Chiefs. Leadership, or lack thereof, is the main topic for this article. If you are an ineffective leader and your ego brushes easily, put the paper down quietly and walk away slowly.

“Be good, and if you can’t be good, don’t get caught.”
Believe it or not, that is the exact quote given by top management, in their recent training of officers on the new “Penalty Guidelines for Sworn Members” (check out the last slide of the “Leadership Training” power point presentation). Who was the brain behind that quote? I may not have a bunch of degrees behind my name, but I can guarantee, I will not be giving that kind of sophomoric and unprofessional advice to my crew accompanied by a wink and a nod.

“Leadership” training is the new buzzword in the LAFD. For various reasons, the Department has made the commitment to educate and train every member, from the rookie firefighter up through the ranks, including all officers, in the area of Leadership.

This commitment is a great step in the right direction! The ultimate goal is to “Lead by example”. Therefore, I am puzzled as to why the Department refuses to acknowledge that some of their top “Leaders” are failing to set an appropriate example for the rest of us. There are Deputy Chiefs/Bureau Commanders that are repeatedly being named for abusing their authority, and treating members of this department unfairly. These Chiefs are the common thread among so many different complaints, from subordinates to Bkle’s Rights hearings and even litigation. So why is it that these supposed “leaders” remain in a position to further rack havoc on this department? Anyone? Anyone?

We have seen only one demotion in the Deputy rank this year, and that Chief was placed in a position that oversaw litigation brought against the department. Hello? The same litigation in which he is personally named? Does anybody see a problem with this? Why are we leaving these Chiefs in positions of leadership, when there are other leaders who are going to lead us in the right direction.

I recommend that all ranks read the Chief Officer Code of Conduct that has been posted on the LAFD Chief Officers’ website for years. It is applicable to all officers and is worth reproducing some of it here. There are a lot of lessons in this reading. Remember to learn from the good, what to do and learn 10 times more from the bad, what not to do. The introduction says it was written by a Chief Officer from San Francisco in 1943 and that if the text was gender and politically correct, it could be the Code for today’s Fire Officers. See excerpts in box to the right.

Rest in Peace
Thank you to the Correll family, FS 64, and to all in attendance at Harry’s beautiful funeral at the Mission Santa Ines. Harry will surely be missed, but his legend will live on.

Words of Wisdom
Nationwide there are over 100 firefighter deaths this year. Multiple deaths due to not wearing a seat belt, please buckle up.
Ladder uninvoluted to involved, properly sound the roof for integrity, and never go cross country, have a proper route of travel (bearing wall, lambeaux, etc.) – Roof Safety Training.
Protect your precious airway! Where SCBA whenever possible, don’t rush to over


Three trucks collided at the intersection of Roscoe Blvd., and Havenhurst Ave. in Van Nuys.

A physical assignment was dispatched along with USAR 88 and HR 56. It took about 40 minutes for firefighters to free one of the trapped drivers. Photos and Information by Brian Litt

Excerpts from:

http://www.lACITYchiefs.org/main/politics/officials/02code.html

Chief Officer Code of Conduct

To be an efficient officer you must be: first, a good disciplinarian, and be considered fair and above all, treat those that characterize natural leaders of men. You must have the respect of your men, their unhesitating obedience, and if you are man enough to win it, their enthusiastic loyalty.

A bluffer on the other hand, who deliberately tackles situations containing unknown factors, is a sorry sight pretending to lead men in the ranks who know their part better that he does (BES). The bigger the man the fitter his simplicity. Remember always pomposity or airs are like an inflated toy balloon. Some day a pin punctures it and the result is pathetic. Build, with your popularity the solid base of fellowship, and the only way to do it is to keep the lines of communication open, to be strong and firm with weaklings.

An officer cannot be a good officer if he is not a good leader. He may be able to fool himself and even other offi-

Inexperience is the most common and cruel offenses of sarcasm and the practice reprimanding a man in the pres-

words of wisdom

the importance. The chief factor in leadership is the leader himself. The chief leader must have a high sense of personal capacity and skill, and intelligence in the leader.

Remember the 5 F’s, in this order: Faith, Family, Friends, Fun, Fire Department. If Fire Department is higher on your list than 5, you may need to re-evaluate, because you can always promote later, and it’s not worth compromising your family (divorce, etc.).

...
The Right to Organize

Our local union was responsible for legislation that would guarantee firefighters in California the right to organize. The law forbade strikes, but it became the case law for organizing all California public employees.

From its inception, the goals of UFLAC have remained unchanged and have included: fair pay for a skillful, difficult and dangerous profession; protection for his/her family; a pension tailored to his/her lifetime employees.

In the early 1960s the fire department went from a two-man crew to a modern department. This meant a 50 percent increase in the number of promotional possibilities. There was little or no expense to taxpayers because of the reduced fire insurance rates. During this time firefighters worked a 62 hour work week. Through public education and political action the union fought for and achieved the 56-hour workweek.

Other significant accomplishments of the union from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, include a successful court case requiring the city to provide safety clothing and equipment which members had been required to purchase themselves; the establishment of a clause in the pension plan which allows the rates to increase commensurate with the rate of inflation; and the successful 7.8 percent lawsuit against the city of Los Angeles in 1975. That case was filed as a class action suit by UFLAC Executive Board Members Don Wallace, Jim Perry and Frank Lunn, along with three police officers under the “umbrella” of the Los Angeles Fire and Police Protective League, Fire and Police Chapters. The retroactive pay form 1971 to 1975 amounted to $35 million and established the base from which all firefighters and police officers continue to benefit.

New Safety Standards

During the late 1960s and early 1980s, the union won the long-sought-after establishment of minimum standards for firefighters in California. These standards led to safer helmets, mandatory safety shoes and the requirement that firefighters wear a personal alarm device when fighting structure fires. The new requirements eliminated polyester trousers while fighting fires and substituted fire-resistant materials.

Union Fights Against Cutbacks in Fire Protection

The union was also involved in several major campaigns to maintain the fire protection and safety for the public. One such case—faced with a declining fire department budget and increased political pressure from the city council and the mayor, the Fire Chief reversed his public position on the importance of maintaining Fire Company staffing. He proposed and achieved the elimination of one firefighter position on every single-engine fire station in Los Angeles during the hours of 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Although the union and members of the fire commission spoke against this dramatic reduction in fire protection, the cuts were made.

