

Spring 2009

# Boston Firefighters Digest



*International Association of Fire Fighters Local 718*  
*Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts*  
Massachusetts AFL-CIO • Greater Boston Labor Council

Dedicated to the advancement of the moral, economic  
and social standing of the members of the Boston Fire Department  
in keeping with the dignity of their heroic calling.



## Lieutenant Kevin M. Kelley

*Ladder 26*

January 9, 2009

Killed in the Line of Duty

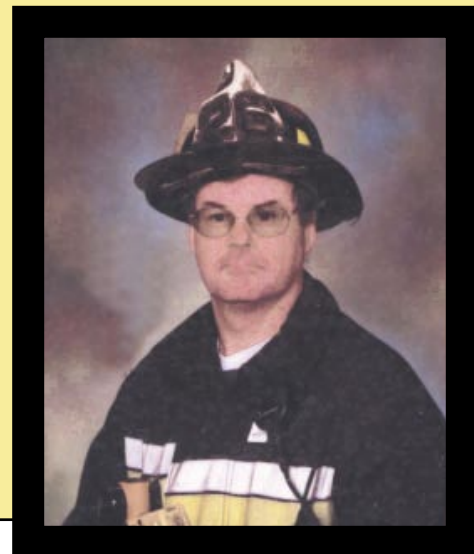


Photo by Bill Noonan, FIU-K7

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## Boston Firefighters Digest

*Boston Firefighters Digest* is the official newsletter of Boston Firefighters Local 718. Opinions are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Local 718, its members or its affiliates. Corrections will be made when notified in writing. For a subscription, mail requests to the Editor. Digests are distributed to all Boston firehouses, Fire Alarm, Headquarters and mailed to member retirees, survivors and friends. The cost of the *Boston Firefighters Digest* is borne by member dues.

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Monday – Friday  
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*Boston Firefighters Digest* is designed by  
Union Printworks, 1193 River Street,  
Hyde Park, MA 02136, (617) 364-5050  
Member of GCIU Local 600M

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Chris Stevens, E-21; Sean Kelly, E-18;  
Jim Kenney, L-4; Bob Kilduff, Jr., R-2;  
Tom Matthews, HQ; Tom McCann, E-39;  
Neal Mullane, Jr., E-37; Ed Paris, TL-17;  
John Sarro, L-16; Ed Street, L-18

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Vincent Easterling, E-55, D-10	Gr. 1
Joe Spinale, E-56, L-21	Gr. 3
Jody Connolly, Fire Investigation Unit	Gr. 2

## Correction

In the Winter *Digest*, on page 13, the name Rodgers was spelled incorrectly. The correct spelling listing is: **FF Kenneth Rogers**, Engine 17, Appointed 1/18/76 – Retired 7/31/06.

## Executive Board Representation

The President assigns Executive Board members to specific Divisions and Districts of the department to better serve the membership. Members should go to the E-Board Representative who is responsible for their District first to handle issues.

Of course, this does not preclude the members from dealing directly with the leadership of the Local.

The Districts are broken down as follows:

Districts 1 & 6 ..... Tom McCann, E-39  
District 3 ..... Vacant  
Districts 4 & 11 .... Peter Gailunas, TL-17  
Districts 5 & 7 ..... John Sarro, E-24

Districts 8 & 12 ..... Mike O'Reilly, L-29  
Districts 9 & 10 ..... Bob Petitti, E-42  
Fire Alarm, Headquarters &  
Fire Prevention ..... Peter Clifford, FAO





Local 718 foreign relations committee member.



## BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



### *MEMBERS CURRENTLY SERVING ON ACTIVE DUTY*

**CURTIS CAMPBELL**  
**MARK DUNNIGAN**  
**PATRICK HOARTY**  
**GREGORY KELLY**  
**ROY MARSHALL**  
**MARC MCANDREW**  
**MATTHEW NELSON**  
**KEVIN RANAHAH**  
**ERIC VINITSKY**



In recognition and  
grateful appreciation  
to those members  
of the  
Boston Fire  
Department  
who are currently  
serving on  
active duty  
with the  
United States  
Armed Forces  
Services.





# Ut Ceteri Vivant

**2**4-hours after Lt. Kevin Kelley was commander of Ladder 26 for the last time, "Fire Commissioner" Rod Fraser held a press conference steps from where Kevin climbed onto the truck. When asked about the maintenance division, he proclaimed defiantly that his policy for maintenance is "if it's broke fix it." This was too little too late for Kevin Kelley.

You see Rod, when you are in a 30-ton truck on a steep hill with no brakes – it's too late to "fix it." Most people think that they are going to die, not that it's time to call a mechanic. Luckily for the people on Parker Hill and Huntington Avenues, Kevin Kelley and Bobby O'Neill are not most people.

Faced with complete brake failure and pedestrians walking on both sides of the street, they were left with no good options. In keeping with their oath as Boston Firefighters, the people of Bos-

wounded children and adults, collapsed ceilings and walls. Amos dug through the debris to assist the screaming children and wounded adults. David managed to squeeze through the breach on the driver's side, where Bobby (now semi-conscious) was being drenched by an eight inch water main overhead which had been shattered by Ladder 26's impact. David was able to position himself to protect Bobby's airway from the torrent of water and provided first aid. **God had already put His hand on Kevin.**

As we've come to expect when we are in trouble on this job, the Calvary showed up. Rescue 2 arrived, and as David Blaides said, "I thanked God for Mikey Walsh". Lt. Walsh ordered a citywide tech-rescue response and along with his crew began the delicate extrication of Bobby O'Neill. Operating the tools for Rescue 2 that day was Joe Houlder. In my opinion, Joe is one of the most unsung legends on our job - no better Jake to have with you in a tight spot. It should come as no surprise that Joe's formative years on the job were spent working on Ladder 26, Grp. 4 – under the command of Lt. Kevin Kelley. Kevin left us a lot of gems.

