

DISABLED AND RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS®

Official Publication of the Illinois Association of Retired Firefighters



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VOLUME 31



Belleville Firefighters Give Honor To Those Sacrificed on 9-11.

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AFFI President Pat Devaney swearing-in newly elected IARF officers • Photo courtesy of Pekin Retiree Butch Clor

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Official Publication of the Illinois Association of Retired Firefighters

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President's Message

Jim Schrepfer, President I.A.R.F.



Brothers and Sisters,

In 1982, The Illinois Association of Retired Firefighters was formed to assist retired and/or disabled firefighters in their retirement

and currently consists of 25 local clubs. The IARF allows the retiree to maintain contact with friends and co-workers, continue to be informed about problems of retirees, and keep up to date with solutions to financial problems faced by Firefighters.



The local clubs plan activities such as visiting elderly members, and staying engaged in the community. They encourage the disabled and/or retired firefighters

to visit any brother or sister who is hospitalized or is home bound, and to participate in Silent Watch duties for any members who pass.



The Illinois Association of Retired Firefighters began publishing a bi-annual magazine, Disabled and Retired Firefighters, as a

way of informing retirees about other clubs activities in their communities including charity work, public education, visiting the sick and infirmed, and political activities.

Local Clubs have engaged in such activities as working with the AFFI Local

to build a home ramp for disabled MDA spokesperson. The IARF donates to retirees with medical expenses, like the retiree in Elgin, whose wife had a stroke. The IARF also has made an annual donation to Operation Santa, an organization that sends Christmas stockings to deployed heroes.

Our current focus is to encourage our retiree clubs to join with the active fire fighters in their community service activities, such as their "Fill the Boot" Drive for MDA, "Shop with a Fireman" for underprivileged children during the Christmas season, visiting hospital bound children at Christmas, placing flags on graves of brothers who have passed and many other charitable activities. This alliance between the active Fire Fighters and the retirees will be our focus moving forward.



Continued from page 2

Our members have served their communities during their entire careers. They are continuing this effort into retirement. We need your help to continue these efforts, to help IARF protect our retired heroes and support our charities.



The Illinois Association of Retired Firefighters has set up a Facebook page so that you can follow all our activities at Facebook-Illinois Association of Retired Firefighters.

Fraternally in Solidarity,
Jim Schrepfer President IARF

Email: presidentiarf@gmail.com



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Please support them whenever you can!

President Emeritus Rpt.

Bob Sullivan,

President Emeritus I.A.R.F.



Big “hello” to everyone. A lot has happened over the last six months. The election process has ended and there are considerable issues which pertain to our quality of life up for consideration. Social Security has been in the news

for another round of legislation. As well as, public pensions may be targeted for changes to reduce the state budget. Health insurance may still be the big elephant in the room with politicians claiming to make it better.

The media continues to be very controversial. Both active and retired firefighters cannot allow the distractions to keep our guard down. Vigilance must be a priority for the protection of our benefits.

The 2017 IARF Golf Classic will be hosted in Pekin. The Spring meeting will be in Belleville and the July meeting will be back in Peoria. All information for those events will be in this magazine. I look forward to seeing all of you in attendance.

Fraternally, Bob Sullivan

Vice President's Message

George Bode, Vice President I.A.R.F.



I'm going to get up on my soapbox this month, and talk about something that can be the "death knoll" of any club or organization, APATHY. Over the last few years, I have noticed the attendance and involvement in

various clubs and organizations seems to be falling off, ours included. Our president has embarked on a plan of broadening our club scope and reach by trying to involve members from all over the state. We now have quarterly meetings in each of our three districts, with the annual meeting centralized in Peoria. Of course, you already know all this. So why is the attendance not climbing. Don't get me wrong. There is the occasional meeting where we have a "big" turnout, maybe 30 or 35 members. Gentlemen, we have almost 2000 members statewide. If you do the math, that works out to about a 1.5% attendance rate! And that's at a "big" meeting!

I will grant you the facts we have recently been having some different clubs step up and offer to host a quarterly meeting. We have even had some interest in new clubs hosting the annual golf outing. I can understand why a northern member might not want to make the trip to the southern district for a two hour meeting. What I have a hard time with are the members who don't come to the meetings in their own district! Your officers and board

work very hard to promote our club, to make sure we relay important information to the clubs in a timely manner, and try to stay on top of anything affecting our membership. But we need your help. Those who attend our quarterly meetings are also a great source of information and inspiration to us.

Gentlemen, this is your organization. It is a closed club of retired firefighters, active firefighters nearing retirement, and our widows. We fought our entire careers to make things better for those who followed us. Why should we not do the same now? More importantly, those who "follow" us are our wives and children. Don't you want the best for them after you've gone? Your officers and board know this, and are dedicated to making sure they have the best. But we need your help too. Attend meetings as often as you can, get involved with the active locals doing fundraising or community service. Show them, while we might be retired, we are as involved as ever.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and I will see you at the next meeting. Right?

Fraternally Yours,
George Bode

Secretary's Report

Mike Levine, Secretary I.A.R.F.

Secretary's Report:

Preamble to Illinois Constitution

A recent news article recorded the insecurity of pension systems through-out the country. In some cases, retirees have legally had their monthly payout cut by a third of their full benefit. There were several pragmatic reasons given for the grave state of both public and private pension systems. However, the central issue appears to focus on the lack of trust and confidence in administrators to honor their fiduciary responsibilities.

The institutional security of the fire pension system is found in the personal property protections of the Illinois Constitution. However, political maneuvers are being formulated to work around those constitutional provisions. Unscrupulous and corrupt civic leaders are abandoning ethics and morality to remove the personal property protection clause under the state charter.

As modern social systems appear to be breaking-down, anarchy and disorder are emerging as acceptable methods of change. This condition existed once before in Illinois during the 1700's. One of the first acts of the Congress of the United States was to establish the Northwest Ordinance. Under this document, religion, morality, and education would be the requirement for good government. It took nearly one generation before Illinois could be admitted as a state and form its own constitution.

The delegates to the Illinois Constitutional Convention knew that they derived their responsibilities from a much higher power; "an

Almighty God." Their fore-fathers had been oppressed by monarchies and despots. They wanted a document that would protect their property, liberty, and quality-of-life. Thus, the preamble of the Illinois Constitution still remains to this day.

"We, the People of the State of Illinois - grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberty which He has permitted us to enjoy and seeking His blessing upon our endeavors - in order to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the people; maintain a representative and orderly government; eliminate poverty and inequality; assure legal, social, and economic justice; provide opportunity for the fullest development of the individual; insure domestic tranquility; provide for the common defense; and secure the blessings of freedom and liberty to ourselves and our posterity - do ordain and establish this Constitution for the State of Illinois."

It would be a valiant proposal at each membership meeting to drop the moment of silence (a practice of demonic origin) and adopt the tradition of a corporate prayer at each retiree meeting. This invocation could take on the form of the Illinois constitutional preamble. Retirees could also ask the "Authority Having Jurisdiction" – Our Heavenly Father – to be guardian over the continued establishment of the fire pension system in its whole form and maintain the constitutional protections of those personal property clauses that serve to secure the blessings of freedom, liberty, and posterity for Illinois and its fire service.

Remember Belleville on April 22nd; Peoria on July 22th; the Pekin Golf Classic on September 13th, and Evanston on October 28th.

Submitted by Mike Levine, IARF Secretary

Treasurer's Message

Dan Oaks, Treasurer I.A.R.F.



None of us have to struggle alone. The IARF and the AFFI are endorsing The Illinois Fire Fighter Peer Support (ILFFPS) Team. This is a group of teams prepared to offer assistance by

trained individuals of either firefighters or emergency responders who answer the call to their brothers and sisters in need, regardless of the circumstance.

We have all experienced times in our lives that are tough by virtue of what we have encountered as professionals and human beings. Strength is not shouldering another burden; rather, strength is in letting go and asking for help. ILFFPS is made up of fire service members just like you. If you need a peer to talk with and someone who can understand what you are experiencing because they have been there.

There are firefighters and retirees that have been trained to listen and begin the process of healing and restoration. There are also board-certified professionals ready to assist at the next level. This group of physicians and therapists have taken the time to study and research the impact that a firefighting career has on an individual. They are prepared to bring insight and understanding that the average counselor may not be aware of. Please see Jada Hudson's article in this issue.

Fraternally, Dan Oaks



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Trustee's Message

Rocky Fardel, Trustee I.A.R.F.



Hello Retirees and spouses,

As the cold weather is nearing an end, I hope everyone is well. Our last couple quarterly meetings went very well and the host clubs did a very good job with

the arrangements. If you've never attended a meeting you should try and make one, especially when it's in your area. There is always plenty of food and drink. The next meeting is in Belleville and after that the next one is in Peoria. Any club can put in to host a meeting too. We are always looking for clubs to get involved.

The IARF 24th annual golf outing will be in Pekin this year on Sept. 13th. You'll be seeing more information on the details soon. The outing is open to retiree teams and active teams. Be sure to let your active local know about the outing. Our goal is to make this the premier golf outing, for retired and active Firefighters in the state.

Stay Safe and Healthy
Rocky Fardel – Trustee
iaff524@yahoo.com

Trustee's Message

Darrell "Dude" Meisinger,
Trustee I.A.R.F.



This is just a short note. I know the quarterly meetings can be a great distance to travel for some of us, but I would like to encourage as many as possible to make the Belleville and Peoria quarterly meetings. Map, locations, and times

will be in this magazine. The agenda for the Peoria meeting in July will include a very large amount of organizational business for membership approval.

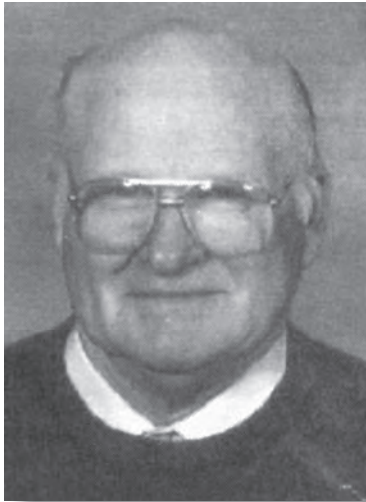
In September, the Annual IARF Golf Classic will be held in Pekin at the Sunset Hills Club course. Pekin's Randy Dixon will be arranging a great day of fellowship, meals, and refreshment. Please give a shout out: "Thanks again Randy."

May you and yours stay safe.

Sincerely,
Darrell "Dude" Meisinger, Trustee
5331 Ill Rt. 29
Green Valley, Ill. 61534
(309) 251-055

Trustee's Message

Wayne Stout, Trustee I.A.R.F.



The State of Illinois still does not have a budget and it is putting a hardship not only on State workers and their families it is forcing many school districts and state funded organizations to look for funding elsewhere. We as

firefighters and retired firefighters have worked long and hard just to retain what we have.

Our legislative team works on our behalf as the pressure continues to grow from all sides. We cannot let up for a minute. We are seeing WI and now IA try to pass a "Right to Work Law, break down unions and the pension system. I say to all our members we must stay strong and keep informed to what is going on around us. I hope you stay informed by the news from TV and your local paper then have a meeting or even a coffee time to exchange different points of views at least once a month.

For if we sit on our hands and let life go by we will not keep the things we worked so hard for. We have seen the fire service go to a two Party pension and some departments allow only two on the pumper. This is just a small part of what changes have been made since 2011, yet some members say "It's not so bad".

We had people go to jail not many years ago to keep and protect conditions to make sure we would not end up like the Coal Miners years ago. I think we need to take a good look at what we are doing to make sure that our pensions and conditions benefits are going to be strong for years to come.

I urge all of you to have your local clubs meet once a month and if you drive call one of your fellow retired firefighters and offer to pick them up. Your participation is important so attend your local meeting and stay an active member. Attending the State quarterly meeting is a GREAT way to keep informed on what our organization is DOING FOR YOU!

Sincerely, Wayne

Trustee's Message

Joe Swierczek, Trustee I.A.R.F.



IARF
Brothers
and Sisters,

I hope that
everyone is
ready for Spring.
I want to extend
an invitation
to all of our
retired members
to attend the

Spring Quarterly Meeting being hosted by Belleville, which I am a proud member of. If you can make the Spring meeting please allow time to visit the Belleville 9-11 Memorial Walkway that was unveiled on September 11th, 2016 and featured in Fall magazine. The Memorial is located on the grounds of the Belleville Fire Administration and Fire Station Four at 1125 S. Illinois Street.