Union-Community Coalition

One year later, the union funded an extensive public education campaign. Working with Richard Close, President of the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association, the union formed a “Citizens for Better Fire Protection Committee.” That committee included a coalition of the most influential homeowner groups, chambers of commerce, business and service clubs, retired fire chiefs, as well as organized labor. Tremendous public support convinced the city council to restore $1.6 million to the LAFD budget. This resulted in the restoration of the lost firefighter’s positions.

Negotiated Benefits

During the same timeframe, UFLAC utilized the recently won rights of negotiation and set a standard of success and achievement in the bargaining process. UFLAC was the first union to achieve city funding of health benefits for dependents, a dental insurance program, a uniform allowance, a meaningful grievance procedure and a host of work rule changes designed to improve the firefighters’ profession and economic security for their families.

Elected Union Leaders

Throughout the years, UFLAC was privileged to have scores of elected officers who gave unselfishly of their time and knowledge. Their continued schooling in labor and employee relations laws, management skills, leadership and tireless efforts on behalf of their sisters and brothers in Los Angeles and the Fire Service throughout the Nation is legend.

Several UFLAC Officers distinguished themselves and were awarded Iaff Scholarships to the Trade Union Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Business. Those union officers had to take Civil Service Leave from the LAFD during their many months of study and make up that time before taking their pensions. Those who successfully completed and graduated from that intensive study program included Don Wallace, Lyle Hall, Ralph Travis and Martin Garza.

Many other UFLAC officers distinguished themselves on research projects, committee assignments and saved the jobs and careers of many members through courageous employee representation in grievance procedures and Board of Rights Trials.

It would be difficult to enumerate and individualize the depth of commitment and leadership qualities of the many who have served our union in elected and appointed positions. Here is a partial list of achievements and benefits that these unselfish and dedicated members have provided the union membership:

Retirement Benefits

Negotiated:

- Tier 5 pension plan.
- Retiree dental subsidy.
- Widows’ medical subsidy.
- Elimination of widow remarriage penalty.
- City Reimbursement of the Medicare Part B monthly surcharge.
- Lowering from 60 to 55 the qualifying age for the retiree medical subsidy.

Drop program.

Active Member Benefits

Negotiated:

- Additional vacation and holiday time.
- Additional family illness and bereavement leave.
- City paid $50,000 life insurance policy.
- Health, dental and life insurance subsidies for spouses, minor and dependent children of active duty members who suffer line-of-duty deaths.
- $7,500 funeral expense reimbursement.
- Dependable care reimbursement account.
- FMLA vacation credit.
- Special-duty SOD provisios.
- Special duty accumulated time bank.

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History of... United Firefighters of Los Angeles City Local 112, IAFF, AFL-CIO-CLC

by Jim Perry

The Firefighter’s Union was founded in 1906 and received its charter from the International Assn. of Fire Fighters on August 18, 1918. For many years Los Angeles city firefighters were represented by two organizations, the Union and the Los Angeles Fire and Police Protective League. In the early 1970s, the two organizations merged into the United Firefighters of Los Angeles City (UFLAC), Local 112, AFL-CIO-CLC.

Past UFLAC Presidents

Bill Wheatly 1959-1969
Bill Shonborn 1969-1970
Bill Waibel 1970-1972
Don Wallace 1972-1976
Lyle Hall 1976-1984

Andy Kulis 1984-1985
Don Forrest 1985-1990
Andy Fox 1990-1992
Ken Buzzell 1992-2002
Pat McOsker 2002-2006

Page 4 Los Angeles Firefighter January/February 2008
L.A. Firemen’s Credit Union Chili Cook-off 2007

by Eric Guerrero
Marketing Manager
Los Angeles Firemen’s Credit Union

Two parts chili and a whole lotta fun! L.A. Firemen’s Credit Union turned up the heat with their Third Annual Chili Cook-off on December 1, 2007. The event, held at Frank Hotchkim Memorial Training Center, featured the secret chili recipes of California fire departments including LAFD, Compton, Downey, L.A. County, Milpitas, Monrovia, Pasadena, and the L.A. Firemen’s Relief Association. Everyone in attendance was able to sample the recipes to help determine both the Firefighters Choice and Team Spirit Awards. A panel of local chefs determined the Best Darn Chili Award.

The Credit Union would like to offer a special thank you to Chief Garcia, Chief Fox, Captain Porter, and the FHTC staff for the use of the facility; thanks to UFLAC for bringing the MOAB and feeding everyone; thanks to the Relief Association for bringing Whishire the Fire Dog and thanks to Dalyman’s Firehouse for their assistance with the Fire Family Foundation.

Best Darn Chili Award
First Place – Pasadena Fire
Chili, Pasadena FD
Second Place – Pick It Up Chili, Compton FD
Third Place – It’s no walk in the park, LAFD FS 104

Firefighters Choice Award
First Place – LAFD Fire Hogs

Team Spirit Award
First Place – Milpitas Firefighters Local 1699

The cookoff also served as the inaugural event for the Fire Family Foundation. The Foundation, the first of its kind in California, will help, provide financial support to firefighters, their families, and to those charities that support the fire community; provide educational support to firefighters; provide financial support for fire departments.

To learn more about the Fire Family Foundation, visit www.firefamilyfoundation.org or www.lafirecu.org.
Volunteers Let New Orleans Residents Know They’re Not Forgotten

by Jim Perry

For the displaced people of New Orleans to return, they need decent housing, good schools for their children and security in their jobs. Over two years after the disaster, many people, especially low income workers, African-Americans and union members, are having a hard time finding one of those needs, let alone all three. Whenever disaster strikes, union members are among the first to lend a hand. When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit New Orleans in 2005, unions members sent supplies and volunteered to help clean up and provide whatever help was needed.

I recently attended the International Labor Communications Association’s Convention in New Orleans. As part of that convention 71 labor editors and reporters from throughout the United States and Canada were sent out to track down and write stories of the city’s workers’ loss, desperation, hopes and struggles. We went back to the labor media center set up at the ILCA convention hotel to produce video, audio, photography, text stories and post them on the convention website: NewOrleansLaborMedia.org.