After the extrication, Bobby, David and Amos were transported to the hospital. The tech-rescue teams got busy shoring up the building to prevent further collapse. The busy operations came to a halt when Father Dan ap-

peared with his Chief's helmet on his head and the stole around his neck to give his fallen Brother the Last Rites – an assignment he's been tasked with too many times.

January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009, will always be a terrible day for Boston Firefighters. We lost one of our best. But it was a lucky day for the city of Boston. That stretch of Huntington Ave. has four lanes of traffic and two lanes of trolley traffic (one trolley every 30 seconds). Those who know Huntington Ave. try to avoid it at 2:30 in the afternoon; there are too many school buses that time of day. That Friday there was just the right mix of luck and heroism. There was a minor accident minutes before involving a trolley down the tracks a bit, causing the MBTA to halt all trolley traffic. An oil truck travelling on Huntington had just passed Parker Hill Ave. seconds before 26 crossed. Somehow, no trolley riders, no kids on a school bus, no pedestrians, no carloads of people, and no children in the daycare center were killed. **This was not all luck; the fortitude of Bobby O'Neill steering that truck and calm methodical presence of Kevin Kelley's leadership saved lives.**

The people of Boston were horrified and shocked to learn that their firefighters were operating trucks with no brakes. We were just horrified, but not shocked. We've been driving around on these dinosaurs for years. That wasn't even the first time Ladder 26 lost its brakes on Parker Hill Ave.! Two years ago Ladder 26 crashed into a building. Nine days before Kevin was killed Ladder 23 (covering Ladder 26) lost its brakes on Frawley St., the street parallel to Parker Hill Ave. They managed to crash into a fence before gaining too much momentum.

Here are a few more apparatus atrocities off the top of my head:

- Ladder 29 (2<sup>nd</sup> due) couldn't get their stick out of the bed with people trapped on Columbia Rd.

**"When apparatus reaches the 10-year mark, they are for the most part tired, worn out and possibly unsafe pieces of equipment. Aerial ladders that receive the workload such as ours reach a point where they have to be replaced."**

– Statement of Commissioner / Chief of Department  
Martin E. Pierce, Jr. to Boston's Chief Operating Officer, August 16, 1999

ton came first. As he had been for the last 20 years, Kevin Kelley was in complete control of Ladder 26. He was calm and professional, trying to get his boys out of a bad situation. When the driver, Bobby O'Neill, veered toward parked cars, Kevin saw the pedestrians on the sidewalk who would have definitely been killed and told him to correct the truck.

Kevin then checked the other sidewalk – more people – **no good choices.** With only a few seconds to make decisions, Kevin did his best to protect his crew, and try to minimize the potential damage of an out of control ladder truck careening through crowded city streets. Kevin immediately yelled to the members in the jump seats to brace themselves and used the air horns and sirens to warn those on Huntington Ave. He then coached Bobby O'Neill to the path of least resistance; Bobby did a tremendous job avoiding a light pole and two large brick stanchions. Unfortunately, again, **there were no good choices.**

Ladder 26 hit a parked SUV, a brick wall, and crashed through the first floor of a high-rise building before coming to a stop. Kevin died on impact. Bobby was unconscious, trapped in the cab which had folded in. The two members in the jump seats, David Blaides and Amos Monteiro, were seriously injured. In a matter of seconds, the crew of Ladder 26 went from helping one of their neighbors having difficulty breathing to being severely or fatally injured.

Although in tremendous pain and unsure of the extent of their own injuries, David and Amos knew that their Brothers in the front seat needed help. Amos immediately got on his portable and called FAO for help unable to climb between Ladder 26 and the wall. Due to a broken leg he was forced to hop on one foot to a side entrance where he faced complete chaos. Behind the building's wall they had crashed into was a daycare center. There were



- Same fire – Engine 24 (1<sup>st</sup> due) had their computerized pump governor shut down with multiple lines off it (ended up 4 alarms)
- Engine 18 (1<sup>st</sup> due) shut down when the line was charged at fire on Talbot Ave. The company had to bail down the stairs, delaying the primary search (piece was 23 years old)
- Rescue 2 had to leave a member in the piece at fires with their foot on the brake because maxi was broken
- Engine 22 was driving down the street when the cab elevation mechanism malfunctioned tilting the cab with members in it
- Ladder 17's officer had to pull up the accelerator pedal with a closet rake every time the driver depressed it (spare piece)
- Ladder 6's steering wheel came off responding down Ashmont St.
- Engine 33's spare shut down with the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> due hand lines off it at an occupied building in District 5, Brookline was 3<sup>rd</sup> due and their engine supplied our lines

### ***How Did Our Fleet Get Into Such Terrible Condition?***

**P**olicy established under Mayor Flynn/Commissioner Stapleton and continued by Commissioner Pierce instituted an apparatus replacement program to replace apparatus every 10 years. This system was in compliance with NFPA standards for fire apparatus with heavy usage in a city like Boston. The maintenance policy called for routine preventive maintenance done by members of the Motor Squad according to the manufacturer's specifications, and all mechanical maintenance and repair was contracted out. The Motor Squad was our AAA – they rotate the tires, change the oil, pop a new battery in and if you broke down they got you running or had you towed. This is in addition to thawing hydrants and aerials at fires, manning the relief van, and handling firehouse maintenance after business hours. Vendors took care of the rest. This seemed like a common sense policy.