The Fall 2016 meeting was held in Elgin and the Winter 2017 meeting in Bloomington were both well attended. We were blessed with good weather. I must say that the Elgin Fire Barn No. 5 Museum is very impressive! I would encourage all members to visit the museum. I would like to thank both clubs for hosting the meetings.

Please plan on attending the Spring meeting in Belleville on April 22nd and the Summer (picnic) meeting in Peoria on July 22nd. I am looking forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Fraternally,
Joseph A. Swierczek – Trustee

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAPLAIN...Darrell Coons

FROM THE CHAPLAIN...

When I was a young person, growing up in the Church, I didn't give much thought to the Old Testament in our Bible. As is common, I thought there were some good stories there, but not much I could apply in my "modern life." Years later I found there was so much that I had missed.

In seminary, as I prepared for ministry, those Old Testament Books came alive with meaning for me and I learned how much I had been missing. One of the fascinating things I discovered involved the ancient laws of hospitality. Who knew we were to treat the strangers in our midst as honored guests? Who knew that we were to see to any of their needs, regardless of where that might conflict with our own lives? That kind of thinking is certainly contrary to today's norm, isn't it?

Yet, that is what I have found in the IARF! Wherever we go in Illinois, I've felt like we were honored guests. We come into town and you put your lives on hold to see to our needs, not just with coffee and donuts for the Board meeting at 10am, but insuring that everything is taken care of throughout the day. I know it is partly because of the firefighter brotherhood/sisterhood, but it's more than that because you are just good people.

Is it Biblical? Maybe not, but as your Chaplain, I like to think that it is. Thank you all for your good hearts and your hospitality.

And now, it's our turn in Belleville. I know we're way south for most of you, but I hope you'll honor us with your presence on April 22. We want to make you as welcome as you've made us.

And, just in case you have a need as you make your way here or as you leave, keep my phone number with you and give me a call. We'll try to get the help you need.

Welcome, my friends,
Chaplain Darrell Coons
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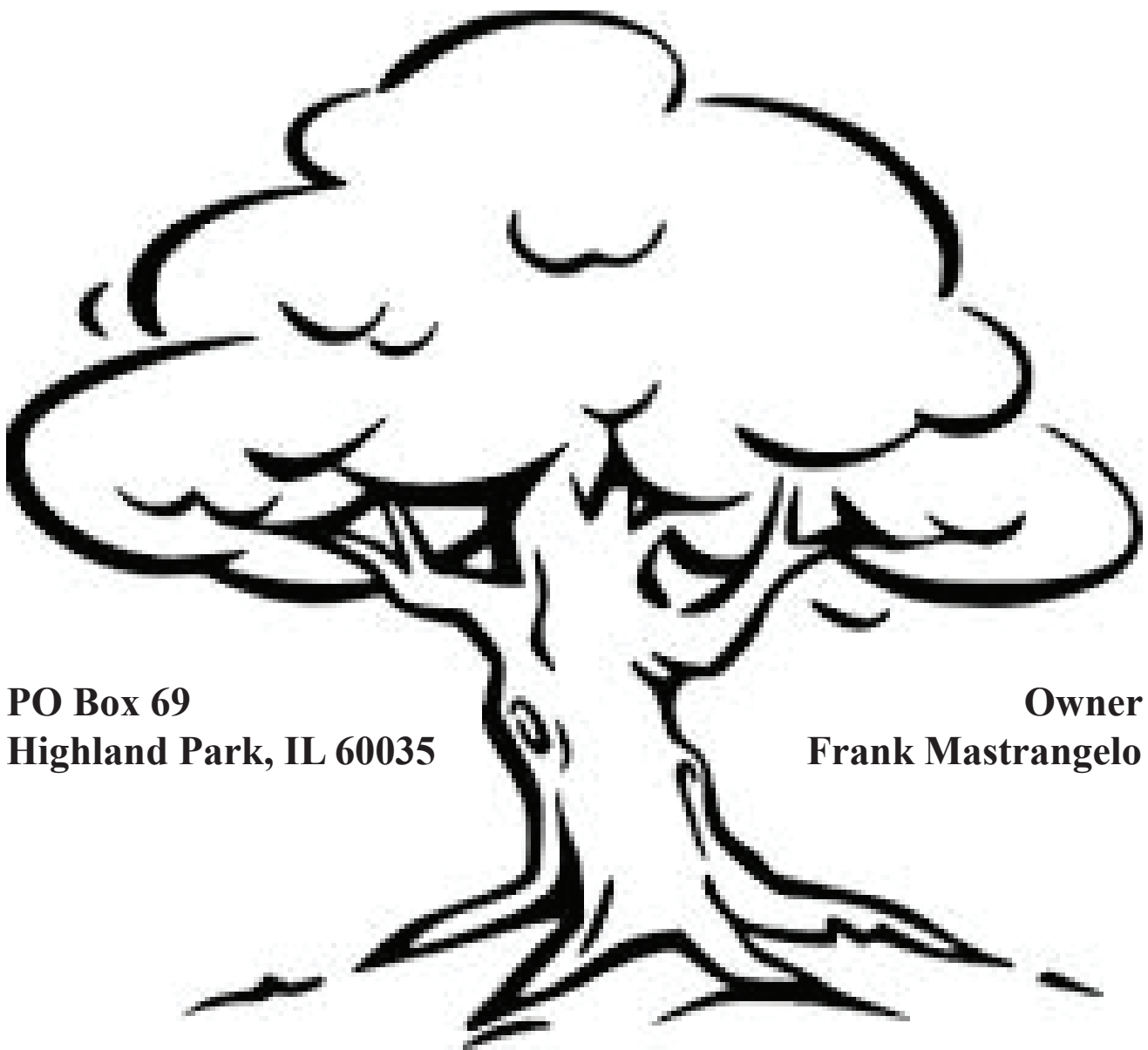
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S & K PANTRY

7142 Canton Farm Road
Plainfield, IL 60580

FARM & FLEET

6674 Logan Avenue
Belvidere, IL 61008

CHECKPOINT AUTO BODY

10129 South Harlem Avenue
Chicago Ridge, IL 60415

HAMADA OF JAPAN

18310 North Creek Drive
Tinley Park, IL 60477

MATTESON FUEL

4750 West Lincoln Highway
Matteson, IL 60443

GO 4 FOOD

212 West 23rd Street
Chicago, IL 60616

POLSON'S
NATURAL FOODS

960 Main Street
Antioch, IL 60002

QUALITY CRAFT
AUTO BODY & SALES

6345 West Ogden Avenue
Berwyn, IL 60402

FARM & FLEET

4567 East Rockton
Roscoe, IL 61072

KELLEY WILLIAMSON
COMPANY

1132 Harrison Avenue
Rockford, IL 61104

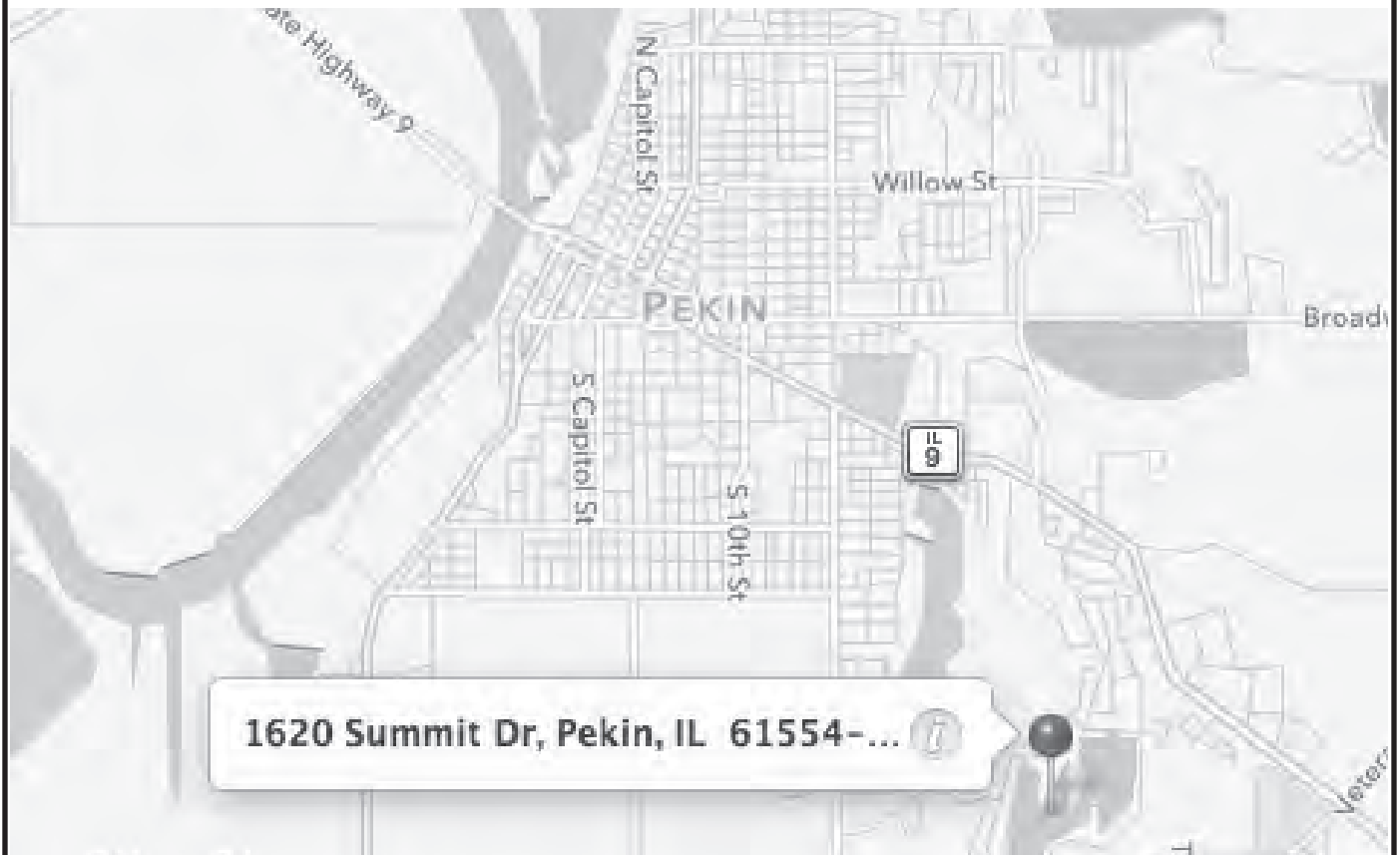
Pekin • IARF Golf Classic

September 13, 2017

Wednesday 8 : 00 A.M.