Prior to our assignments we were taken on a bus tour of the still devastated areas of New Orleans. I was fortunate to be on a bus with a native and proud New Orleans working man, Chet Held, Assistant Business Manager with the IBEW Local No. 130. Brother Held, who lost his own home in that tragedy, gave an emotional and heartfelt narrative as we toured what is now known as “The Forgotten City.” After the tour we were broken down into groups to visit specific areas and talk to the citizens and workers affected by the hurricane and flooding. Our team’s assignment was to visit and report on the New Orleans Fire Department and the sad situation the firefighters find themselves in today. Our tour guides were Nicholas G. Felton, Jr., President of New Orleans IAFF Local 632 and Michael C. Langston, Local 632 Vice President.Both of these men are full-time active members of the NOFD.

One member of our team was Angelle Bergeron, Correspondent/Editorial with the Engineering News-Record working for the McGraw-Hill Companies. Sister Bergeron put together the article on page 7 that tells our story as well as anyone could.

A resident tells reporters and editors about the lack of action or concern by city, state and federal government agencies leaving thousands homeless. These apartments had water up to the second floors and are all condemned, with fencing to keep out former residents.

Fire House 21 is one of five stations that was destroyed and left uninhabitable. The station was stripped of all the mold and rotting wood floors, ceiling and walls and cleaned by the firefighters assigned there. The doors were removed because of the damage and never replaced by the city. The fire apparatus is kept in the open bays and the firefighters have been living in small, cramped and inadequate FEMA trailers since the floods.

This temporary FEMA trailer is quickly deteriorating.

Inside the stripped fire station stands the firefighters emergency gear and fire apparatus.

Reporter Angelle Bergeron interviews Nicholas G. Felton, Jr., President of New Orleans IAFF Local 632 outside one of the five New Orleans fire stations destroyed as a result of the flooding. On the left is Connecticut AFL-CIO Communications Director Paul J. Rapanault, and on the far right is Michael C. Langston, Local 632 Vice President.
New Orleans IAFF Local 632 Struggles Two Years Later

by Angele Bergeron

For six days after Hurricane Katrina made landfall, fire fighter Michael Windsay patrolled his eastern New Orleans neighborhood, rescuing people trapped by floodwaters when the levees were breached or overturned. He wasn’t the only one. Windsay remembers seeing more helicopters in any given amount of available air space than he’s ever seen in his life, as first responders from across the nation patrolled, rescuing human souls.

“Since I was in New Orleans East, I had no idea what the city’s struggles were,”Windsay says of the widely reported stories of the misdeeds of New Orleans Police Department officers. “All I know is that I looked left, and I looked right and I saw water everywhere. And in between that, I saw people who needed to get out,” he says. Windsay can recount story after story of the kindness of firefighters and regular people who became situational heroes.

Windsay says of the widely reported city’s struggles were, “Wind-say can recount story after story of the kindness of firefighters and regular people who became situational heroes. The Southern California wildfires were a hellacious foe. But the men and women from nearly all of our local fire departments throughout California and from CAL Fire stood bravely in the paths of the wildfires that marched across the landscape. I watched firsthand at base camps in San Diego, Escondido and L.A. County as our mem-bers ignored the boundaries that define their jurisdictions and worked together to battle fire and unrelenting wind. They worked in rugged ter-rain and in brutal conditions to fight the fires. They worked tirelessly, some in 96-hour shifts, to defend communities. Fighting a wildfire is a far different challenge than try-ing to extinguish a structure fire, and the expertise with which California’s fire fighters protected their homes and the homes of their fellow citizens was nothing short of awe inspiring. We regret the loss of life and property. We pray for those of our members and citizens who were harmed by the fast-moving fires and remain hospitalized. We stand ready to assist those in Rancho Bernardo, in Poway and in other communities who lost their homes.

As capably as our fire fighter-s from California and surrounding states performed during the October firestorm, credit for their success also must go to state officials. Were there failures? Of course there were. Did those failures result in some addi-tional losses? Probably. Is there even get a decent night’s sleep for several weeks. And what ails the fire fight-ers means inadequate protection for the citizens of New Orleans. We had a five alarm fire recently Uptown, and before we could get there, because we were so spread out, it caught to a second house next door,” Felton says. “By the time we responded, we were down to about 35 fire fighters left to protect the rest of the City.”

After Katrina, the IAFF transported New Orleans fire fighters to Baton Rouge, cleaned them up, and provided them with food, clothing, $500 cash and critical stress de-briefing. “There is no doubt in my mind that the union did more for fire fighters than any-one else,” Felton says. Michael Langston, first vice president of the Local 632 talked about how a union brother in Texas provided a house for Langston and his family to live until they could get a FEMA trailer in New Orleans. In spite of all of that, the enormity of the disaster seems overwhelming. In hind-sight, anyone can see the enormity of Katrina, which was almost 200 miles wide. Look-ing forward, it’s hard to tell when her effects will subside.

In California, Lessons Learned and Lives Saved

by Harold Schaitberger

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As capably as our fire fighters from California and surrounding states performed during the October firestorm, credit for their success also must go to state officials. Were there failures? Of course there were. Did those failures result in some additional losses? Probably. Is there more work to do? Definitely. But there were fewer problems compared to 2003 because the governor and state legislature learned from their mistakes and improved the state’s natural disaster response.

A 2004 blue ribbon commis-sion appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger rec-ommended the 150 new apparatus be purchased to help fire fighting efforts. Some new engines have been purchased, but progress is sluggish, and firefighters hope new equipment is delivered more quickly in the coming years.

San Diego’s use of reverse 911 calls to warn residents was critically important in saving lives, yet voters there continue to reject tax increases that would fund more fire stations. But voters there would be wise to fund new stations to bolster safety.

Improved communications since the 2003 wildfires helped take advantage of offers of mutual aid from other cities and states.

The cooperation that characterized daily operations of fire officers and fire fighters from the dozens of fire departments attacking the fire prevented an even greater loss of life and property. California’s response may have been the most suc-cessful, most comprehensive and coordinated emergency response in our nation’s history.
In Memoriam

Harry R. Correll
Engineer Active Duty - Fire Station 64 “B” Platoon
Born: October 2, 1937
Appointed to LAFD: June 10, 1961
Died: October 10, 2007

The officers and member of United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, Local 112, IAFF, AFL-CIO-CLC extends their heartfelt condolences to the family and many friends of Brother Harry Correll.