### ***What Went Wrong?***

**I**n the late 1990's, the Menino Administration abandoned the apparatus replacement program resulting in a fleet that in some cases the trucks were older than the guys driving them. The motor squad was cut in half to two guys on duty each shift and the preventive maintenance position eliminated. They stopped buying fire trucks and let our fleet rot - and saved a bunch of money along the way.

### ***Nobody Hoodwinked the Administration***

**A**s Commissioner, Martin Pierce knew the dire ramifications a dilapidated fire fleet would have on a city built to burn like Boston, and the risks unsafe apparatus posed to civilians and his firefighters. Commissioner Pierce sent a series of letters to the Administration arguing the merits of replacing apparatus according to standards and warned of the life hazards of abandoning the replacement program. It was around this time a series of articles in the Globe criticized the management of the Department. The Mayor hired a Commission to review the department and pushed Commissioner Pierce out. Sound familiar?

The Maintenance Division made many requests for additional resources, including an experienced fleet mechanic to implement a

preventive maintenance program, in April of 2007, one year and 10 months before Kevin died. All of these requests fell on deaf ears. I believe the administration purposely underfunded the Maintenance Division to create dysfunction; they could then blame the dysfunction on mismanagement and achieve their goal of civilianizing the positions – to create more hack jobs for Menino. That is a standard play in this Administration.

### ***10 Years of Neglect Later, We've Fallen a Long Way***

**A**pparatus is just one glowing example of how far the infrastructure of our job has collapsed under Menino's management. Here are a few more:

- We spent six years with a condemned burn building, halting all ongoing fire training and forcing our Instructors to borrow the Worcester burn building to train recruits
- The BFD headquarters and BFD Training Academy are both 60 years old and outdated
- The Menino Administration has never built a firehouse but has replaced half of the police stations, along with a new HQ
- BFD Haz-Mat and technical rescue training has been bouncing from one abandoned building to another for years. The

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**“As of this date, by deviating from the replacement schedule, the department is behind three (3) pumps and eight (8) aerials. If the city continues to disregard the schedule, it won't be long before we have to make huge expenditures to keep our fleet running.”**

– Statement of Commissioner / Chief of Department  
Martin E. Pierce, Jr. to Boston's Chief Operating Officer, August 16, 1999

instructors literally beg for tables and chairs from companies throwing out their furniture

- Although we have become a hub for the bio-tech industry, with thousands of Level 2 & 3 labs, and the Level 4 Bio-Lab at BU, we still do not have a dedicated Haz-Mat company
- All of our Haz-Mat training was done by grants through the IAFF; 718 then had to fight with the city to support it
- The department Chemist has no department vehicle. When a Level 3 Haz-Mat comes in he has to hitch a ride from the police department (of course the Mayor's new “Deputy Commissioners” have cars with lights and sirens – in case the city needs lawyers in a hurry)
- The city has done nothing to prepare us for an incident involving the LNG tanker, let alone plan to protect the thousands of citizens whose lives would be in jeopardy
- Aside from not pre-planning for an LNG incident on the harbor, our fire boat is 40 years old, and hasn't been properly maintained by the city. Luckily one of our members is a licensed engineer who tries to keep the boat afloat, sometimes buying parts with his own money, but it is still out of service most of the time
- We have never had a grant writer. As a result, we never got adequate access to over **\$22.7 billion dollars** distributed by

*(continued on page 9)*

# *The Eulogy of Lt. Kevin M. Kelley*

by District 9 Fire Chief Charlie Mitchell

**G**reetings to the various dignitaries at the church.

I want to talk directly to Gloria, Susan, Chris and Maureen. Although I may be the one speaking, this is from all those who were with Kevin over the years. We want you to hear from his second family, who he really was.

I don't know how I let myself get talked into being the one to eulogize Kevin. Artie Johnson and the guys were afraid they would have trouble keeping it together. That fear is racing through me now. Please bear with me if I have some difficulties.

I first met Kevin in Oct, 1989. He came to Huntington Ave. to fill a Lieutenant's vacancy on Engine 37, group 4. At that time I was the Lieutenant on Ladder 26, group 4. We would affectionately call the company the busiest ladder truck in New England.



**Boston Fire Department Chief Chaplain the Rev. Daniel Mahoney celebrated Lt. Kevin M. Kelley's Funeral Mass at St. Ann's Church in Quincy.**



**The Boston Firefighters Acappella Quartet sings at the Mass.**



Photos by  
Bill Noonan,  
FIU-K7





**State and local officials stand in silence as the Lt. Kelley's funeral procession passes.**

Kevin was different. He led on that nothing bothered him. He didn't really care. It was smoke and mirrors. When you work 42 hours a week, go into burning buildings, handle other emergencies, it doesn't take long to find the real person behind screen. Whatever Kevin said, he was truly the opposite. Remember actions speak a lot louder than words. Kevin was a man of action. He liked being on the fire department, he liked where he worked, he loved his job and loved the guys he worked with. But you wouldn't hear that from Kevin. Smoke and mirrors, he couldn't let the true be known.