**Sunset Hills Golf Club
1620 Summit Dr.
Pekin, Illinois 61554**

(309) 347-7553



***Illinois Association of Retired Firefighters
24th Annual "Earl Levine" Memorial
Firefighters Golf Classic***

**Wednesday - September 13, 2017
Sunset Hills Golf Course – 1620 Summit Dr. Pekin, Illinois**

Team Name:

Phone: ()

Name of Team Members:

Address:

City:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

----- cut & return -----

***Price - \$75 per golfer
Includes: 18 Holes of Golf
Shotgun Start @ 8:30 AM
Meal After Round of Golf
Refreshments on Course
Golf Cart
Prizes***

***Make Checks Payable to:
Pekin Retired Firefighters
c/o
Randy Dixon
1829 Highwood
Pekin, IL 61554
(309) 346-0012***

***Format:
Four Man Team Scramble (Active)
Four Man Team Scramble (Retired)
Hole Prizes***

***Dinner For Non-Golfers
\$15
Dinner @ Mashies
(Located at course/clubhouse)
Directions, Accommodations, and Pricing
Available upon request***

***Hosted by:
Pekin Retired Firefighters
For Further Information
Contact Dude Meisinger @ (309) 251-0550
Randy Dixon @ (309) 346-0012***

***Hole Sponsorship's Available
@ \$50 per hole***

1ST FAMILY HOME

HEALTHCARE

666 Russell Court
Woodstock, IL 60095

WALKER AGENCY

1676 Henry Luckow Lane
Belvidere, IL 61008

MOBIL GAS & FOOD

2074 Sibley Boulevard
Calumet City, IL 60409

C & H BUILDERS

1534 Ruby Street
Belvidere, IL 61008

FAIRWAY AUTO SALES

3017 West Lake Street
Melrose Park, IL 60160

J & J'S CREATIVE COLORS

19015 South Jodi Road
Mokena, IL 60448

NEW STAR RESTAURANT

7444 West North Avenue
Elmwood Park, IL 60707

**A-1 AMERICAN JEWELERS
& LOAN**

6151 West North Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302

CURTIS TOWING INC

Illinois

RAMIREZ TRANSMISSION

1004 Claim Street
Aurora, IL 60505

**TUFFY AUTO SERVICE
CENTER**

395 S Randall Road
Elgin, IL 60123

EMANUEL HOME

HEALTH INC

610 Lake Plumleigh Way
Algonquin, IL 60102

HILLSIDE LUMBER INC

4234 Warren Avenue
Hillside, IL 60162

TOTAL ECLYPZE SOUNDZ

1600 South 14th Avenue
Maywood, IL 60153

ADVANCED AUTO TECH INC

BODY WORK

58 West Industrial Road
Addison, IL 60101

COMPLETE HOME

MAINTENANCE

5403 Patton Drive Unit 206
Lisle, IL 60532

CHROMA CORPORATION

3900 West Dayton Street
Mchenry, IL 60050

RICHARDS BUILDING SUPPLY

4001 Industrial Avenue
Rolling Meadows, IL 60067

BARANOWSKI BAKERY

DELI INC

9653 Grand Avenue
Franklin Park, IL 60131

THE ULTIMATE PAINT SHOP

28865 Nagel Court
Lake Bluff, IL 60044

ASIAN NOODLE HOUSE

844 N Roselle Road
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

2016 Membership Meeting Minutes

4th Quarter Membership Meeting – October 22, 2016

Elgin

Officers present: Schrepfer, Oaks, Levine, Stout, Meisinger, Fardel, Swierczek, and Rev. Coons, Bode (on assignment), Sullivan (medical)

President Schrepfer extended introduction for Elgin Retiree Club President Larry Judkins. Larry introduced the officers of the Elgin Fire Barn and Museum, James Carrigan and Dale Betts. James and Dale were given appreciation for getting the Elgin Fire Barn No.5 ready for the IARF quarterly meeting. Larry also introduced the Elgin Fire Dept. Acting Chief Dave Schmitt. Larry reported that Chief Schmitt is soon to be appointed as Elgin's permanent Fire Chief. Also recognized in attendance was Illinois State Representative Anna Moeller, Democrat for the 43rd District. In addition, Richard Dunne, Elgin City Councilman and firefighter retiree was recognized in attendance.

All members were requested to stand for a moment of silence and prayer.

Colors posted by the Chris Clauson of the Elgin Fire Department Honor Guard
All stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag and Nation.

Presentation by the Honorable Anna Moeller, Democrat State Rep. for the 43rd District.

President Schrepfer yielded the floor to the Honorable Anna Moeller for a report on the legislative activity in Springfield. Rep. Moeller thanked the membership for the invitation to speak and shared that she was raised by her firefighter-grandfather in Waukegan, IL. And could relate with many of the concerns of Fire Service families throughout the state.

Representative Moeller discussed the conditions surrounding the budget stalemate between the legislature and Governor Bruce Rauner. Rep. Moeller provided an explanation of the Governor's turn-around agenda that includes pension reform, collective bargaining, term limits, property tax reform, worker's compensation, redistricting reform, and other worker related issues. In addition, there is a consensus that the overall Illinois financial condition needs to be improved and corrections made.

Representative Moeller identified that either serious funding cuts or revenue increases to solve the budget crisis carry severe impacts on certain segments of our communities and are controversial. However, there may be signs of compromise and optimism in future legislative negotiations. Representative Moeller took questions from the floor concerning future pension reform, medical benefits, and other fire service legislative issues. Representative Moeller closed her comments by listing the many strengths of Illinois and the promises to achieve solutions.

Comments by Elgin City Councilman Richard Dunne

City Councilman Dunne commented on the inaccurate actuarial formulas used to define fire pension obligations. Rep. Moeller understood Councilman Dunne's question and offered study into correcting those reports of pension obligations.

President Schrepfer thanked Representative Moeller and Councilman Dunne for their very informative report and conversation, as well as, their support for the Fire Service.

Introduction of Jada Hudson of the Illinois Firefighter Peer Support Group and Doug Eller of New Concepts Financial Group

President Schrepfer acknowledged the improvement in the IARF magazine articles that not only report Association activity but also addressed fire service issues such as financial and emotional support assistance. Jada Hudson of the Illinois Firefighter Peer Support Group was introduced as well as Doug Eller of New Concepts Financial Group. Both Jada and Doug were available for discussion with meeting attendees after the meeting.

By-Law Changes, Quarterly Meeting Schedule, and the IARF Facebook Page

President Schrepfer reminded the membership of the facebook page for the Illinois Retired Firefighter Association. Also Schrepfer brought forward the By-Law changes for review and discussion. The history of the original document along with the 2016 changes was presented. A copy of the revised By-Law was provided to the membership. President Schrepfer reviewed the changes along with the justifications for raising the membership fees.

It was pointed-out that the quarterly meetings will be scheduled for northern Illinois in the fall, with the January and July meetings in Central Illinois, and the Spring meeting in Southern Illinois. Larry Judkins made a motion to schedule the Fall 2017 meeting back in Elgin. That motion was requested to be tabled until a later part of the meeting.

President Schrepfer explained the purpose behind the By-Law change for the staggered officer election process. The intention is to assure organizational continuity and maintain board policy during the transfer of officeholders. Questions from the floor were received for clarification and a consensus from the membership was received.

Treasurer Report and Secretary Minutes of July 23, 2016 Meeting

Treasurer Oaks read and distributed the income/expense report for July/October. An explanation of the Building Fund was provided with the need to redistribute funds from that account due to rising fees and activity costs. An account of the reduction in revenues and increase of costs was partly due to the overall economic condition.

Secretary Levine distributed the July 23, 2016 General minutes from the Peoria meeting for the membership to review and accept. President Schrepfer explained that a copy is in the magazine along with a more detailed copy on each table.

Motion: by Dennis Arens to accept the Treasurer Report and Secretary minutes from the July 23rd meeting without corrections or additions. Seconded by Ron Gammon. Membership voted unanimous in the affirmative.

First Order of Business: AFFI – Labor Orientation Committee

President Schrepfer announced that the AFFI has initiated the Labor Orientation Committee to inform newly hired firefighters of the sacrifices made to provide the many benefits and job standards enjoyed in today's fire service. President Schrepfer was appointed to that committee by AFFI President Devaney and all IARF retirees are encouraged to become involved. The Labor Orientation Committee makes presentations to recruit classes and during local union activities. Many of the IARF members lived through the hard times when the struggle was intense to bring about the professional standards and job benefits many of our recruit may take for granted.

Younger professional firefighters are often overwhelmed to hear that city officials had fire officers thrown in jail, tires slashed, or other forms of harassment just for standing-up for their legal rights. A T-shirt has been designed to tell the story of the animosity handed-down by the political elite on our fire professionals. During the Chicago firefighter strike of 1980 fire political leaders labeled fire officers "Goon". The AFFI is now selling "Goon Shirts" to commemorate the many labor struggles of the Illinois Fire Service.

Second Order of Business: Take Bids Requested for the 2017 Golf Classic

President Schrepfer requested offers from club representatives to host the 2017 Golf Classic.

Motion: Pekin representative and IARF Trustee Darrell Meisinger made a motion to host the Golf Classic on Wednesday September 13, 2017. Motion was second by William Freiburg. With no other offers to host the golf event President Schrepfer requested a vote on the motion. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Third Order of Business: Bids for 2017 and 2018 Fall Quarterly Meetings

President Schrepfer requested offers from club members to host the 2017 Fall Quarterly Meeting.

Motion: Evanston representative Ron Gannon made a bid to host the 2017 Fall Quarterly meeting. Larry Judkins made a motion for Evanston to host the 2017 Fall Quarterly meeting and for Elgin to host the 2018 Fall Quarterly meeting. Motion was seconded by Ron Gannon. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Fourth Order of Business: New Concepts – Doug Eller

President Schrepfer introduced Doug Eller of New Concepts and thanked him for his article in the Disabled and Retired Firefighters magazine along with his support and donation of Black Hawk tickets for the 2016 Golf Classic. Doug introduced legislation and financial planning that can assist firefighters while on the job and later after retirement.

Fifth Order of Business: Computer Purchase to Support Magazine Editor's Office

Treasurer Oaks advised the membership that the Editor's Office has an eight year old computer that is need of replacement along with new software. The estimated price is \$2,500. Secretary Levine offered further explanation and justification to support the purchase.

Motion: President Schrepfer requested a motion to support the \$2,500 computer purchase. Treasurer Oaks made a motion for the purchase with a second from Larry Judkins. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote

Sixth Order of Business: Larry Judkins Introduced Elgin's Oldest and Newest Retirees

Larry Judkins introduced Elgin's oldest retiree, Bob Newby and Elgin's newest retiree, Bob Newby Jr. It was also mentioned that Bob Newby III will continue the tradition as he is on duty today.

Seventh Order of Business:

Fund Raiser for Elgin Retiree and Cancer Victim: Robert F. Smith

Larry Judkins announced a fund-raiser for Robert F. Smith who is battling cancer. While on the job, R. F. Smith is one of only three Elgin firefighters that won the Firefighter Medal of Honor for bringing a fellow firefighter out from a burning building..

Motion: Secretary Levine made a motion for \$100. donation to Robert f. Smith fundraiser. Councilman seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimous.

A Motion by Trustee Stout to adjourn and seconded by Larry Judkins. **Motion passes unanimous.** .

The October 22, 2016 Fall General Membership Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted:

MOVING ?
... please send us your change of address

.....

• New Address: _____

• Name _____

• Address _____

• City / State / Zip _____

.....

Mail this form to • IARF • 23731 N. Algonquin Dr. • Canton, IL 61520

2017

1st Quarter Membership Meeting – January 28, 2017

Bloomington/Normal

Officers present: Schrepfer, Bode, Oaks, Levine, Stout, Meisinger, Fardell, Swierczek, Sullivan (medical), and Coons, (medical)

All members were requested to stand for a moment of silence and recite the pledge of allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Report by Chuck Sullivan, AFFI Central District Legislative Representative:

President Schrepfer introduced Chuck Sullivan, AFFI Central District Legislative Representative. Brother Sullivan informed the membership that the statutory definition of an on-the-job duty injury is being and how that is being explained for the pension boards.

In the area of cities with public safety directors over fire departments, it has been proposed that those public managers have state fire officer certification.

On the matter of the foreign fire tax, there has been an initiative to bring more transparency to the actual administrative cost of those funds under the Illinois Municipal League (IML). The IML may be withholding funds designated to fire department by claiming excessive processing costs.

Chuck reminded everyone that for the last two years Illinois has not adopted a budget due to Governor Rauner's turnaround agenda. The governor seeks local empowerment zones that would promote local right-to-work districts. Also, the governor seeks to consolidate local fire pension boards under IMRF along with malicious pension reforms.

The AFFI has made every attempt to meet with Governor Rauner, but his staff will not acknowledge the AFFI or schedule a conference with the fire service leadership. At this time, there are proposals to break the present retirement benefit into separate tiers with newer firefighters receiving less of a benefit than senior members. Representative Sullivan explained how any proposal to weaken the fire pension would only serve to separate the ranks and bring animosity among the life-saving services.

The governor is using the power of his office to recruit our legislative friends under his administration. Many have been pulled from legislative positions into lucrative government positions. Then Governor Rauner appoints his cronies into the vacated elected offices. The governor's staff is working on an initiative to bring a binding congressional amendment before the general voter that would reduce all pension benefits. This legislative modification would be preceded by a media blitz depicting the gold-lined pension packages of the public sector.

Representative Sullivan took questions from the membership and assured the continued effort of the AFFI to defend retiree benefits.

Secretary's Report:

President Schrepfer requested the reading of the October quarterly minutes from the meeting in Elgin. Secretary Levine distributed written copies to those in attendance. A brief overview of the activity and motions voted on was provided.

A motion was made by Peters to accept the minutes as presented. Second by Feasley. Voice vote of the membership: Unanimous to accept the minutes.

Treasurer's Report:

President Schrepfer requested Treasurer Dan Oaks to report on the state of income, costs, and investments. Treasurer Oaks distributed written copies of the financial report for October - December. A brief overview of the income and expenses was provided. Treasurer Oaks asked if each club would send their dues and membership rosters in by March 1st.