May he rest in peace...
Engine 60 and RA889 were dispatched to the 6800 block of Gentry Avenue in North Hollywood to the report of an auto fire with a civilian injury. Upon arrival firefighters found a fully involved truck burning underneath high voltage power lines.

An unidentified 60 year old transient was sleeping in the front seat of the truck and was able to self-extricate prior to the fire departments arrival. He was evaluated by paramedics for possible thermal and respiratory burns on scene. The patient was later released following a thorough evaluation with no apparent injuries.

Photos and Information by Rob Curtis, LAFD

The Mail Bag

Dear Jim:

Wishing you and the newspaper a Happy New Year! I’ve been following your newspaper, “The Los Angeles Firefighter,” for several months and have been impressed by the stories you have published. However, as a retired firefighter, I feel compelled to express my concern about the recent developments in the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD).

Over the past few years, there have been numerous reports of hazing, harassment, and discrimination within the department. These issues are not confined to the LAFD alone; they have also affected other departments in the area. It is concerning to see such behavior continue despite the implementation of new policies and procedures to address these concerns.

The recent announcement of a new Disciplinary Plan is a step in the right direction. However, it is imperative that the department ensures that these guidelines are enforced consistently and fairly. It is crucial to create a culture where all members, regardless of rank, feel safe and respected.

I support the efforts of the firefighters and paramedics who are working tirelessly to serve our community. It is important that they have a work environment that fosters their well-being and professional growth.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]

PS: Please let me know if there is anything I can do to support your work.

[Name]

[Title]

[Organization]

Response to Daily News

“LAFD Nearer To Disciplinary Plan”

This article doesn’t paint the entire picture of the Los Angeles Fire Department. Chief Barry is supported by the troops and the union. Leadership starts at the top with the deputy chief rank though, doesn’t it?

The article wants you to believe that problems only come from captains and firefighters in firehouses. There should be a big “public concern” that specific deputy chiefs are repeatedly not credible witnesses in court, harass members that exercise their rights as employees, and use blatant retaliation tactics as their normal mode of operation if you’re not in their “good ol’ boys club.”

Absolutely, the great men and women of the LAFD in the fire stations who run over 1,300 calls a day act professionally and consistently with the gold badges (including deputy chiefs) as well as the silver badges (the workers).

Thanks again,

[Name]

[Title]

[Organization]
Firefighters, Police Officers and Sheriffs “Fight for Life” Boxing Tournament

Results of Fights
1. Suzie Graz, LAPD win over Mary Vasquez, LASD
2. Adrian Rendon, LASD win over Jose Arellano, LAPD
3. Paul Cullen, LAPD win over Jose Arias, LASD
4. Tom Gutierrez, LAPD win over Hashan Harrison, LASD
5. Eric Nelson, LAPD win over Ivan Garcia, LAPD
6. David Apodac, LASD win over Joel Ruiz, LAPD
7. Julie Portrelli, LASD win over Ria Garcenila, LAPD
8. Jesse Venegas, LASD win over Jerry Mejia, LAPD
9. John Negrette, LAPD win over Oscar Rodriguez, LAX
10. Rudy Barrigan, LAPD win over Jorge Caamal, LASD

New LAFD Boxing Team Victorious in First Tournament
We are very proud of the success our own members, in this, their first official boxing tournament as LAFD Boxing Team members.

LAFD Firefighter Paul Cullen from Fire Station 46, “A” Platoon was victorious over a very strong LASD Deputy Jose Arias in the 165 pound/Novice Division, and LAFD Firefighter Eric Nelson from Fire Station 66, “B” Platoon was victorious over a very tough LAPD Ivan Garcia in the 210 pound/Novice Division. The skill, endurance and heart that they displayed brought the big crowd to their feet throughout their fights… true warriors in the ring.

Both of these men trained very hard for these fights and were well coached by fellow LAFD members. In Cullen’s corner were John Tohill, Chief Second and Gary Rodriguez, and in Nelson’s corner were Chief Second Dan Foote and Daryl Bennett. LAFD members Jack Reiss worked as a referee and judge and Carlos Vargas worked both corners as their Cut Man. Both Reiss and Vargas are professionals and can be seen on television working professional fights around the world.

LAFD Boxing Team members Devin McLaren from Fire Station 12 “C” and Joe Mendoza were injured/unable to fight in this tournament. They look forward to getting back to training for future events.

The Boxing Team is looking for new members and will be having a meeting after the first of the year. If you are interested, get in touch with any of the following LAFD Boxing Staff:

• Carlos Vargas – OCDS “C” Cell: 818-497-3496
• Jack Reiss – FS 99 “C” Cell: 805-341-7229
• Frank Lima – FS 69 “B” Cell: 213-507-6317
• Dan Foote – FS 35 “C” Cell: 661-406-5011
• Daryl Bennett – FS 79 “B” Cell: 310-748-4520
• John Tohill – FS 42 “B” Cell: 661-313-5409
• Jim Perry – Retired Cell: 775-450-5517

For more information about how you can support City of Hope’s lifesaving research and treatment programs, please call 800-260-HOPE, or visit the Web site at www.cityofhope.org.

Left to Right: Dan Foote, Jack Reiss, John Paxton, John Tohill, Boxer Paul Cullen, Daryl Bennett, Boxer Eric Nelson, Joe Mendoza, Gary Rodriguez and squatting, Carlos Vargas.

Photos by Gene Blevins, Rob Curtis and Jim Perry

Firefighter Eric Nelson, Referee Patrick Connolly and Police Officer Ivan Garica.

Firefighter Paul Cullen, Referee Pat Russell and Deputy Sheriff Jose Arias.
Helping One Another...

Responding to Assist Captain II Tom Dowling

by Mark Khitikian
LAFD

If you’ve never heard of or worked around Tom Dowling, you’ve missed out. Tom’s a genuine good guy with a big heart. He spent a number of years in Battalion 3 and was last assigned to Fire Station 10 “C.” A number of years ago Tom was diagnosed with cancer. As expected, he went through the usual array of radiation and chemotherapy treatments. It began as one type of cancer and as Tom put it, “Morphed into something else.” And as you can imagine, Tom’s been through hell. Long stays in the hospital accompanied with much shorter stays at home. Of course, when you’re not home, lots of “Honey do’s” pile up, like needing a new driveway poured.