In September, 1990 I was promoted to Captain and Kevin jumped across the floor to Ladder 26. He was now in charge of the busiest ladder truck in New England when group 4 worked. He would never admit it, but he was happy. It was his groove.

He would go on to become the voice of Ladder 26, group 4.

Artie came to fill Kevin's vacancy. He was the new boss of Engine 37, group 4. They would work together day and night for many years.

I came back to Engine 37 in 1991, became Artie's boss and when working off group or in place of him, I would be Kevin's boss. For some reason, time flies by on the fire department. Kevin was Kevin. He didn't change, he continued doing his job. He never complained about the running. Well almost never as Artie reminded me.

In 2002, I was promoted to chief and shortly there after was in the safety car on, what else, group 4.

Artie was promoted to Captain and took my place. Why leave, when you are happy where you work.

*(continued on page 8)*



**Quincy Firefighters stand at attention during the funeral procession.**

# The Eulogy of Lt. Kevin M. Kelley

(continued from page 7)

Although I didn't see him every day, we crossed paths many times. Kevin still taking care of business. Still the boss of the busiest ladder truck in New England, on group 4. I figure at 4000 runs per year average, he must have responded to about 25,000, maybe a lot more responses. The voice of Ladder 26 was not leaving; he was going to retire with quite a record.

Last Friday, Artie was working. I was working, it was group 3. Another day in the firehouse. Just one of the many. We both responded to what would become one of our worst fears. An accident, a bad accident involving one of our own. The scene was ugly, members were trapped. I saw Artie. I told him don't worry, we will get them out. Then Artie said, Kevin is in the front seat. I was confident a rescue would be made. As fate would have it, this was not to be. It was Kevin's last ride on the busiest ladder truck in New England.

There is no way to prepare you for a situation as that.

Almost 20 years as the boss of Ladder 26, group 4. Quite a record, one that probably will probably never be surpassed. Most certainly, there will never be a Kevin Kelley again.

## Kevinisms

- He could sense that supper was ready 2 minutes before it was announced. He was always first at the table. Understand there was never a set time. They were too busy to do that.
- He could be identified by his voice faster than mine on the dept radio.
- He holds the record of the longest Lieu-

tenant on Ladder 26. My guess is it will be a long time before it may ever be broken. My understanding there is one of his protégé's ready to try

- I was told he used to fight tooth and nail. The nail won!
- He enjoyed a good laugh at another's expense. I know he did not like the hot seat himself.
- I know he was issued station uniforms over the years. I cannot remember a time he had a full set! Something about the fact there were no tailors in Quincy.
- He was a role model. I was told by a protégé the question, "what would Kevin do?" is used many times to handle various situations. I then thought that Kevin's legacy has already started. As newer members are trained, they will be taught as Kevin would do it.
- He had names for members of his crew. I believe shock and clog are here in the church.
- He was affectionately known as Kevin 2 incidents. He was ahead of his time.
- Some also suggest he could have been known as Mr. Diplomacy.
- He should be known as Mr. Disney for the many trips he took you to at the Magic Kingdom. I received word yesterday from Disney that they would like some of the bars of soap back. Anyone finding these boxes is requested to contact Ladder 26.
- There was a complete agreement amongst everyone that Leary blew it with his show *Rescue Me*. Kevin proved that he had star qualities with his appearances

in front of the camera. Kevin should have been Leary's boss. That would have been a show!!

- Speaking of cameras, I am told he had a face for radio. That fact never stopped Kevin from being in front of a camera.
- Kevin was a 100% union member. He was there whenever needed.
- Most of all Kevin was a great husband and the best father.

We have a term in the Boston Fire Department. It is not used for everyone. Not all have nor will attain it. It does not come from on high, but rather from below. It is given by those in the trenches. It says you know what he is doing, he will take care of me and he will come for me if I am trapped. The term, simply put is, he is a good Jake. No fanfare, no banners, nothing printed. Just a nod from the guys you work with. To me it says it all. Kevin was just that, a good Jake.

Gloria, Susan, Chris, Maureen. Kevin may no longer be here. We want you to know he will always be missed. We also want you to know that after the cameras are gone and headlines have moved on, his second family will still be here. We take care of our own. Just reach out if you need anything. We will never forget. Kevin made the supreme sacrifice. The brotherhood is strong. Let us help you.

Kevin was just an ordinary man, he did extraordinary things.

Kevin rest in peace. The guys are here to watch over you're your first family. Say hi to the other Huntington Ave alumni up there with you. Please ask the Big Guy in charge to place a protective hand over our department.

Good bye Kevin.

The military salute for  
Lt. Kevin M. Kelley.



Lt. Kevin M. Kelley travels to his final rest.

— Photos by Bill Noonan, FIU-K7



## Vice President's Report

Rich Paris, R-2



### Participate in the STOP-DROP-CONTROL High Blood Pressure Program

**W**e, Local 718, are committed to improving your health and fitness. As part of these efforts, I encourage you to participate in the *STOP-DROP-CONTROL* High Blood Pressure (HBP) program, which is consistent with the goals of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Wellness-Fitness Initiative. This comprehensive program is designed to help you manage your blood pressure as well as educate members of our community about the dangers of high blood pressure.