A motion was made by Hockensmith to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Second by Woellens. Voice vote of the membership: Unanimous to accept the Treasurer's report.

First Order of Business: Notification of July Election of Candidates for AFFI Convention.

President Schrepfer announced that the AFFI will hold their Convention in 2018. Because the IARF registered as Local #9999 in 1982, retirees are allowed three delegates and three alternates to attend the convention. The IARF by-laws require those interested in attending the convention as either delegates or alternates to submit a letter of intent for candidacy before the annual meeting in July. An election will be held at the July meeting for the AFFI convention delegates and alternatives. All letters of notification of candidacy should be sent to the IARF Secretary by June 1st, and candidates must be present at the July meeting.

Second Order of Business: Nomination for Location of the January 2018 Quarterly.

President Schrepfer requested a motion from a Central District retirees club to hold the 2018 January Quarterly meeting.

Motion by Sylvester to hold the 2018 Quarterly meeting in Bloomington. Seconded by Fowler. Voice vote of the membership: Unanimous to accept Bloomington as the site of the 2018 IARF Quarterly meeting.

Third Order of Business: Illinois Firefighter Peer Support Group

President Schrepfer notified the membership that many retirees are having certain transitional difficulties after leaving active duty. To remedy this situation, the AFFI has endorsed the work of the Illinois Firefighter Peer Support Group (IFFPS). The IARF will inform members of the activities and services of IFFPS in the magazine. All retirees are encouraged to become familiar with this organization and encourage one another to seek their services as needed.

Fourth Order of Business: New Concepts

President Schrepfer notified retirees that Doug Aller of New Concepts is available to assist individuals, friends, and/or family members seeking investment or financial help. New Concepts has been one of the sponsors of the IARF annual golf event and will extend reduced costs to firefighters seeking financial service.

Fifth Order of Business: IARF 2017 Annual Golf Event in Pekin

President Schrepfer introduced Rocky Fardell. Trustee Fardell announced that on Wednesday September 13, the Pekin Retirees will host the 2017 IARF Golf Classic at Sunset Hills. Sign-up information will be in the Spring magazine and anyone interested may call rocky or Trustee Meisinger. The phone numbers will be in the magazine. There will be trophies and prizes.

Sixth Order of Business: Northside Fire Protection District

President Schrepfer informed the membership of municipalities that were given notice by the Illinois Department of Insurance of unfunded pensions. North Riverside in Cook County was one district that informed their firefighters in 2014 that the fire district would re-organize as a private contractor rather than pay into the pension. A private ambulance company offered to replace the fire department with a private contract service. The North Riverside firefighters are a small IAFF local union and filed suit to stop the contract service take-over. Their legal fees have raised to a very high level in this fight to keep their jobs and benefits. The International and the AFFI has assisted North Riverside in supporting their legal costs. The IARF board has donated their travel per diem of \$800. for the North Riverside legal defense fund and will provide a collection basket for the membership to add to that donation.

President Schrepfer reminded the membership that a similar threat exists in most areas of the state and could be acted on similar to North Riverside if those firefighters fail to win their case. All union fire service families should be informed and prepared to support the North Riverside cause. The North Riverside case may reach the Illinois Supreme Court and will require the full assistance of all Illinois firefighters.

Seventh Order of Business: The Second Quarterly Meeting in Belleville (April)

President Schrepfer reminded the membership of the second quarterly meeting to be held in Belleville on April 22.

Eighth Order of Business: The AFFI Legislative Conference

President Schrepfer announced that the executive board will be attending the AFFI Legislative Conference in March. Each conference the IARF has donated \$1000. to the association's PAC fund. The membership is invited to attend the AFFI "Lobby Day" on March 22nd. President Schrepfer requested a motion to concur with the board's approval to donate \$1000. To the AFFI PAC fund.

Motion by Feasley to donate \$1000. to the AFFI PAC fund. Seconded by Peters. Voice vote of the membership: Unanimous to donate \$1000. to the AFFI PAC fund

Motion to Adjourn.

President Schrepfer requested a motion to adjourn.

A Motion by Trustee Meisinger to adjourn and seconded by Tom Jackson. **Motion passes unanimous by voice vote.**

The January 2017 General Membership Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted:

Mike Levine, IARF Secretary

NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATED FIRE FIGHTERS OF ILLINOIS

NORTH RIVERSIDE — The mayor of a small suburban community west of Chicago thinks the village was unfairly “singled out” for underfunding police and fire pensions in the years during the recession when revenue was low.

An appeals court ruling in December determined that the village of North Riverside doesn’t have an adequate reason for shorting the pension fund for several years prior to 2013 – an issue that started in an administrative hearing and wound its way through the courts for more than two years.

North Riverside officials argued that the impact of the recession prevented it from fully contributing to the pension fund – an excuse the village hoped would lead the state to forgive lapses. Fully funding the pensions, which amounts to approximately \$2.2 million each year, could mean cutting services if the economy takes a dive again, Mayor Hubert Hermanek told the Cook County Record. Though the choice all those years ago wasn’t made by him, he said it came down to a tough call between funding the pensions and maintaining services.

“It appears that North Riverside was singled out, because just about every community underfunds or doesn’t fund their pensions,” he said. “I wish the state, the county and the courts would realize it’s not something we willfully do. There’s only so much money that can go toward paying the bills. If we fully fund the pension, that leads to a decrease in services and layoffs. It’s very difficult to

make that decision to fund the pension when the residents are going to suffer.”

During the administrative hearing, the state ruled against the village and ordered it to pay into the pensions. North Riverside fought the decision in appeals to the Cook County Circuit Court and to the Illinois First District Appellate Court. In the Dec. 19 appeals court ruling, a three-judge panel sided with the Illinois Department of Insurance and its Public Pension Division. The decision, written by Justice John Simon, found that the village had opportunities to raise additional revenue or to reallocate the money it had to pay into the pension fund.

“There was evidence that the Village spent its money on discretionary endeavors it prioritized more than contributing to the police and firefighter pensions,” Simon said. “That is a violation of the Pension Code. The Village had simply made choices to allocate funds elsewhere.”

Hermanek said North Riverside owes a \$2,000 fine for not paying the full \$35 million it owes to the pension fund. During the last three years or so, the village has fully funded the pension. But costs increased by \$400,000 this year because the state of Illinois recently increased the expected lifespan of workers receiving pensions. Additionally, the village has to make up for investment losses the fund sustains.

Being a non-home rule municipality, North Riverside doesn’t have the same option as

other communities to raise property taxes to cover its pension obligations. Instead, those payments come out of the general fund – revenue that comes from retail sales taxes. Hermanek has sought alternatives that would eventually eliminate some of the village’s pension obligations, including privatizing the firefighting force. But a lawsuit pending in the courts will determine whether he can legally terminate the union’s contract. Under the arrangement he wants, retirement payouts for the fire department would roll into a 401(k) retirement plan, rather than a pension system. Currently, North Riverside employs 16 firefighters, Hermanek said. And many more retired workers are receiving pensions.

While the economy that supports the 6,700-resident village has been strong enough to fully fund pensions in recent years, Hermanek will keep pushing for solutions to rein in “out-of-control” obligations.

“It’s just unsustainable,” he said.

2017 Quarterly Membership Meetings

Belleville

Saturday, April 22

.....

2017 Quarterly Membership Meetings

Peoria

Saturday, July 22

.....

2017 Quarterly Membership Meetings

Evanston

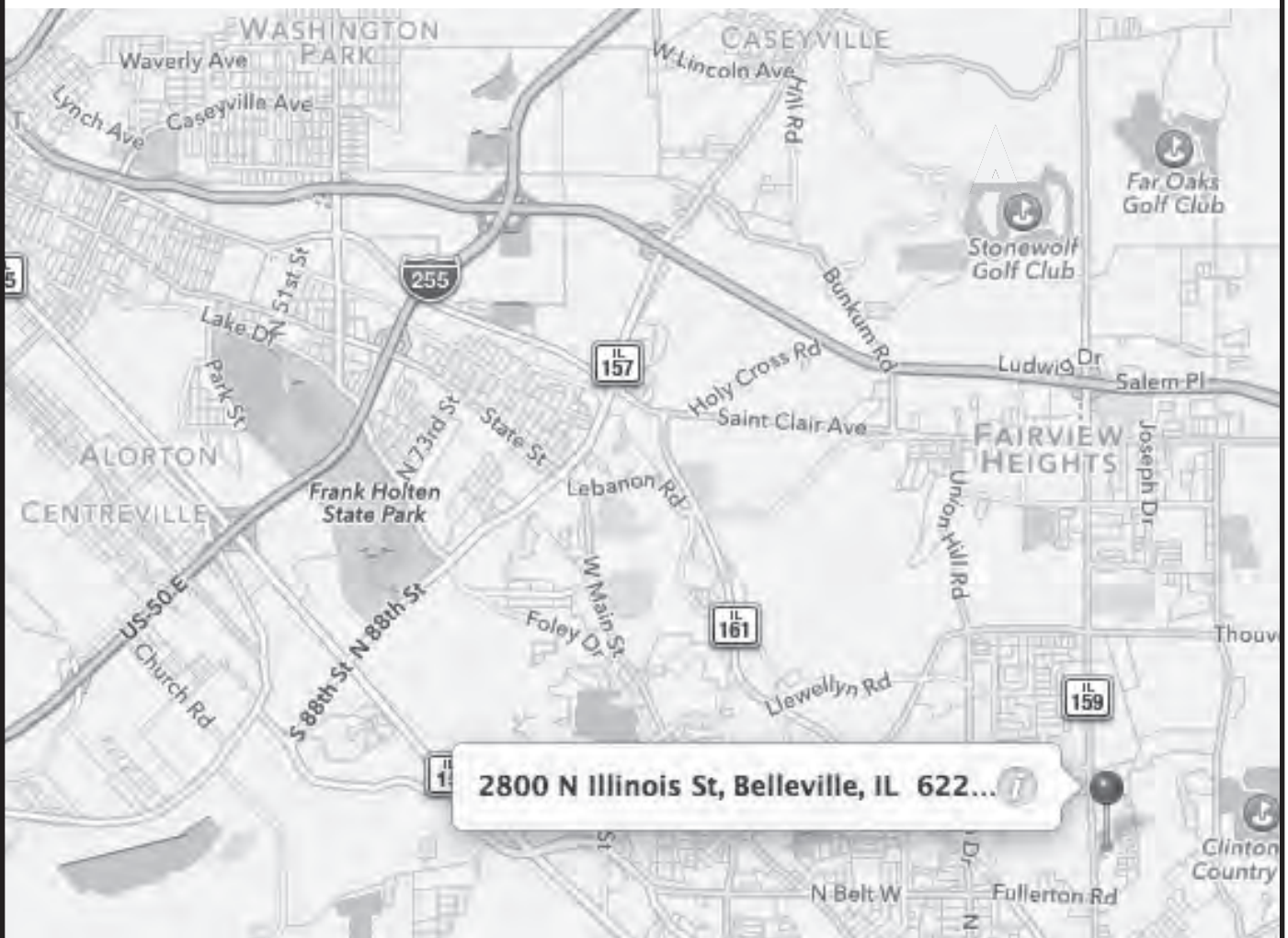
Saturday, October 28

I.A.R.F. 2nd Quarter Meeting for 2017

Saturday - April 22, 2017

C.K. & L Country Club
2800 N. Illinois St.
Belleville/Swansea,
Illinois 62222
618-235-2420