A number of individuals, who made me promise I wouldn’t mention their names, came to Tom’s rescue. Although pouring a new driveway was a major project, generous donations of platelets, blood, money or taking time to just stop by and visit has been much appreciated by Tom. I really did promise not to mention names, but what the heck; I’ve never kept a promise yet!

Many THANK YOU’S to:
• The Baja Motor Cycle Riders Fund, headed up by Ken Kemp, who raised $2000 on a recent motorcycle trip and donated the proceeds to Tom.
• Ralph Uraqaza - concrete pumping.
• Mike Henry - prepared the driveway for concrete, which included the forming, laying steel and setting bricks. Naturally, the finished job looks like a piece of art, no kidding!

Also Angel Arellano, Mike Henry’s right-hand man and a member of our Department, assisted Mike in making this a project a huge success.
• Rick Heiller - did lots of grading and hauling.
• John Haigh - owner of Bonanza Concrete Company. John donated all the concrete.
• Ron and Gail Grist - owners of Bellis steel who donated all the rebar.
• Jasan Knight - owner of Fire-Axe Inc.
• Ted Nonini, Treasurer of UFLAC who provided food and drink.

Other members that have helped Tom in various capacities include:
• Greg Shirley
• Bill Finn
• Mike Mcknight
• Chief Mottram
• Greg Ikeda
• Bruce Bickly

I’m sorry if I’ve forgotten any names. So many people have taken time out of their busy days to help Tom. Your help, no matter how small, is much appreciated by Tom and his family.

Thanks again to all, for your time, help and prayers.

Your Health...

Happy Stressed Out New Year

by Anne Clifford
Consultant
Fickewirth & Associates

Happy New Year! UFLAC members have a whole new year ahead – indeed a blank slate, if you will — to make a commitment to a healthy lifestyle. Adopting good eating habits and a regular exercise routine are obvious. What should also be a priority is lowering stress levels. Indeed, UFLAC members know firsthand how job stress can take its toll. Combine that with family stress and health and money issues, and you have the perfect recipe for a stressed out life.

If you are feeling stressed as we enter 2008, you are not alone. A recent study indicates that stress represents a major health problem in the United States. In fact, a poll by the American Psychological Association (APA), shows that one-third of Americans are living with extreme stress and nearly half of Americans (48 percent) believe that their stress has increased over the past five years.

Stress Takes Its Toll
The APA, in a news release on its website, notes that stress is taking a toll on people, contributing to health problems, poor relationships and lost productivity at work. This probably doesn’t surprise many UFLAC members, but money and work continue as the leading causes of stress for three-quarters of Americans – a dramatic increase over the 59 percent reporting the same sources of stress in 2006.

The survey also found that the housing crisis is having an effect on many, with half of Americans (51 percent) citing rent or mortgage costs as sources of stress this year. Without a doubt, UFLAC members coping with the high price of real estate and rentals in the greater Southern California area can also relate to these findings.

Nearly half of all Americans report that stress has a negative impact on both their personal and professional lives. About one-third of employed adults have difficulty managing work and family responsibilities, and 35 percent cite job interfering with their family or personal time as a significant source of stress.

Does the following sound familiar? Stress causes more than half of Americans (54 percent) to fight with people close to them. One in four people report that they have been alienated from a friend or family member because of stress, with 8 percent connecting stress to divorce or separation.

Words from an Expert
According to psychologist Russ Newman, PhD, JD, APA executive director for professional practice, “Stress in America continues to escalate and is affecting every aspect of people’s lives – from work to personal relationships to sleep patterns and eating habits – as well as their health. We know that stress is a fact of life and some stress can have a positive impact. However, the high stress levels that many Americans report experiencing can have long-term health consequences, ranging from fatigue to obesity and heart disease.”

Stress Affects Your Health
Twenty-eight percent of Americans say they are managing their stress extremely well. However, many people report experiencing physical symptoms (77 percent) and psychological symptoms (73 percent) related to stress in the last month. Physical symptoms of stress for people participating in the poll include fatigue, headache, upset stomach, muscle tension, change in appetite, teeth grinding, change in sex drive, and feeling dizzy, psychological symptoms of stress include experiencing irritability or anger, feeling nervous and lack of energy. In addition, almost half of Americans report lying awake at night due to stress.

So what can you do to alleviate stress? We will let you know in the March/April UFLAC newsletter. In the meantime, go to Blue Cross’ website at www.bluecrossca.com and check out what they have to offer to help manage stress.

I want to wish all of our UFLAC members a very happy and healthy New Year. And try not to get too stressed out.

There are many stress management strategies that many people find helpful. One of the most popular is exercise. Physical activity helps to reduce stress by stimulating the production of endorphins, the chemicals in the brain that produce a sense of well-being.

Another strategy that can help reduce stress is relaxation techniques. These include deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and meditation. Regular relaxation can help reduce tension and stress.

It’s also important to eat a healthy diet and get adequate sleep. A healthy diet can help your body function properly and reduce stress. Adequate sleep can help your body recover from stress.

Finally, it’s important to take time for yourself. Make sure to schedule time for activities that you enjoy and that help you relax. This could include spending time with family and friends, reading, or engaging in a hobby.

Stress management is an ongoing process. It’s important to continue to work on managing stress on a daily basis.

Your Health... Happy Stressed Out New Year

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Through the Blue Cross CaliforniaCare HMO and Prudent Buyer PPO plans, UFLAC members and their families have access to the finest doctors and two of the most extensive networks in the state. With CaliforniaCare, you can build a relationship with your primary care physician and receive almost all benefits including office visits, hospitalization, surgery, routine physical exams, well baby care and even vision and hearing exams, for little or no out-of-pocket cost. Additionally, Prudent Buyer is the best fee-for-service type health plan available for UFLAC members.

A full physical rescue assignment was dispatched to the 5600 block of Colbath Ave. in Van Nuys. Arriving firefighters reported they had a car in the living room of a single family dwelling. An elderly woman was backing out of her driveway across the street when, according to her, the accelerator stuck and she rocketed backwards across the street and into the house. She was examined by paramedics but not transported.