It is likely that you know someone who has high blood pressure. There is a strong possibility that uncontrolled high blood pressure may contribute to heart disease.

High blood pressure is a warning sign that should not be ignored. It can lead to heart attack or stroke. Each day your blood pressure is 140/90 mm Hg or higher, you are damaging your blood

vessels and making your heart work harder.

The IAFF has collaborated with Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation to develop the *STOP-DROP-CONTROL* HBP program, which has been designed with direct input from your peers to ensure that it provides the right resources and the right information – and offers maximum value for you. Your long-term health, your family, and keeping your community safe are all important to you. This campaign is created to help you check and manage your blood pressure, and take steps to lower it, if necessary.

For more information, contact me at 617-288-2100 or visit [www.iaff.org/hs/fts](http://www.iaff.org/hs/fts).

Keeping you healthier – and on the job – is the most important part of the *STOP-DROP-CONTROL* HBP program.

## President's Report

(continued from page 5)

Homeland Security since 2002 – **Mismanagement**

- Homeland Security considers Boston one of the highest risk Tier 2 cities in the country because we have an underground subway, international airport, international shipping port, underground tunnels and bridges for our highway system, tunnels under our harbor, the Bio-Lab is in a densely populated neighborhood, and the LNG Tanker in our harbor. Yet Menino has done nothing to modernize our job since 9/11. The only terrorism related move Menino made was to sell a parcel of land, owned by the city, valued at \$2-million dollars for \$175,000 to people with ties to Muslim extremists to build a Mosque! Boston Firefighters will be like lambs to slaughter in a terror attack on this city.

### Where Do We Go From Here?

**I**t's not news that our jobs have been neglected by city hall. We also know that this neglect puts our lives in jeopardy – and we, our families, and the people of Boston deserve better! The only way to successfully change our job to better protect ourselves and the citizens of Boston is through a partnership with city hall. That is why three years ago, under my leadership, Local 718 endorsed Thomas

Menino for his 4<sup>th</sup> term as mayor of Boston. We attempted to re-write our relationship and move forward. And he screwed us. I accept full responsibility for embarrassing our proud name by attaching it to a man that has never acted on his responsibility to protect us!

Today, we still have the same problems: lack of equipment, manning, training, planning etc. Fires still happen every day, people need their firefighters, and the War on Terror isn't going anywhere. Our lives depend on being progressive, and changing to meet the

challenges of the future. To do that we still need a partner in city hall who respects us and the job we do for the people of Boston. This November is possibly the most important fight our job has had in its 300 years of service. We will stand together and fight for the positive change this city needs, and we will prevail! We will not allow the deaths of Kevin Kelley, Warren Payne and Paul Cahill to be in vain. The firefighters who protect this city deserve the respect of the Mayor of Boston.

*Ut ceteri vivant! That Others May Live!*



New Chief of Department Ronald Keating accepts congratulations from Local 718 President Ed Kelly.

– Photo by Jim Rodgers, FIU K-7

**Retirement Party for  
Charlie Santangelo, TL-17  
Thursday, April 30, 2009 • Florian Hall**

For Tickets contact: E-7 & TL-17 or the Union Office

**Retirement Party for  
Chief of Department Kevin MacCurtain  
Thursday, May 7, 2009 • Florian Hall**

For Tickets contact: Union Office or Chief of Dept's Office

**Watch for Flyers for both these parties in the firehouse!**

# Bargaining Team Report

By Peter Gailunas, TL-17

Prior to the City of Boston filing for arbitration with the state JLMC in August, 2006, the Local 718 bargaining team thought the two sides weren't that far apart on issues and compensation from a bargained contract. Part of the JLMC arbitration process is mediation; this is where an independent mediator is assigned to assist both parties close the gaps in bargaining and come up with an agreed upon contract. At these meetings, we would the mediator know which issues we had flexibility on and the City would do the same. After several mediation sessions, the mediator came to the conclusion that the City was showing no flexibility on any issues and let the JLMC know that this process was making no headway. It was then looking like the contract would get done through an arbitration award.

This whole arbitration/mediation process was taking place during the Boston media's assault on the Boston Fire Department. This assault was orchestrated by people at City Hall. Of course the City will deny this, but there is plenty of proof. At the first JLMC

meeting, we were asked to agree to a gag order on all of the talks that took place there. We were told that this was usually the first order of business at the JLMC. We agreed right away. The City had a problem with a gag order and would not agree to one. Judge Zoll subsequently issued one and the City violated it many times. They not only leak stories, violating the gag order, they were brazenly giving quotes. Lisa Signori, the City's Chief of Finance and Administration, and Dean Mazzarella, the City's JLMC representative, were quoted in several different stories about contract issues. Judge Zoll refused to sanction or even admonish the City for these violations. It did not look like we could get fair and impartial treatment from the JLMC.

At the JLMC meeting in October of 2008 to certify the issues to be addressed in arbitration, talks between the two sides started again. At one point President Kelly wrote down every Union give-back on a piece of paper, walked to City Hall and personally handed it to Mayor Menino. Included in these give-backs were: drug and alcohol testing, increased health insurance premiums, a return to acting

out of grade off of the Civil Service promotional lists, sick leave reforms, and civilianization of the Maintenance Division through attrition. Except for the Maintenance piece, these are the City's arbitration issues. They had all these issues and more if we could have done a deal through bargaining. Even if the City's bargaining team did not tell Mayor Menino what the City would receive in give-backs from us prior to then, he had them hand delivered by Ed Kelly in October, 2008. Several marathon bargaining sessions followed (we even missed a couple of Red Sox playoff games), before talks broke down yet again. For the City to tell the media that the Union wanted to be compensated largely for these give-backs is simply not true.