Meeting Times:
Board 10:AM
General Members
12 : Noon



Peoria • Annual • Indoor Family Picnic and Quarterly Meeting

July 22, 2017

Saturday 12:00
noon

Ito Hall • 4909 Farmington Road
Peoria, Illinois

(309) 676-9725



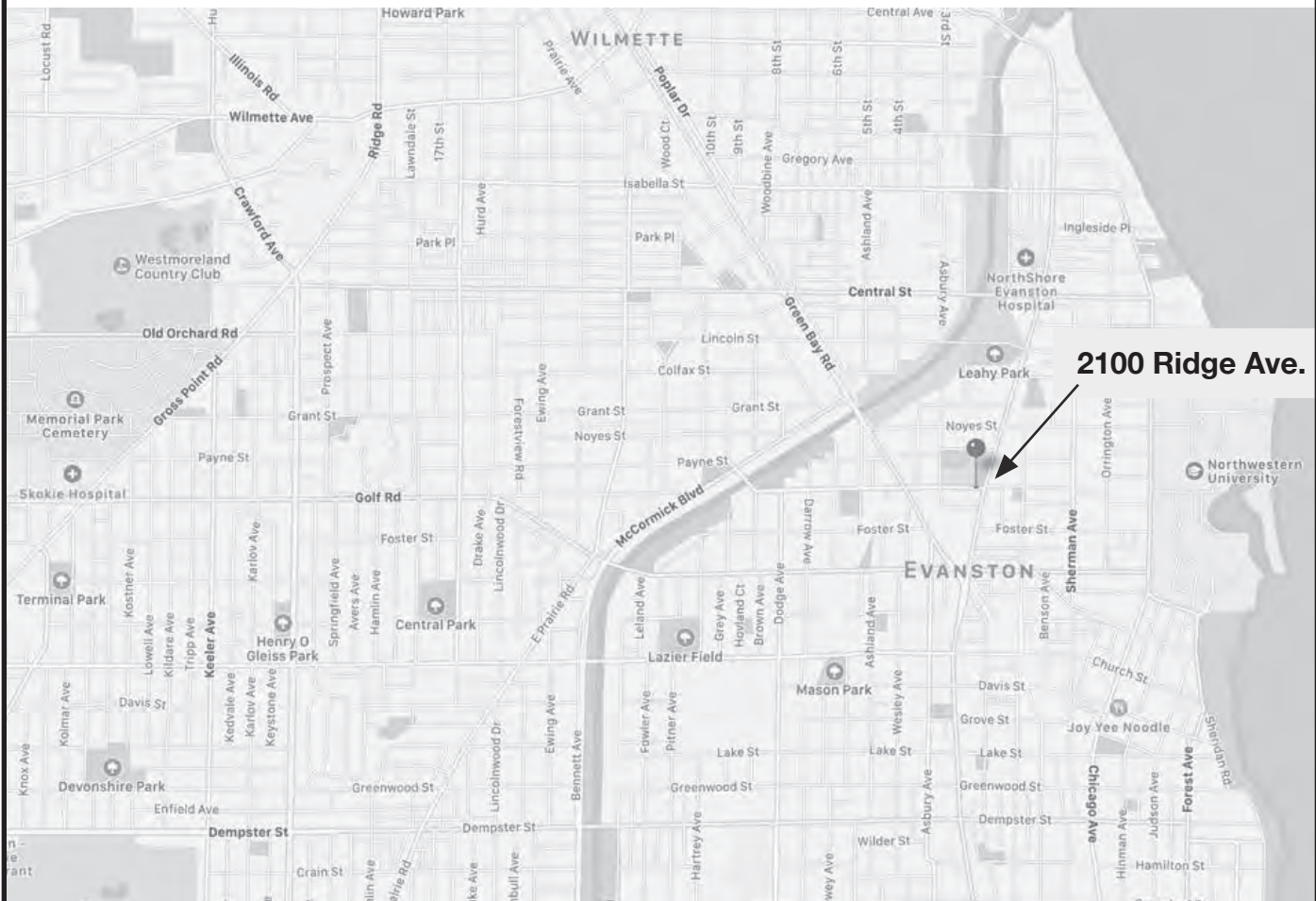
Evanston Quarterly Meeting

October 28, 2017

**Saturday 12:00
noon**

Evanston City Hall 2100 Ridge Avenue
(Fourth floor - Parasol Room - Elevator Access)
Evanston, Illinois 60201

Details: Ron Gannon
847-966-7665



Fran Gambro Legislative Conference

On March 21 thru 23, President Schrepfer, Vice President Bode, Secretary Levine, Treasurer Oaks, and Trustee Fardell attended the 17th Annual Fran Gambro Legislative Conference in Springfield. During the conference, several of the approximately 6000 bills presented to the Legislature each year were discussed. Some are being supported by AFFI, and some are being opposed. The following is a brief report on each of the bills discussed.

Bills being supported by AFFI:

HB 618 with Amendment 1 - Article 3 Police to Article 4 Fire: Pension Transfer

This bill would allow a police officer transferring to the fire department of the same municipality, to transfer up to six (6) years of creditable service contributions from the police pension fund to the fire pension fund.

HB 628 – Foreign Fire Insurance Administration Fees

This bill limits the amount of administrative fees charged to administer the collection and distribution of foreign fire insurance fees to a maximum of 1% of the gross amount collected on behalf of local units of government in Illinois.

HB 3379 – Fire Department Logo: Vehicles and Uniforms

This bill requires private non-government agencies providing fire protection to the public to display its logo on all vehicles and uniforms with the term SERVICE PROVIDED BY: (Name of Company) as well as other minimum requirements if the local unit of government logo is displayed. (Applies to engines and trucks, but not ambulances.)

SB 1304 with Senate Amendment 1 – Fire Chief Minimum Qualifications

This bill sets forth minimum requirements in order to be appointed to the position of fire chief or the department head of a fire department. The requirements include:

- Office of the State Fire Marshal Basic Certification (formerly Firefighter II)
- Office of the State Fire Marshal Fire Officer I and II
- Associates degree in Fire Science or a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited university or college.
- OR
- A minimum of 10 years of experience as a firefighter at the fire department in the jurisdiction making the appointment.

SB 1335 with Committee Amendment 1 – Fire Fighter Pension Code: Secondary Employment Contributions

This bill requires the secondary employer to contribute towards the cost of benefits provided by the Article 4 pension fund in the primary employer's jurisdiction. (Fire Departments only.)

HB688 – Chicago Pension: Article 4 to Article 6

This bill authorizes a firefighter to transfer up to ten (10) years of creditable service in a downstate firefighter pension fund, if unreimbursed, to the Fireman's Annuity and Benefit Fund of Chicago upon payment of a specified amount.

HB 622 –Illinois Public Labor Relations Act: Stay on Appeal

This bill amends the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act (IPRLA) at it relates to a stay of a Board Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) order, clarifying the intent of the existing statute by requiring either party to file a successful motion in the appellate court to obtain a stay of a Board ULP order.

SB 630 – Article 4 Pension: Act of Duty

This bill amends the Downstate Firefighter Article (Article 4) of the Illinois Pension Code with respect to the term "act of duty", to include any term or condition of employment assigned to any firefighter by his or her employing entity, including direct orders, standing orders, or standard operating procedures.



*Representing thousands of retired firefighters in Springfield
IARF Officers attending Legislative Day at the Capital.*



President Schrepfer hands check to AFFI President Devaney for the AFFI PAC fund.

Fran Gambro Legislative Conference cont.

Bills being OPPOSED by AFFI:

HB 438 – Local Government Bankruptcy

This bill creates the Local Government Bankruptcy Neutral Evaluation Act, to allow a local entity to begin the evaluation process to declare bankruptcy, to void contracts and commitments, and to exempt the findings of the evaluation from disclosure.

HB 448 – Labor Relations – Financial Ability

This bill amends the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act to provide that if a unit of local government, as an employer, and public employees provide for arbitration of impasses, the employer's financial ability to fund the proposals based on existing available resources shall be given primary consideration, provided that such ability is not predicated on an assumption that lines of credit or reserve funds are available or that the employer may or will receive or develop new sources of revenue or increase existing sources of revenue.

HB 3069 – Pension Code – Local Control of Benefits

This bill authorizes units of local government to provide alternative retirement plans in lieu of or in addition to the existing plan under the applicable Article. This may include a defined-benefit component, a defined contribution component, or both, and may include disability or survivor benefits and any other benefits that are permitted under federal law.

HB 3526 – Worker's Compensation Reduction: Including the Removal of Firefighter Presumptive Disability

This bill removes all firefighter presumptive disability language from the Worker Compensation Act.

HB 3638 – Firefighter Staffing and Catastrophic Injury

In addition to removing manning/staffing from mandatory subjects of bargaining, this bill also seeks to redefine catastrophic injury within the Public Safety Employee Benefit Act (PSEBA), as well as changing the definition of catastrophic injury so that essentially no firefighter would ever again qualify for this benefit.

HB 3675 – Local Government – Mandates

This bill would prohibit public employees and labor organizations from collectively bargaining on certain specified matters, and provides that governing authorities of counties, municipalities, and units of local government, including school districts, may by ordinance or resolution prohibit those activities from collective bargaining.

HB 3765 – Labor Relations – Dues Collection

This bill provides that certain provisions concerning the collection of dues under collective bargaining agreements apply only to collective bargaining agreements entered into before the effective date of this amendatory Act. Collective bargaining agreements entered into, modified, extended, or amended on and after the effective date of the amendatory Act, employers shall not enter into collective bargaining agreements that provide for the payroll deduction of labor organization dues, fair share payments, initiation fees, and assessments.

SB 1305 – Public Labor – Arbitration

This bill requires the arbitration panel to fully consider the statutory factors upon which it must base its findings, opinions, and orders during the dispute of a new or amended security labor agreements wage rates or other employment conditions. (Governments ability to meets costs)

SB 1862 – Local Governments – Mandates

This bill provides that the corporate authorities of a municipality may, by ordinance with a three-fifths vote, exempt the municipality from one unfunded mandate per year if it determines that compliance with the unfunded mandate creates an undue burden on the municipality.

If you have questions concerning any of these bills, please contact one of the members who attended this conference, or the AFFI Legislative Team for a more complete explanation.

J & E DUFF INC

PO Box 368

West Chicago, IL 60186

BODE PRESCHOOL & CHILDCARE CENTER

946 Bode Road

Schaumburg, IL 60194

ACTION AUTOMATION

5160 West 125th Place ♦ Alsip, IL 60803

DEPRESE SALON

4209 Lincoln Avenue ♦ Matteson, IL 60443

RT. 59 PHILLIPS 66

1307 S Neltnor Boulevard ♦ W Chicago, IL 60185

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7777 West 96th Place ♦ Hickory Hills, IL 60457

KVH INDUSTRIES INC.

8412 West 185th Street ♦ Tinley Park, IL 60487

STRO CORPORATION

9923 Ridgeland Ave ♦ Chicago Ridge, IL 60415

TKL AUTO REPAIR

9004 South Oketo ♦ Bridgeview, IL 60455

WATER OF LIFE MINISTRIES

2420 New Milford Church Rd ♦ Rockford, IL 61109

JKC TRUCKING INC.

5450 South Center Avenue ♦ Summit, IL 60501

PEPE'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT

8128 West 95th Street ♦ Hickory Hills, IL 60457

WALTERS DISTRIBUTING CO.

1625 Dundee Avenue ♦ Elgin, IL 60120

LOMBARD MOBIL

5 East North Avenue ♦ Lombard, IL 60148

AMBROSE BUILDERS

5924 Springside Ave ♦ Downers Grove, IL 60516

SMOKE VILLA

707 North Addison Road ♦ Villa Park, IL 60181

NIC & DINO'S BAR

1147 West Armitage ♦ Chicago, IL 60614

QUICK GAS & MINI MART

15355 Dixie Highway ♦ Harvey, IL 60426

S & M CAR WASH

4 West Irving Park Road ♦ Bensenville, IL 60106

BABYLON TECHNOLOGY

930 Curtis Street ♦ Downers Grove, IL 60515

DOWNERS GROVE TOTAL HEALTH

3000 Wood Creek Dr ♦ Downers Grove, IL 60515

GJC LEGACY & ASSOC.

15030 South Ravine ♦ Orland Park, IL 60462

CELINA'S FRESH MARKET

14164 McCarthy Road ♦ Lemont, IL 60439

DUNHAM GRAPHICS

5007 Chase ♦ Downers Grove, IL 60515

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5010 Fairview ♦ Downers Grove, IL 60515

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3600 Sauk Trail ♦ Richton Park, IL 60471

MILL GAS STATION

539 Army Trail Road ♦ Addison, IL 60101

MARQUETTE MOBIL STATION

7200 South Western Avenue ♦ Chicago, IL 60636

CROSSROADS AUTO SPA

24037 West 135th Street ♦ Plainfield, IL 60544

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10600 South Cicero ♦ Oak Lawn, IL 60453

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26100 Whiting Way ♦ Monee, IL 60449

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9220 S Roberts Road ♦ Hickory Hills, IL 60457

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8729 West 95th Street ♦ Hickory Hills, IL 60457

AL-HIJRAH GROCERS

2043 Bloomingdale ♦ Glendale Heights, IL 60139

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2583 North Clark Street ♦ Chicago, IL 60614

**SUBURBAN DOOR CHECK
& LOCK SERVICE**

415 West Ogden ♦ Westmont, IL 60559

ESQUIRE BARBER SHOP

1511 West Foster Avenue ♦ Chicago, IL 60640

ALTON

Alton Retired Firefighters Club

President

Richard Siemer
(618) 372-3786

980 West County Line Road
Brighton, IL 62012

Secretary/Treasurer

Mike Harvey
(618) 208-7143
(618) 593-6904

3516 Castelli Dr.
Alton, IL 62002
mharvey54@yahoo.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday in January, May, and September at the Alton Motorboat Club.