Photo and information by Mike Meadows
The IAFF represents more than 287,000 full-time professional fire fighters and paramedics who protect 80 percent of the nation's population. More than 3,100 affiliates and their members protect nearly 6,000 communities in every state in the United States and Canada. In addition to city and county fire fighters and emergency medical workers (such as fire fighters, Forest Service fire fighters), federal workers, and others who work in industrial facilities, and fire and emergency medical workers employed at certain industrial facilities.

Her attorney asked Hirsch to rule Godbee's death an accident or homicide due to 9/11 and to add his name to the offi- cial death certificate. Hirsch refused to consider the issue. He wrote: "All persons killed at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, and others who died later from complications of injuries or exposure directly caused by the col- lisions of the World Trade Center on that day are homicide victims. How- ever, P.O. Godbee first arrived at the World Trade Center site on September 11 and was in the area when the towers collapsed. While expressing sympathy, Hirsch also stated that "fatality cases caused by work-related incidents... are classified as natural deaths."

He concluded, "we decline to express a legal opinion about the cause and effect relationship between P.O. Godbee's work at the site of the World Trade Center and the subsequent development of sarcoidosis."

Hirsch didn't respond to written questions or requests to elaborate on standards he has adopted for judging 9/11-related deaths. Which is unfortu- nate because the Godbee letter extends a record of confusing positions by the medical examiner.

It added to the roster of vic- tim's the name of Felicia Dunn-Jones, a lawyer who was caught in the 9/11 dust cloud and died five months later of sarcoidosis - but not until her family's attorney broached a lawsuit. Then he ruled that Zadroga's debilitating lung ill- nesses, which started within weeks of 9/11, were not rele- vant to his assessment.

Godbee's case raises new questions: Will Hirsch accept victims claims by brother of firefighter who arrived on 9/11 after the towers fell and later fell sick with an illness that proved fatal? If so, why would he not accept a firefighter who arrived a day or two later? Also, why does Godbee's case show that none of the Forgotten Victims of 9/11 are worthy of the memorial list?

These are not issues of sci- ence. These are legal and poli- cy matters with profound social implications that should not be decided by medical experts.

That's why we still believe Bloomberg would be wise to seek the counsel of a blue-ribbon panel, which advises Hirsch and other public employees to memorialize the sacrifices of Zadroga, Godbee and others still to come.

* World Trade Center Trade Center on September 13, 2001, and June 2002. Two years later, Godbee was diagnosed with pulmonary sarcoidosis, a lung-scarring disease. He died in December 2004 at age 44, with severe pulmonary disease, Hirsch's office, naming sar- coiosis as the cause of death. Widow Michelle Hackett-God- bee was given a line-of-duty death benefit.

Only claims that have been suc- cessfully paid to those killed in the collapse of the World Trade Center. Currently, says IAFF General President Beddia and Joseph Graffagnino. The Com- mittee could either take up the legislation directly or seek to turn the recently passed legislation moving through the process.

* Legislative Gridlock Complicates Outcome

After the overwhelming 314- 97 vote in the House of Repre- sentatives to adopt the bill, now standing in the way of final passage for the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act is a legislative gridlock that is holding up virtually all substantive pieces of legislation. The Senate and Congress are at loggerheads over every major issue, including the annual appropri- ation bills. Senate and House workers show the current compensation system is not prepared to deal with a large-scale disaster like 9/11.

* UFA/UFDO Hold Press Conference on FDNY Deutsche Bank Fire Cover-Up

The Uniformed Firefighters Association of Greater New York (UFA) and the Uniformed Fire Officers Association (UFDO) held a press conference at the FDNY Deutsche Bank Fire Cover-Up in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, which took place in the lower Manhattan financial district.

* Senate Votes to Strengthen Firefighter Fatality Investigations

The U.S. Senate unanimously- voted to move closer to passage Firefighter Fatality Investi- gation and Prevention Program Act of 2008, which would establish the National Institute for Occupa- tional Safety and Health (NIOSH). The program, creat- ed by the IAFF in conjunction with Senator Bill Clinton, conducts investigations of fire fighter line-of-duty deaths to formulate recommendations for preventing future deaths and injuries. The provision to fund the agency was included in the 9/11 Commission Act.

* Judge Sides With Fire Fighters

Stating reasons of “fundamental fairness,” District Court Judge Gray has ruled in favor of Carlisle fire fighters in their wage dispute with the city of Carlisle. Shuler Gray ruled that the city’s decision to fire a cadre of firefighters is illegal, and that the city must compensate the firefighters for loss of pay.

The city had fired 40 firefighters in February 2007. The firefighters had been fired for failing to report for work on December 27 and 28, 2006, allegedly because of a labor dispute.

* Student Loan Forgiveness for Fire Fighters Approved

The Fire Fighters’ Professional Educational Trust Fund has approved legislation creating a new student loan forgiveness program for full-time professional fire fighters and other public safety employees who have served their communities for at least 10 years. The Col- leges of America will provide Access Act, HR 2669, passed the House 292-97 and the Sen- ate 79-12.

* President Bush signed the bill into law on September 27. The “rising costs of higher education have made it more difficult for many individuals with student loan debt to pur- sue their career goals,” says IAFF General President Helmut Schachtberger. “By making the burden of student loan debt more affordable, this program will not only reward those who commit their lives to serve their communities and protect their neighbors but encourage more young people to do so.”

Under the new program, fire fighters who have made 10 years of payments on eligible federal direct loans while employed in a public service job will be entitled to the can- cellation of some loans’ remain- ing balance and principal. The program is available to fire fighters who were publicly financed student loans. Championed by Chairman Tom Harkin, Senator Richard Durbin, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) in the Sen- ate, HR 2669 also increases the Public Service Student Aid and reduces the national debt by $750 million.
Landmark Firefighters Procedural Bill of Rights Signed by Governor Schwarzenegger

It’s taken two decades and untold buckets of blood, sweat and tears. But come January 1, the Firefighters Procedural Bill of Rights will be the law in California.

With broad support from both political parties and a signature from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Assembly Bill 220 by Assemblywoman Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles) extends to firefighters the same fundamental on-the-job employee protections that now exist for police officers.

“In the public’s mind, public safety professionals are on the same team,” said California Professional Firefighters President Lou Paulson. “We face the same split-second decisions … the same high-stress situations … the same danger to life and limb. In signing this measure, Governor Schwarzenegger is recognizing that all first responders should be on an equal footing when it comes to protecting our due-process rights.”