We could write a lot more on how we got to this point in the contract process, but let's cut to where we are now. Arbitration starts March 10, 2009. The arbitrator is Dana Eischen of New York. The issues are as follows:

## City of Boston

1. Drug and Alcohol Testing
2. Increase in Health Insurance Premiums
3. Return to Acting Out of Grade Off of the Civil Service List
4. Sick Leave Reforms

## Local 718

1. Special Operations Division (Hazmat and Tech Rescue)
2. Hazmat Ops (Every member trained up to Hazmat Operational Level)
3. 25 Year Step Raise Attached to the TCAP
4. Residency
5. Sick Leave Donation

At the start of this round of bargaining, President Kelly and the bargaining team had a goal of contract changes that would be good for our members while also benefiting the citizens of Boston (Hazmat/Special Ops). We actually felt that a lot of our proposals should have been coming from the City's side of the table. Unfortunately, the City did not want to settle this contract the right way, at the bargaining table.

Whatever the arbitrator rules in this contract, I am proud to have served Local 718 as a member of the bargaining team. We (every member of Local 718) were punched in the nose by the schoolyard bully over and over. We may get knocked down, but we will never get knocked out. We are too proud.

The Local 718 Bargaining Team includes Ed Kelly, Rich Paris, Larry Curran, Joe Finn, Peter Gailunas, Sean Kelly, and Attorney David Wanger.

## Retirement Party For Lt. Neal A. Mullane, E-21



**When: Saturday April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 • 7:00 p.m.**

**Where: Florian Hall, Dorchester, MA.**

**The Mullane Family and Engine 21 would like to invite all friends to attend a surprise party in Neal's honor.**

**Please join us at Florian Hall, Saturday night, April 4, 2009 to celebrate his historic 40 years of service.**

**Tickets will be \$20 per person.**

Available at the door or contact:

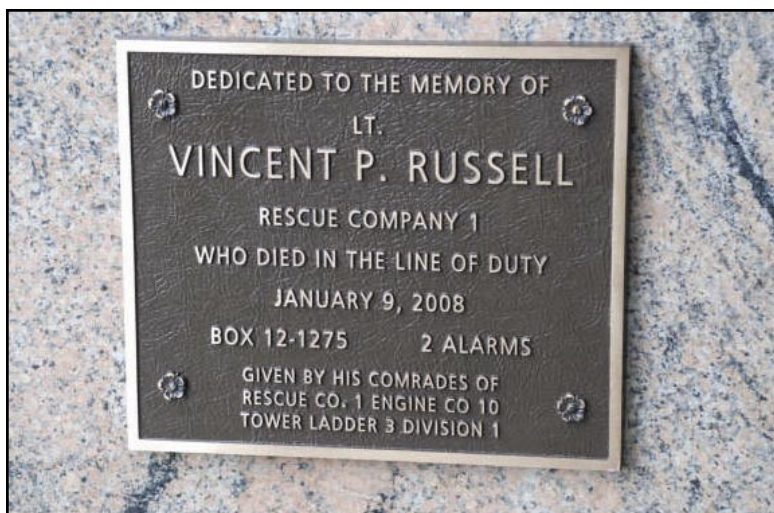
Neal Mullane Jr., L-1  
Ed Kelly, L-718  
Brian Tuohy, E-21  
Joe Foley, E-21  
Paul McLellan, L-23

Mike Mullane, IAFF  
Rich Paris, L-718  
Bobby Gallagher, E-21  
Ronnie White, E-21  
George Patukonis, HQ

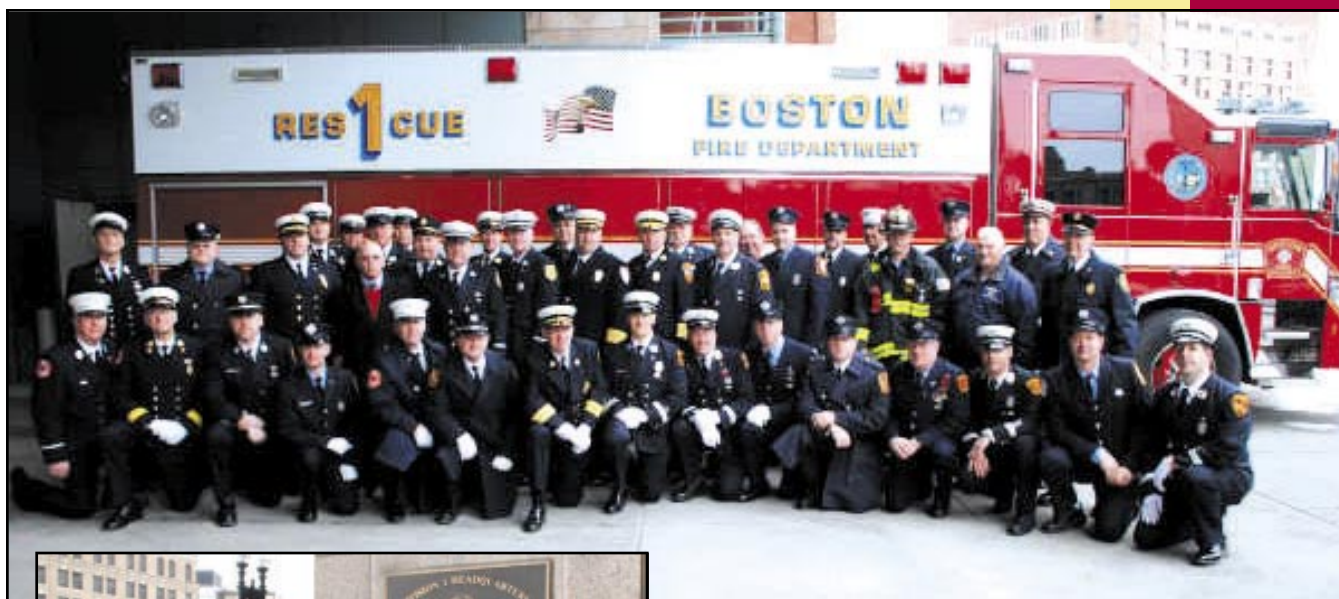
Paul Gillis, TL-17  
Ralph Dowling, FAO  
John Mellace, E-21  
Mike Walsh, R-2  
Joe Driscoll, L-16