AURORA

Aurora Retired Firefighters Club

President

Hal Carlson
(630) 675-3267
2930 Clara Ave.
Aurora, IL 60502
halcarlson2930@gmail.com

Secretary

Mike Zelensek
(630) 859-8710
233 S. Commonwealth Ave.
Aurora, IL 60506
amfires@aol.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meets on the first Monday of February, April, June, August, October, and December at the Aurora Regional Fire Museum, 53 N. Broadway, Aurora, Illinois 60505.

Picnic is in August or September and a Holiday Dinner in December. Call secretary for times.

BELLEVILLE

Belleville Retired Firefighter Club

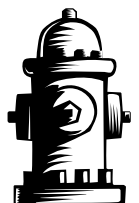
President

Walter Witkus
(618) 398-8513
416 Country Club Acres.
Belleville, IL 62223

Secretary

Ronald Volkman
(618) 233-7478
222 Summers Trace
Belleville, IL 62220
rcvolkman73@charter.net

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meetings are on the second Wednesday of February, May, August, and November at Belleville Exchange Club, 404 Sycamore, at 7:00 p.m. The Club invites every retiree in the area to attend.



BLOOMINGTON

Bloomington/Normal Retired Firefighters Club

President

Ron Fowler

(309) 829-2785

7 Nicole Ct.

Bloomington, IL 61701

captfowler30@aol.com

Secretary

Ken Sylvester

(309) 452-8678

1708 Fairfield Dr.

Normal, IL 61701

captly00@aol.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the 1st Wednesday of January, March, May, July, September and November. The meetings are held at the Union Club House at 1750 General Electric Road in Bloomington.

DANVILLE

Danville Retired Firefighters Club

President

Don Wolfe

(217) 442-4796

1903 Edison

Danville, IL 61832

fireone.1@comcastnet

Secretary

William Thoma

(217) 427-5427

13033 E. Lyons Rd.

Catlin, IL 61817

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club holds Breakfast at "Get Togethers" every other month beginning in February. The Club also has an annual breakfast for retirees, wives and widows that is prepared by active fire fighters Local 429.

DECATUR

Decatur Retired Firefighters Club

President

Steve Bingamon

(217) 433-2609

1610 E. North Port Rd.

Decatur, IL 62526

rocky752@sbcglobal.net

Secretary

Dale Penn

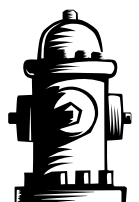
(217) 433-237

3015 Lake Bluff Dr.

Decatur, IL 62521

dalewpenn@gmail.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month (no exceptions) at 11:00 a.m. at Diamond's Restaurant, located at Pershing and Oakland streets.



EAST MOLINE

East Moline Retired Firefighters Club

President

John Long
(309) 496-9006
1121 3rd St.
Rapid City, IL 61275
jrak4long@aol.com

Secretary

Jeff Freiburg
(309) 755-9532
432 35th Ave.
East Moline, IL 61244
j.freiburg@mchsi.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meets twice a year at station No. 2 spring and fall. The Breakfast is also twice a year.

Members participate in a Memorial Day event by placing markers on deceased firefighters graves in honor of their profession.

ELGIN

Elgin Retired Firefighters Club

President

Larry L. Judkins
(847) 695-0523
901 Mohawk Ct.
Elgin, IL 60120
fyfytr6999@yahoo.com

Secretary

William Freiberg
(847) 695-6795
300 N. Aldine
Elgin, IL 60123

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meets at the American Legion Hall, 820 N. Liberty, on the first Wednesday of every month. Time: 11:30 - 1:00 p.m. Eat lunch - Tell stories - Update issues relevant to retirees - Pension - etc.

EVANSTON

Evanston Retired Firefighters Club

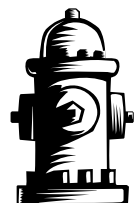
President

Bob Nelson
(847) 814-2102
1748 Kelley Lane
Pingree Grove, IL 60140
ninabob354@yahoo.com

Secretary

Ronn Gannon
(847) 966-7665
8412 McVicker Ave.
Morton Grove, IL 60053
ronnfgannon@comcast.net

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meets twice a year (tba), once in the spring and once in the late fall.



GALESBURG

Galesburg Retired Firefighters Club

President

Mike Whitson

(309) 337-1959

1163 Greenleaf St.

Galesburg, IL 61401

firewhitty@gmail.com

Secretary

Lynn A. Nelson

(309) 343-4853

492 S. Soangetaha Rd., Apt. #2

Galesburg, IL 61401

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meetings are the first Tuesday of February, April, June, August, October and December.

JACKSONVILLE

Jacksonville Retired Firefighters Club

President

Scott Jess

(217) 371-1336

2360 Mound Ave.

Jacksonville, IL 62650

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES This Club meets at the Ponderosa Steak House, West Morton Avenue, on the second Wednesday of January, March, June, September and December at 7:00 p.m.

The Club celebrates Illinois Firefighters Memorial Day and has wiener roast in September and a Christmas dinner in December. These are member and family affairs.

JOLIET AREA

Joliet Area Association Retired Firefighters

President

Mike Bessette

(815) 439-1865

4711 Galway Rd.

Joliet, IL 60431-8674

mjb53@comcast.net

Secretary

David Apgar

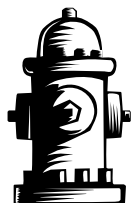
(815) 729-3382

250 Lake Lawn Ct.

Joliet, IL 60534-6874

d_apgar@comcast.net

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES Meetings are on the second Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. in January, April, July and October.



KANKAKEE

Kankakee Retired Firefighters Club

President

Gary Regas

1374 N. Tower Road
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 351-8567

Secretary

Phil Hodak

905 S. Evergreen Ave.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 937-5998
hodak4@ameritech.net

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES Club's membership includes over 40 retirees. Meetings held at the Rich Lambert Memorial Union Hall #653, 120 E. Hickory St., on the second Wednesday each month at 6:30 p.m.

MOLINE

Moline Retired Firefighters

President

Ron Miller

2812 32nd Ave. Dr.
Moline, IL 61265
(563) 449-4757
molinefirelt@hotmail.com

Secretary

Bob Boden

3135 45th Street
Moline, IL 61265

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES This Club will meet at the VFW on 7th Street in Moline at 6:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the even months. Memorial markers are placed on the graves of our deceased each Memorial Day, and a Memorial Service is held at the Central Fire Station each year with an Honor Guard and Pipers. August meeting is a potluck with the wives.

MOUNT VERNON

Mt. Vernon Retired Firefighters Club

President

Larry Myers

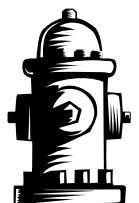
17676 N. Illinois Highway
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
(618) 315-4398

Secretary

Richard Page

1703 Pace Ave.
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
(618) 242-0774
chaos1950@charter.net

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month starting in August. Social time is followed by a meal and business meeting.



(FORMERLY WAUKEGAN) NORTHEAST

Northeast Illinois Retired Firefighters Club

(Formerly Waukegan / North Chicago Retired Firefighters Club)

President

John Bruno

(847) 800-1968

6138 Crossland Blvd.

Gurnee, IL 60031

jtbruno18@gmail.com

Secretary

Jim McGrain

(847) 244-1931

2913 Brookside Ave.

Waukegan, IL 60085

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meetings are held on the second Tuesday of March, May, September and November at 2:00 p.m. at Bertrand's Bowling Alley on Washington St. in Waukegan. This Club supports the programs of the WFD and Local #473.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Northern Illinois Retired Firefighters Association

President

Ed Whittington

(815) 332-4375

4639 Lindbloom Lane

Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Secretary

Ronald E. Seeley

(815) 623-6980

11591 Wild Deer Trail

Roscoe, IL 61073

rockfordretiredfirefighters@gmail.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES This Club meets in January, March, May, July, September and November at the Lithuanian Social Club in Rockford. Meeting consists of social hour, dinner and business conference.

OTTAWA

Ottawa Retired Firefighters Club

President

Robert Pillion

(815) 434-5559

321 Nebraska St.

Ottawa, IL 61350

bgpill@ivney.com

Secretary

Tom Ganiere

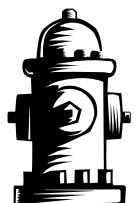
(815) 252-7886

323 Taylor St.

Ottawa, IL 61360

tomgan@aol.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meetings are on the last Thursday of the odd number months.



PEKIN

Pekin Retired Firefighters Club

President

Tim Zimmerman

(309) 346-6082

(309) 251-5396

2205 Scenic View Ct.

Pekin, IL 61554

captz.28.zimmerman@gmail.com

Secretary

Steve Shutts

(309) 696-8134

PO Box 275

Pekin, IL 61555

pknfr@grics.net

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Pekin Club will have their meetings in February, April, June, August, October, and December on the second Tuesday at the American Legion Hall, 718 Court St. gathering at 6:00 p.m. with a 7:00 p.m. meeting start.

PEORIA

Peoria Retired Firefighters Club

President

Mike Doyle

(309) 693-7814

3700 War Memorial Dr.

Peoria, IL 61615

Co-Chair

Dave Klasing

(309) 370-0613

4724 S. Hanna City Road

Hanna City, IL 61536

Secretary

Dan McGann

dmcgann33@gmail.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club meets on the last Monday of each month at the Amvets Post, 237 NE Monroe at 7:30 p.m.

QUINCY

Quincy Retired Firefighters

President

Ronald W. Hinkamper

(217) 223-4159

2625 Woodale Ct.

Quincy, IL 62301

Secretary

Gerald Gengenbacher

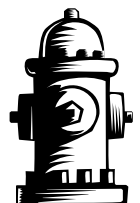
(217) 224-0586 or (217) 316-6078

1400 Jefferson St.

Quincy, IL 62301

gbackup@adams.net

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES The Club has meetings on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Eagles Club, 3737 N 5th Street.



ROCK ISLAND

Rock Island Association of Retired Firefighters

President

Wayne Stout

(309) 795-1095

16509 99th Ave. West

Illinois City, IL 61259

mlp614@aol.com

Secretary

Jerry Wiesman

(309) 949-3209

1121 West Court

Colona, IL 61241

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES This Club meets on the first Tuesday of each month at the Hy-Vee in Rock Island at 9:00 a.m.

The Club has a Memorial Service each year on Firefighters Memorial Day and participates each year in the Labor Day Parade.

SPRINGFIELD

Springfield Retired Firefighters Club

President

John Sullivan

(217) 787-8392

1304 S. Grand Ave. West

Springfield, IL 62704

Secretary

Pete Janssen

(217) 544-6881

8 St. Mary's Ct.

Springfield, IL 62702

sectreasursarff@gmail.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES At Firefighters / Postal Club 940 West Lake Shore Drive, August 21 and November 7, at noon: Christmas Party – December.

U-C-U

U-C-U Retired Firefighters Club

(Urbana Champaign University)

President

John Mullen

(217) 688-2256

2375 CR 1200 N.

St. Joseph, IL 61873-9725

jjmullen@juno.com

Secretary

Robert L. Mullins

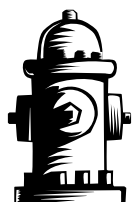
(217) 369-5927

2395 CR 1200 N.

Homer, IL 61849-9745

rlmullins626@gmail.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES This Club meets in the VFW Post #630 located at 1303 E. Main, Urbana at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every other month beginning with January.



2017 I.A.R.F. CLUB & CHARTER REPORTS

WESTERN CHICAGOLAND

Western Chicagoland Retired Firefighters

President

Steve Rose

(630) 205-8315

434 Zachary Drive

Hampshire, IL 60140

stephenrose8152@hotmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer

Mario Tricoci

ltfpfd@yahoo.com

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES Correspondences to WCRF can be sent to:
WCRF, P.O. Box 87, Forest Park, IL 60130

Do I Have to File an Amended Return?