AB 220 is the culmination of a 20-year crusade by California Professional Firefighters to secure a consistent procedur-
al standard for all first responders – police, firefighters and public agency EMS personnel – when they are the targets of investigation or interrogation by their superiors.

The landmark measure is designed to apply common-sense principles of fairness and professionalism to the process of investigating and disciplining first responders. As with the original Peace Officers Bill of Rights approved in the 1980s, AB 220 puts in place an expectation that was heightened and reinforced by the September 11, 2001 responses of perceived hazardous situations of unknown origin and by the heightened and reinforced by the Septem-ber 11 attacks. And since September 11, 2001 responses

California’s first responders will be better prepared to meet the challenges of domestic ter-
orism thanks to CPF-backed legislation signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The CPF-backed legislation, AB 587, authored by Assem-
bywoman Betty Karnette (D-Long Beach), earmarks $2.5 million for firefighter anti-ter-
orism training – half of the $5 million allocation made out of proceeds from a special 9/11 license plate fund.

The measure was approved by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger on October 10th (Chapter No. 392, Statutes of 2007).

It is incredibly important that California’s firefighters are adequately trained and equipped with the necessary tools to deal with a variety of emergency situations, includ-
ing acts of domestic terrorism.

The need for funding fire service antiterrorism training courses and activities has never been more critical given that firefighters are soldiers of first response in acts of domestic terrorism. The public has come to expect firefighters to act heroically and unselfishly in various emergency situations, an expectation that was height-
ened and reinforced by the Sep-
tember 11 attacks. And since September 11, 2001 responses resources beyond all previous levels.

When firefighters are properly trained, the negative impact of a terrorist threat is signifi-
cantly reduced. To help prepare firefighters for unexpected situations, AB 587 does sev-
eral things. First, it appropriates $2.5 million from the state’s Antiterrorism Fund to the Office of Emergency Services for disbursement to the Califor-
nia Firefighter Joint Appren-
ticeship Program, and appropriates funds from other sources for disbursement to local fire agencies for antiterrorism training courses. It also reimburses local and state fire agencies for antiter-
orism training activities. In this new era we live in, where

California’s firefighters are, and should be, held to the high-
est standards of public serv-
ice,” said Paulson. “We wel-
come these high standards, but they must be applied fairly. This measure establishes that standard of basic fairness, and we are grateful to the governor and the Legislature for their support.”

Firefighter Anti-Terrorism Training

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Orange County Releases Fire Shelter Deployment Report

The Orange County Fire Authority has released a pre-
liminary report on its fire shelter deployment during the recent southern California wild-
fires. Twelve Orange County, CA Local 3631 firefighters were ordered to deploy their shelters while fighting a wild-
land fire near Santiago Canyon and Silverado Canyon when one of two horse teams lost water bearers of ruptured hose lines. The twelve fire fighters remained in communications from their shelters as the Orange County Fire Authority made several high-priority water drops on the approaching fire. Once conditions were cool enough, all 12 fire fighters left their shelters and were evaluat-
ed onsite. None of the fire fighters required medical treat-
ment. “The heroic actions by these fire fighters to save peo-
ple and property under such severe fire conditions are awe-
inspiring,” says Joe Kerr, president of Local 3631. “I am also extremely proud of the quick response by the crews who came in to save them, including the air crew.” Watch a slide show with radio commu-
nications during the incident.

Three young men were critically injured when the car they were in collided head on with a school bus at VineLand and Cohasset St. in North Hollywood. One of the injured had to be cut out of the wreckage and all three were taken to area hospitals. LAPD is investigating. Photo and information by Mike Meadows.

Photo and information by Mike Meadows.
Two CAL FIRE Firefighters Remain Critical as San Diego Community Honors Their Efforts

The community of San Diego is reaching out to support the men and women injured on the front lines while saving lives and battling the devastating wildfire in Southern California.

Four CAL FIRE firefighters, working on Engine 3387 out of the San Marcos Fire Station, were critically injured in the early stages of the fires Sunday when their engine was burned over while rescuing local residents. The four all received burn injuries and were immediately transported to UCSD Medical Center.

Two firefighters remain in critical condition, with second-degree burns to their faces and respiratory systems. They are currently in intensive care under sedation to allow for lung recovery. The other two suffered second-degree burns, but their condition has been upgraded and are doing well in the intermediate care ward of the UCSD Burn Center.

Fund Raising

The San Diego Chargers held a fund raising drive for the crew of Engine 3387 and other victims of the devastating fires at their game with the Houston Texans.

A donation was made on the families’ behalf and special pre-game ceremonies honoring California’s firefighters were held.

The CDF Firefighters 501(c)3 Benevolent Foundation is accepting donations for our members of Engine 3387 who were injured during the Harris Fire burn over while actively engaged in structure protection while performing their firefighting duties. Donations should be sent to:

CDF Firefighters Benevolent Foundation
1731 J Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95811
(916) 609-8700
Tax ID # 20-5686356
Reaching Out To Fellow Firefighters
Cards and greetings for the are welcome and should be addressed to:
UCSD Burn Center
Attention:
CAL FIRE Firefighters
220 West Arbor Dr.
San Diego, CA 92107

Direct line to the CALFire employee and family support office at the UCSD burn center 619-543-6599 Mike Vogt Firefighter and Family Liaison Michael Vogt Battalion Chief Training and Safety Office CAL FIRE - San Diego 619-590-3119 Office 619-590-3106 Fax

WHEREAS, seven counties in the San Diego and Southern California area, covering 515,000 acres, were recently ravaged by a series of the most devastating wildfires in California history, where more than one million people had to be evacuated, hundreds of thousands were displaced for longer periods of time, nearly 2,200 homes were destroyed, and 14 Californians lost their lives; and

WHEREAS, once more firefighting professionals from across the state answered the call and fought tirelessly to bring these devastating fires under control, to save homes and ultimately save lives, despite the adversity of the fierce Santa Ana winds; and

WHEREAS, a total of 108 firefighters suffered injuries as a result of the fires, and many were away from their own families for weeks while battling the fires, and all worked tirelessly under enormous pressure to protect and serve these communities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the California Democratic Party commends the California firefighters and all other emergency crews who battled these devastating wildfires, and is mindful that their lives are on the line each and every day they are on the job; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the California Democratic Party gives thanks to these brave men and women and acknowledges the personal sacrifices they make in serving their communities.