## *Remembering Fallen Firefighter Lt. Vincent P. Russell of Rescue 1*



Members of Boston Firefighters Local 718, along with firefighters from around the state, family and friends, attended the plaque dedication January 24, 2009 of Lt. Vincent P. Russell, Rescue Co.1 who died in the line of duty at 2-1275 January 9, 2008.



Photos by  
Bill Noonan,  
FIU-K7



## 2008

District Chief Patrick J. Ellard, <i>District 11</i> .....	Appointed 9/27/72
Fire Fighter Joseph G. Battersby, <i>Engine 5</i> .....	Appointed 2/20/91
Lieutenant William Nelson, <i>Fire Prevention</i> .....	Appointed 12/24/69
District Chief John W. Conway, <i>Training Division</i> .....	Appointed 11/11/70
Fire Fighter Stephen Cloonan, <i>Rescue 1</i> .....	Appointed 7/7/71
Fire Fighter Thomas Flaherty, <i>Ladder 18</i> .....	Appointed 3/20/74
Fire Fighter John B. Kennedy, <i>Training Division</i> .....	Appointed 3/20/74
Fire Fighter Lawrence Rocci, <i>Engine 17</i> .....	Appointed 3/20/74
Fire Fighter Robert Hardiman, <i>Ladder 6</i> .....	Appointed 7/17/74
Lieutenant Robert Rull, <i>Engine 2</i> .....	Appointed 12/18/74
Fire Fighter Robert F. Cahill, <i>Engine 2</i> .....	Appointed 3/19/75
Fire Fighter Paul Hicks, <i>Fire Prevention</i> .....	Appointed 8/31/77
Fire Fighter David Mendes, <i>Engine 22</i> .....	Appointed 1/18/78
Lieutenant William F. Dennehy, <i>Ladder 28</i> .....	Appointed 9/27/78
Lieutenant Walter James, <i>Engine 55</i> .....	Appointed 9/27/78
Fire Fighter Walter Townsend, <i>Ladder 28</i> .....	Appointed 9/27/78
Fire Fighter Moses Pitts, <i>Fire Prevention</i> .....	Appointed 2/6/80
Lieutenant Thomas E. Brassil, <i>Fire Academy</i> .....	Appointed 1/22/86
Fire Fighter David Sylvester, <i>Ladder 23</i> .....	Appointed 8/20/86
Fire Fighter David Walker, <i>Ladder 4</i> .....	Appointed 10/28/87
Fire Fighter Charles R. Santangelo, <i>Tower Ladder 17</i> .....	Appointed 2/20/91
Fire Fighter Kim M. Akins, <i>Fire Prevention Division</i> .....	Appointed 7/15/00
Fire Fighter Richard Lopez, <i>W-25 Rehab Unit</i> .....	Appointed 7/15/00

## 2009

Chief of Department Kevin P. MacCurtain .....	Appointed 7/26/72
District Chief Cornelius J. Walsh, <i>District 6</i> .....	Appointed 12/24/69
Fire Fighter Walter F. Duggan, <i>Engine 5</i> .....	Appointed 11/11/70
District Chief Frederick J. Sullivan, <i>District 9</i> .....	Appointed 5/17/72
Fire Fighter Harry H. Hirtle, <i>Fire Brigade</i> .....	Appointed 7/26/72
Lieutenant Gerard L. Jenkins, <i>Ladder 23</i> .....	Appointed 9/27/72
Fire Fighter James F. Gallagher, <i>Ladder 1</i> .....	Appointed 9/5/79
Fire Fighter Steven Bowen, <i>Fire Prevention Division</i> .....	Appointed 5/12/93