Written For IARF by Doug Aller **New Concepts Benefits Group**

Tax season is in full swing. By the time you read this article, most of you will have filed your federal and state tax return. Many retirees make mistakes while filing their 2016 tax returns. If you're like most people, you've probably wondered at some point, "Do I need to file an amended return for that?" It is in that spirit of coming clean with Uncle Sam that we at **New Concept Benefit Group** offer you some common tax reporting errors and whether or not you should file an amended return after you discover them.

Issue #1 – You forgot to tell your tax preparer that a donation to charity went directly from your IRA.

Should you file an amended return? – You don't have to file an amended return, but if you were 70 ½ or older at the time of the distribution, you'd probably be well-served to do so. When distributions from IRAs are made directly to a charity on or after your 70 ½ birthday, they can qualify as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). "Regular" charitable contributions are itemized deductions that help to reduce your taxable income. QCDs, on the other hand, are not deductible, but the income never gets included in your AGI to begin with. That's way better than claiming the itemized deduction in most cases, and in no situation would it be worse.

Issue #2 – You forgot to include a 1099-R from one of your retirement accounts on your return.

Should you file an amended return? – Yes! 1099-Rs report income, which you must report on your tax return. To make matters worse, the data reported to you is also reported to the IRS. So if you *don't* go back and amend your return, you should expect to receive a letter from the IRS in the near future to address the deficiency. Computers and technology have made matching the 1099-Rs that the IRS received to the amount of income reported on your tax return much easier, so this is definitely not one of those things you should just sit tight and hope not to be bothered about.

Issue #3 – You forgot to tell your CPA that you made a Roth IRA contribution

Should you file an amended return? – No*. As weird as it sounds, Roth IRA contributions are not reported anywhere on your tax return. That said, you should let your tax preparer know. Most tax software has a place to input that data, even though it's not reported on the return. If for whatever reason you need to take a distribution from your Roth IRA prior to reaching qualified distribution status, having this info will help you reduce or eliminate any tax bill.

Issue #4 – You forgot to tell your CPA that you made a non-deductible IRA contribution

Should you file an amended return? – Maybe*. Did you also take a distribution from your IRA for the year the contribution was made for? If so, the taxable amount of your IRA distribution is off (thanks to the pro-rata rule) and an amended return should be filed. If you didn't take an IRA distribution, then you don't need to file an amended return. There's nothing to change. You should, however, be sure the file Form 8606 to report that non-deductible contribution to make sure that you don't pay tax on that money again when you take distributions in future years.

Issue #5 – You forgot to tell your CPA that you made a deductible IRA contribution

Should you file an amended return? – Yes*. Deductible IRA contributions give you an above-the-line deduction that reduces your AGI (adjusted gross income). In some cases, your tax bill may not drop by much. In other situations, the IRA deduction could be what gets your AGI low enough to qualify for a credit you'd otherwise be phased out of receiving. Depending on the credit, that could be some meaningful dollars.



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If you haven't joined I.A.R.F. yet, please do so now! Mail registration to I.A.R.F., 23731 N. Algonquin Dr. Canton, Illinois 61520 Note: your address label will remind you when to renew your registration of \$2.00 annually. Please remember to renew your registration each year.

Membership Registration

I am ☐ On Disability ☐ Retired from _____ Fire Department

Please enroll me as Member-at-Large with Illinois Association of Retired Firefighters, which will entitle me to the benefits and privileges of this association.

Enclosed is a check (no cash, please): One year – \$10

Name _____

Address _____

Widow Registration This form is to be used by widows

I am the Widow, of firefighter _____, from _____ Fire Department. I wish to support the endeavors of the Illinois Association of Retired Firefighters.

I wish to pay by check (send no cash, please): One year – \$10

Name _____

Address _____

Supporter Registration This form is to be used by anyone who wishes to compliment a widow

YES, I SUPPORT the endeavors of Illinois Association of Retired Firefighters. I would like to compliment the widow of deceased husband _____ with a subscription of the magazine.

Enclosed is a check for (no cash, please): One year – \$10

Name _____

Address _____



ALUMNI BENEFITS INCLUDE

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Mobile Phone & Calling Plans	Pets	Tax Season
	Travel	

Welcome to the IAFF Alumni

The Alumni program is designed exclusively to assist retirees and former members in continuing their relationship with the IAFF.

Membership in this free program allows Alumni members to benefit from select IAFF and Union Plus programs, services and discounts, such as automotive, consumer education, computers, clothing, healthy lifestyles, home improvement, financial/insurance products, mobile phones / calling plans, pets, legal services and travel. Additionally, Alumni members can now subscribe to the *International Fire Fighter* magazine for a nominal price and will also automatically receive email communications directly from the IAFF that feature news and updates on fire fighter health and safety and local, state and federal politics.

Eligibility

All active-retired IAFF members are automatically members of the Alumni. Most former IAFF members with an inactive-retired membership status are eligible to participate provided that they retired or left their local in good standing. The final Alumni eligibility decision is at the discretion of the retiree's former union.

Welcome Package

New IAFF retirees who are eligible for the program will automatically be sent an Alumni Welcome Package that contains an Alumni membership card, a recent issue of the *International Fire Fighter* magazine and a temporary web site address that must be accessed to validate new Alumni memberships.

Each Alumni member will receive a thank you letter and Alumni decals approximately two weeks after updating their contact information at the temporary web site.

Contact Us

Please contact the IAFF with benefit, eligibility, welcome package and other questions related to the IAFF Alumni program.

Email alumni@iaff.org

Phone (202) 824-1567

ANDRES MACIAS

2106 South Cicero ♦ Cicero, IL 60604

LAWN DENTAL CENTER

3113 South Pulaski ♦ Chicago, IL 60623

BIG SUCHIR

669 North Cass Avenue ♦ Westmont, IL 60559

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PFP CPA INC.

16860 S Oak Park Avenue ♦ Tinley Park, IL 60477

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1410 North Market Street ♦ Sparta, IL 62286

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SOUTH CHICAGO ONE

7283 South Chicago Avenue ♦ Chicago, IL 60619

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1755 South West Street ♦ Freeport, IL 61032

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7820 West 26th Street ♦ North Riverside, IL 60546

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5800 West Montrose ♦ Chicago, IL 60634

STAFF ON SITE MIDWEST

1514 15th Street ♦ Rockford, IL 61104

FIRST COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

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ROCKFORD NEPHROLOGY

612 Roxbury Road ♦ Rockford, IL 61107

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17831 Wolf Road ♦ Orland Park, IL 60467

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3828 West 128th Place ♦ Alsip, IL 60803

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410 Ogden Avenue ♦ Downers Grove, IL 60515

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14355 South Bell Road ♦ Homer Glen, IL 60491

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BODYWORKS

1060 Lake Street ♦ Roselle, IL 60172

MARK'S SERVICE CENTER

4303 W Jefferson Street ♦ Shorewood, IL 60404

DELEHANTY FUNERAL HOME

Loves Park, IL 61111

DR. HOME HEALTHCARE

Lemont, IL 60439

ALSIP MARATHON

Alsip, IL 60803

G. PACINI AUTO BODY

Stone Park, IL 60165

STAN'S SERVICE STATION

Roselle, IL 60172

SUPERIOR CAR CREDIT CORP.

East Dundee, IL 60118

AJ AUTO

Schiller Park, IL 60178

BUTERA LAW OFFICE

Rockford, IL 61103

HOLCOMB STATE BANK

Rockford, IL 61109

ADRENDINE AUTOMOTIVE

New Lenox, IL

WRIGHT'S HEARING CENTER

Rockford, IL 61107

ILLINOIS AUTO GLASS

Joliet, IL 60432

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Quiet Desperation: When Retired Firefighters Face Depression

by Jada Hudson, M.S., LCPC, CADCR

When a firefighter retires, he leaves behind a lifestyle and a brotherhood that has been an integral part of his adult life. He is no longer a part of the firehouse - the place where he felt like he could really be himself. New vacancies in his schedule draw his attention to sadness or pain that may previously have been masked by busyness. He has memories of the things he has seen in his many years of service. And, he may begin to experience depression surfacing in his life.

Author Terrence Real of *I Don't Want to Talk About It* sheds light on how depression manifests itself differently in males than in females. He describes the feelings of male depression, saying, "There is a blackness that has lain inside the center of my being...this jagged, empty, frightened feeling has been a part of my internal atmosphere for as long as I can remember. It has been my baseline, my steady state—the me that I have been running from..." Real explains that male depression is a "terrible collusion in our society, a cultural cover-up about depression in men".

In many ways, firefighters are the epitome of this masculine ideal. They are the strong, brave, rescuers among us, who we can always count on in any situation. We cling to this image so strongly that we often forget that firefighters are people with feelings, who face horrific situations every day that can affect them emotionally. *I Don't Want to Talk About It* addresses how our societal ideals of men have created a plague of "covert" depression.

Overt vs. Covert Depression

People typically view depression as an acute and dramatic episode that makes it impossible for the individual to function, even causing the individual to have suicidal thoughts. But, Terrence Real calls this kind of depression "overt depression". It is dangerous, but he asserts there is another kind of depression that is not even being addressed in society. This unmentioned depression, he calls "covert depression".

Women manifest depression differently than men; more often experiencing overt depression. Women blame themselves, tend to talk about their feelings more openly, and show visible signs of their despair. In contrast, men tend to blame others and find it "weak" to talk about their feelings. They may also self-medicate with alcohol, exercise, sex, and the endless process of goal attainment, among other escapes. So, male depression tends to be covert depression.

Covert depression is a state of depression that is hidden from the man's own conscious awareness, yet drives many of his actions. For the man suffering with covert depression, action becomes his means of escape. If he keeps busy, he can disconnect from his feelings and won't have to deal with them. Many firefighters experience depression and do not become aware of it until they retire and can no longer hide their sadness behind busyness or achievement at work.



Jada Hudson is the owner of Hudson Clinical Counseling and an LCPC and CADCR serving women, children and firefighters. She specializes in pediatric death

and substance abuse.

Contact Jada at **630.815.3735** or hudsonclinicalcounseling.com.

Action is their salvation, and firefighters are trained to be men of action. They have been raised within a society where men are encouraged to take action rather than process feelings. They are trained in a field that tells men to set aside feelings in order to stick to their training. They live in a culture where men are supposed to be strong, stoic, good at sports, able to fix things, able to solve problems, and above all, without feeling.

Continued: Quiet Desperation: When Retired Firefighters Face Depression

Even a man raised as a sensitive artist is aware that society expects him to be a certain way, as a man, and he may choose to deal with his feelings as society dictates. A “real man” doesn’t sit around and wallow in his problems. A “real man” does something about it.

This is why many men keep their depression under wraps, or “covert”. Terrence Real describes covert depression as elusive and chronic. It is the result of the way we consciously or unconsciously treat our men to deal with their emotions. Unconsciously, we raise our men to be tough little soldiers, who keep their emotions to themselves. The male ideal is to be impenetrable to pain and never show vulnerability. Society teaches men that pain is something to rise above. A man who shares his emotional pain may even be shamed and therefore begin to feel he is “less than” because of his feelings. He may be told to “stop being a baby”, “man up” or worse, in the case of someone with a stressful job like firefighting, that they “just can’t handle the job”.

Girls, in contrast, are allowed to express themselves emotionally and even encouraged to seek out emotional connections for support and talk about their feelings when needed. Men are encouraged to be assertive, to achieve and to handle anything that comes their way by themselves. They are encouraged to disconnect, not to feel, so they can perpetuate society’s expectation of the bulletproof male. The problem with this is that by doing so, men often fail to develop the skills they need to express emotion and appreciate deep connection. They keep their pain to themselves.

Many firefighters have the Meyers-Briggs personality profile ISTP, which results in a tendency to distrust their emotions. Add to that the societal expectation of the unshakable male, and you have the perfect recipe for a male with covert depression. Men may not even know they’re depressed because they are able to keep so busy with work. But, as people hit retirement age - around 50-60 years old - they undergo a developmental leap which introduces a new, more emotional side to their thinking, and many may begin to feel their sadness. Combine that with retirement’s free time, and depression becomes more obvious.

Male depression hides very well. The symptoms mask the condition because male depression leads to problems we can misunderstand as “typically male” activities: physical illness, alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, failures in intimacy, affairs, addiction to pornography, and increasingly risky behaviors. Retired firefighters may experience many of these strongholds, and because of their age, their bodies respond differently than they did when they were younger. Physical illness may last longer, their bodies metabolize alcohol differently, making it so that one beer hits them the way two or three would when they were younger, and risky behaviors may more readily result in injury.