Submitted by: Senator Art Torres (Ret.), Chairman of the California Democratic Party
Adopted by the Executive Board Of the California Democratic Party At Its Executive Board Meeting, Sheraton Hotel, Anaheim, November 18, 2007

Photos by Mike Meadows
Constitution and By-law Ballot Results

The Constitution and By-law ballots were retrieved, validated, and tabulated by the contracted election company on Thursday, November 29, 2007. The ballot results are as follows:

**ARTICLE I. Sec. 3 - Name:** language reconciliation. PASSED

**ARTICLE II. Sec. 1 - Jurisdiction:** Change in definition of qualified members. PASSED

**ARTICLE III. Sec. 4 - Membership:** Addition of “Associate Member” classification. PASSED

**ARTICLE V. Sec. 3 - Officers & Elections:** Elections every year after ‘08 election. FAILED

**ARTICLE V. Sec. 5 - Officers & Elections:** 3 years terms after election. FAILED

**ARTICLE VI. Sec. 1 & 2 - Management of Union Funds:** Expenditures over $5,000 need General Membership approval. PASSED

**ARTICLE IX. Sec. 1 & 2 - Expenditures over $5,000 need General Membership approval. FAILED**

New California Law Affirms Fire Fighters’ Right to Fill the Boot

With the full support of the IAFF and the California Professional Firefighters (CPF), California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed SB 582 - a bill that preserves California firefighters’ right to “fill the boot.”

Last year, the Muscular Dystrophy Association allocated $112 million in funds for the Association of Fire Fighters’ Fill the Boot campaign. SB 582 helped ensure that California firefighters would once again be able to be recognized for their philanthropic efforts.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed SB 582 - a bill that preserves California firefighters’ right to “fill the boot.”

2006-2008 UFLAC Executive Board

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Check UFLAC Website

For latest news, information and possible meeting date changes
www.uflac.org

If You See An Error...
The Los Angeles Firefighter strives to maintain accuracy and fairness in all stories, graphics, photographs and other copy that appears in our union newspaper. It is our practice to correct errors in the issue immediately following their discovery.

If you have a correction or clarification request, please call the UFLAC office at 800-252-8352 or email the editor: jerry@uflac.org

Station Stewards

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Station Stewards Meetings

Time: 7:30 a.m.
Prior to Monthly Membership Meetings

Union Stewards Needed

We are in the process of reorganizing and updating our Union Stewards Program. It is our goal to have a Union Steward at every work location. Current and prospective Stewards are requested to contact UFLAC Secretary David Pimentle at Fire Station 27-C or call the union office at 800-252-8352.

Los Angeles Firefighter

P.O. Box 252-8352
Los Angeles, CA 90026-5798

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE DIRECTOR
Jerry Brakeman, Retired Firefighter/Attendant . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . UFLAC Office

Editor
Jim Perry, Retired Fire Captain II . . . . . . . . . . UFLAC Office

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Check UFLAC Website

For latest news, information and possible meeting dates
www.uflac.org

If You See An Error...
The Los Angeles Firefighter strives to maintain accuracy and fairness in all stories, graphics, photographs and other copy that appears in our union newspaper. It is our practice to correct errors in the issue immediately following their discovery.

If you have a correction or clarification request, please call the UFLAC office at 800-252-8352 or email the editor: jerry@uflac.org
The IRS has published new instructions on how retired fire fighters can take advantage of the Healthcare Enhancement for Retired Public Safety (HELPS) benefit on their 2007 tax returns. Last year, the IAFF won an unprecedented congressional victory in the passage of the HELPS retiree health care benefit, a tax-free distribution of up to $3,000 from retirement plans to help retirees pay for health insurance or long-term care insurance premiums. The IRS instructions for filing 2007 tax returns explains how to take advantage of this valuable benefit. The IRS will allow retired fire fighters to exclude from income distributions made from eligible retirement plans up to $3,000 annually to pay the premiums for accident or health insurance or long-term care insurance. The premiums can be for coverage for the retiree, spouse or dependents. The distribution must be made directly from the retirement plan to the insurance provider. Eligible retirement plans include qualified trusts, section 403(a) plans, section 403(b) annuities and section 457(b) plans.

The IRS requires retirees to report total distributions on Form 1040, line 16a; Form 1040A, line 12a; or Form 1040NR, line 17a. The taxable amount should be reported on Form 1040, line 16b; Form 1040A, line 12b; or Form 1040NR, line 17b. Also, retirees should write “PSO” next to the appropriate line where the taxable amount is reported. For more information go to www.iaff.org

For additional assistance, retirees should contact a tax accountant.

Important Information...

For Retirees Accrued Leave Deferral Option

The City of Los Angeles Deferred Compensation Plan has announced a new benefit available to employees retiring from City service. Individuals receiving payments of residual sick, vacation, and other accrued leave upon retirement will be eligible to make contributions to the City’s Deferred Compensation Plan from those payments, up to the individual’s annual contribution limit for calendar year.

As an example, assume an employee, age 55, is retiring in late December and expecting to receive an accrued leave payment of $25,000 in early January. The annual contribution limit for an individual over age 50 is $20,500. This employee could elect to contribute $20,500 into the Plan from that accrued leave payment. All contributions to the Plan are tax-deferred, so eligible individuals taking advantage of this program could realize significant additional tax deferral benefits.

You will need to work with a local Plan representative to enroll in this program. The local representative will help you determine:

- The approximate amount of accrued leave you will be receiving.
- The date the payment will be received.
- The annual limit applying to you for he calendar year of the deferral, and
- The amount you are them eligible to contribute.

Individuals not currently enrolled in the Deferred Compensation Plan are also eligible for this program, but must enroll in the Plan as part of this process. You should be aware that enrollment in the Plan, or an election to participate in the Accrued Leave Deferral Option, must occur no later than the month prior to the date that you receive your accrued leave payment.

For further information or to enroll, please feel free to stop by the Plan Service Center located at City Hall, 200 N. Spring Street, Room 867, Monday through Friday from 8:30-5:00, or call Natasha Zuvich at (213) 978-1617.