Sadly, it is common for men who exhibit these undesirable behaviors to want to feel something, anything. Often these men are paralyzed by a feeling of “numbness”, which is a term I have heard firefighters use to describe their feelings. They seek a “drug” or stimulant of some kind, whether it’s a substance, sex or gambling, to continue to mask their feelings of depression.



Continued: Quiet Desperation: When Retired Firefighters Face Depression

In contrast, a male with covert depression may exhibit “positive” symptoms that reinforce the male ideal, like goal achievement at work, workaholicism, exercising obsessively, pursuing athletic achievement, etc. Society rewards high-achievers and healthy athletes, so society, in essence, praises the man for hiding his depression. Of course, not all positive actions are signs of covert depression or addiction.

Real warns that these “positive” behaviors can be nonetheless damaging to the man, his marriage, and his family. The children of the workaholic feel neglected, or the wife may leave, all as a result of a covert man not acknowledging his feelings. When a man retires, he can shift his focus to other pursuits, but he may find it difficult to continue to hide his depression without having a full-time occupation. Both the negative and positive activities of covertly depressed men help them perform the ultimate defense and “cover-up” desired by society: to run from their feelings.

Running from Depression

Society teaches women to verbalize feelings and externalize pain. Men are taught to discharge distress with action, which is something firefighters do every day. To rise above the pain or stand up to the discomfort of his feelings, a man needs to stay in action. A man in action doesn’t have to face his feelings or deal with the pain of them. If a man cannot rise above the pain, he gets “depressed about being depressed, ashamed about being ashamed”.

Real says the sad truth is that “many men would rather put themselves at risk than acknowledge physical or emotional distress”. This may explain the rise in suicide among firefighters in recent years and the statistic that men are four times as likely to take their lives than females. In the case of the firefighter with covert depression, this may even creep into the job, with the firefighter taking increasing risks as their depression deepens. After retirement, firefighters will add to their depression an increased sense of disconnectedness from the brotherhood or their firehouse, which, according to Thomas Joiner Ph.D., is one of the major contributing factors to an individual’s ability to commit suicide.

For the man with covert depression, the greatest fear is in the loss of the action. This is why some firefighters actually dread the prospect of retirement. If they stop achieving, taking risks, drinking, or whatever their distraction is, they will have to deal with their feelings. They fear that if they stop acting they will be acted upon. Their feelings will engulf them, and they will become incapacitated. In other words, they fear the onset of the overt depression. They believe as long as they keep “running”, they can stay ahead of that overt depression. If they stop, they may be doomed.

This is a real, not imagined, concern for the depressed. He instinctively knows he is inches from an overt depression because he is. Women, because they are more aware of feelings, are better at heading off depression and asking for and receiving support than men are. They rally support and take the time to grieve. For men, it’s easier to keep running.

Firefighters Facing Depression

Real asserts that when it comes to depression in men, “biological vulnerability contributes to depression, but this alone is not enough to bring about the disorder. It is the collision of inherited vulnerability with psychological injury that produces depression.” Exploring this psychological injury requires moving a man from the safe, socially accepted, confines of covert depression to the vulnerable, socially isolating, unpredictable state of overt depression. The injury may be from psychological trauma or neglect; something from the deep past or something recent. Whatever it is, it must be acknowledged and discussed for the healing to begin.

Continued: Quiet Desperation: When Retired Firefighters Face Depression

Talking about the feelings, the events, etc. with peers, friends, family members or therapists is the first step. Art Zern, who is Assistant Fire Chief in Sycamore and is part of the Illinois Firefighter Peer Support Team, said he believes many suffer in silence because of the fire departments culture of service, so the job has a very high hidden cost and no one gets out unscathed.

Also, firefighters are always firefighters, even when they are off duty or retired. They carry a heavy burden of responsibility to “save the world”. Art gave the example of the off-duty firefighter who witnesses an accident or horrific event right before his eyes that he is unable to do anything about, simply because he is not on duty and does not have his equipment and gear on at the time.

“While the average civilian that witnesses an event is surely traumatized, the first responder also feels guilt, responsibility and shame for being unable to “save the day” as is expected of him from the public and himself. We can deal with losing a fair fight, but it’s very hard to deal when the deck is stacked against you,” Art said. “When I started this job 35 years ago, talking about the events of our job and the endless trauma was not even a consideration. All of the damage was hidden and our culture had been a major contributing factor in firefighter suicide and behavioral health issues. Sadly, we have done it to ourselves to a great degree.”

Retired Fire Captain Chuck Wehrli is a program coordinator of the Illinois Firefighter Peer Support team. He also acknowledges that the recent spotlight on firefighter behavioral health is long overdue: “We have done a bad job over the years helping our own until the last decade,” he said, “and peer support has been one of the best avenues in getting help. We need to talk to others that have been through the same situations and realize we aren’t that rock all the time. We need support also.” He also said it is important for fellow department members to be constantly on the alert for depression in others and ourselves. A firefighter is subject to many things that can lead to depression: bad calls, pressures from family and spouses, and even interdepartmental strife. He said we owe it to our co-workers and ourselves to address behavioral health problems sooner. Even for the retired firefighter, who served in a fire service that was not as aware of behavioral health and the importance of self-care, it is important to break down the walls of the macho male persona, so that people can heal. Depression could be hiding in anyone, and the answer is to open the doors of communication.

Society may have made it more difficult for men to acknowledge their depression, but at least today firefighters have a safe place to go where their feelings won’t be judged - peer support. If you feel that you may be exhibiting the signs of covert depression, I urge you to receive the help and support you deserve. There’s even a retired firefighters peer support program now. Whatever the problem you may be experiencing, talking about it with open honesty can ironically be considered the truest form of “manning up”.



Illinois Firefighter Peer Support (IFFPS)

Grandpa Needed Peer Support, but No One Knew it Then



Grandpa, Bob Olson, with Engine 73

During my 27 years as a firefighter, I have often thought about my grandpa, Bob Olson, and his influence on me. I saw how well he survived tragedies on the job and in his personal life. He had an incredible ability to be present in the lives of his family members, while clearly dealing with his own tough experiences.



By: Matt Olson

Grandpa Bob Olson left me his old leather helmet. I kept it for a while, but now it's in its forever home with E-73, where Captain Casey and the rest of E-73 recently welcomed me and my sons as we presented the old helmet. It was inspirational.



E-73 has tremendous pride in those who came before and made E-73 into what it was and is today. A few years ago, I came across some of grandpa's log entries that he created as Captain of 73. I traced his start at 73 to March 1, 1963. As I read, I saw a window into who he was as a fire officer. I had only known him as a gentle and caring grandfather. But seeing his handwriting and reading what he wrote was surreal.

One log entry stood out. I remember him talking about it – December 14, 1967. He was sent to a home on fire not far from the rehouse. There were three little kids in the house. He showed me his log entry from that night. Then, he turned the page and said, "Look here, back to work the next day".

"One log entry stood out. I remember him talking about it - December 14, 1967... Then, he turned the page and said, 'Look here, back to work the next day.'"

Here's what he had written... "3:14 am Code on still from citizen, called FAO for box, stretched 350' of 3" hose with 1 1/4" SOP and 350' of 2 1/2" hose with 100' of 1 1/2" hose and Elkhart nozzle, carried 2 children to sidewalk, gave same to citizen to bring to engine house. Worked 3" line in windows of bedroom, used 1 1/2" hose in rear door. Later attached 100' of 1 1/2" hose with 3/4 SOP on 3" line and worked stream in dining room. Ordered to quarters by 29th Batt. Chief. Chicago hydrant OK. H.P. 40# Engine pressure 170# and 110# Co. in service 4 men 0 miles"

When you stop and think about that, this was profound. No one ever taught my grandpa to understand or process what he saw and did that night. They just expected him to come back to work in a couple of days. How many people can carry 2 dead children to a sidewalk and hand them to a stranger while their father watches and then go back to work like nothing happened? Fire fighters do this. This is the job.

"When you stop and think about it, this was profound. No one ever taught my grandpa to understand or process what he saw and did that night. They just expected him to come back to work in a couple days."

In moments of seeing horrible things, what does a firefighter think of? When does he think of it? Grandpa logged who was his company.

He logged the assignments that they completed. He logged engine pressures on each line. He logged hydrant pressures. His mind was on how much water was coming from the hydrant and how much pressure 73 was able to turn into at each nozzle for the firefighters fighting a fire. He was focused. But, somewhere in his mind were the faces of those two children he may have never met before. Somewhere in his mind were the faces of 5 of his own children.

What did he take home with him? What I saw each day was a smile and happy eyes, kindness and willingness to make sure that I had what I needed through some tough times. What he was is amazing to me. He showed limitless strength and patience.

But, Grandpa knew loss. He lost personally: 2 sons died before him. He lost professionally: this was just *one* day at work for my grandpa. He was and always will be to me, a hero. He loved life because he knew, all too well, what it was like to see life taken away.

A Safer Fire Service

I may have held onto his helmet and log entries, but I haven't held on to the approach men of his day took toward emotional wellness. Today we have a much better understanding of the emotional pressures of the job. We understand the emotional injuries we sustain while working, and we can look for ways to make it safe.

We have made such great strides to keep our bodies safe on this job, but not necessarily our emotions and our minds. We have the best gear, NFPA constantly reviews what we do. IDOL, OSHA, NIOSH – everyone studies our incidents and suggests improved ways to be safe.

My department has a policy on buckling up. Buckling up is safe; it makes sense. But, the seat belt isn't what saved my life in my career – a conversation with a counselor is. When I was facing my most difficult challenge as a firefighter and struggled more than I ever had before, it was a conversation that gave me hope, that showed me that it was ok to struggle. It is human.

What Peer Support is All About

Today we talk a lot about peer support. What we can do for each other is make it safe in the re service. We can make it safe to struggle some. We can make it safe to not be OK today. Just because we may not be OK today, doesn't mean we stay that way. We take care of each other. We talk to each other. We listen to each other. We relate to the times in another firefighters career that we can. We validate that the hard time they are going through makes sense. We acknowledge that they are where they are supposed to be, and we share the hope that we have because we also know that it can pass on by and we will soon be OK again.

“...the seatbelt isn't what saved my life in my career - a conversation with a counselor is. It was a conversation that gave me hope, that showed me that it was ok to struggle. It is human.”

For another firefighter to take the time to let one of us know that it is ok to struggle is powerful. If we do a better job of being there for each other and taking the cape off, putting down the emotional burdens that we carry, we can get through this job safely both physically and emotionally.

That to me is what peer support is about: it's about being able to look back at our old helmets and feel nostalgia without sorrow. It's about being able to be present with our families, care for their needs, and truly be ok because we've gotten to process the emotional scars from this job.

Thanks for your service, Grandpa, especially when you were hurting and didn't have a place to talk about it. I think you'd be proud of how we've made it safe for our firefighters now.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Never Forget...



REMEMBERING
9/11

To commemorate the people of the fire service who have earned their supreme happiness in heaven, we dedicate this page...

Last Alarm

Batt. Chief William H. "Bill" Johnson
Lieutenant Wesley K. Thuney
Firefighter Roer Belski
Chief Ron Levin
Captain Donald Swibaker
Driver/Engineer Andrew Nanni
Engineer Ronald Saeger
Engineer Melvin J. Hill
District Chief C. Ronald Hedge
Lieutenant Roger Randolph
Driver/Eng. Rickard "Dick" Kollberg
Captain Richard Lundy
Lieutenant Bill Misner
Firefighter John "Jack" Buss
Chief Bruno Browbowski
Lieutenant Edgar "Red" Daugherty
Lieutenant Freddie Tegel
Firefighter E. Max Dilley
Firefighter Kenneth Frantz
Lieutenant E. Wayne Martin
Lieutenant William Kirchmeyer
Captain Donald Ebeling
Battalion Chief William Peacy
Captain Larry Boren
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Chief John Michael Sinclair
FF/Paramedic Pete Zerites
Lieutenant Larry D. Stewart
Chief Harry A. McClain
Captain Bob Greene
Asst. Chief Dale Sunberg
Firefighter Everett "Gino" Bragg
Captain Peter F. Erpelding
Firefighter/EMT Lawrence "Larry" Fleming
Firefighter Thomas N. Kostopoulos
Fire Instructor Howard D. Eskridge
Lieutenant Robert F. Smith
Firefighter Frank Turk
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Captain Wally Seyb
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Firefighter/Paramedic Gary J. Hilbert

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