## 2008

Retired 11/30/08	Lieutenant Robert L. Powell,	
Retired 12/5/08	<i>Engine 51</i> .....	November 25
Retired 12/31/08	Fire Fighter Edward R. Yalmokas,	
Retired 12/31/08	<i>Aide to the Commissioner</i> .....	November 26
Retired 12/31/08	Fire Fighter Arthur M. Turk,	
Retired 12/31/08	<i>Engine 34</i> .....	November 29
Retired 12/31/08	Fire Fighter Daniel F. Harrington, Jr.,	
Retired 12/31/08	<i>Engine 32</i> .....	December 3
Retired 12/31/08	Fire Fighter Edward P. Joyce,	
Retired 12/31/08	<i>Ladder 1</i> .....	December 17
Retired 12/31/08	Fire Fighter John P. Fallon,	
Retired 12/31/08	<i>Engine 41</i> .....	December 22

## 2009

Retired 12/31/08	
Retired 12/31/08	<b>Lieutenant Kevin M. Kelley,</b>
Retired 12/31/08	<b><i>Ladder 26 *Line of Duty*</i> ..... January 9</b>
Retired 12/31/08	Fire Fighter Robert F. Bowen,
Retired 12/31/08	<i>Aide to Division 1</i> ..... January 11
Retired 12/31/08	retired
Retired 12/31/08	Lieutenant Robert E. Alexander,
Retired 12/31/08	<i>Fire Investigation Unit</i> ..... January 18
Retired 12/31/08	Fire Fighter Edward E. Gurnon,
	<i>Engine 55</i> ..... January 19
	Fire Fighter John J. McCarthy,
	<i>Ladder 21</i> ..... January 28
Retired 1/16/09	Fire Fighter Henry Daise,
Retired 1/31/09	<i>Engine 30</i> ..... February 1
Retired 1/31/09	Fire Fighter Francis J. Dowling,
Retired 1/31/09	<i>Engine 49</i> ..... February 13
Retired 1/31/09	Lieutenant William G. Carpenter,
Retired 1/31/09	<i>Engine 36</i> ..... February 14
Retired 1/31/09	Fire Fighter Frank J. Gemellaro,
Retired 1/31/09	<i>Ladder 9</i> ..... February 22

**Engine Co. 25  
operating with their  
new (1947) Mack  
High Pressure Hose  
Wagon at a 3rd alarm  
in the market area,  
circa 1949.**

— From the collection of  
Bill Noonan, FIU K-7





# Hypertension Hits Hard in Boston Firefighters

By Michael G. Hamrock, MD,  
BFD Medical Examiner

In each Boston firehouse, on any given tour, eight of 10 firefighters have hypertension. These alarming statistics were recently discovered during the voluntary screenings of over 600 Boston firefighters by the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care nurses during their firehouse visits. Hypertension is a major risk factor in the acute coronary syndromes that occur every three weeks in a Boston firefighter. We need to act diligently to prevent and better control this disease.

Physical and mental stress, and chronic exposures to heat and toxins combined with sleep deprivation are among a few of the contributing factors for hypertension in firefighters. Hypertension makes the heart work harder as it attempts to push blood through high resistance vessels. A useful analogy would be the higher pressures needed from the fire pump to deliver water through a narrow fire hose. Heart failure from hypertension occurs as the heart muscle cells become overly stretched and enlarged and eventually less compliant in attempts to compensate for this heavy workload.

Even more critical is the damage to the coronary and cerebral arteries from the excess pressure on them with each heart beat. This constant pounding leads to micro tears which initiate an inflammatory response and plaque formation in these vital vessels. A hypertensive firefighter with additional risk factors including high cholesterol, smoking, being overweight, or diabetes will greatly accelerate plaque buildup and develop premature cardiovascular disease, strokes and kidney disease.

A predictable and harmful physiological cascade of events leads to heart disease in firefighters. For example, after the house alarm sounds there is an immediate adrenaline surge stimulating a rapid rise in heart rate and blood pressure. A firefighter with underlying hypertension will experience a more dramatic increase in blood pressure and heart rate while responding to and operating at the fire scene. The extreme physical stress to a hypertensive firefighter in heavy turnout gear causes excessive demands on the heart and blood vessels. Immediately, or within forty eight hours, this can lead to a plaque rupture and a total blockage of the coronary artery. Unfortunately, scenarios similar to this occur too frequently in Boston firefighters. Last year, 18 members suffered acute coronary syndromes. Although lucky to survive, many now have significant physical limitations and are permanently removed from fire duty.

While we cannot change the inherent health risks unique to firefighting, we can do a much better job in identifying firefighters

with hypertension early and aggressively treating them. This will certainly help prevent many firefighter coronary events. The goal is to keep blood pressures from not exceeding 120/80 mm Hg. This is exactly why the IAFF has joined forces with Novartis to develop the "Stop, Drop and Control" program to accomplish these very important tasks. This program will help screen, educate, and recommend lifestyle strategies and follow up to prevent and reduce hypertension in all Boston firefighters.

Several important steps that can be undertaken immediately to help reduce and prevent hypertension include:

- Schedule a comprehensive firefighter physical exam with your PCP as outlined in the BFD website.
- Throw the salt shaker away.
- Eat healthier meals that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Stop smoking.
- Keep alcohol consumption to no more than two drinks a day.
- Be fully compliant with your prescribed BP meds.
- Consult your PCP if you snore for an "obstructive sleep apnea" evaluation.
- Commit to four aerobic activity sessions a week such as brisk walking for thirty minutes.
- Start a weight loss program with the goal of a 10% reduction over four months.

It is not unusual to see some firefighters gain 20 pounds after the first year on the job. This is equivalent to carrying a half hour air bottle for the rest of your life! The typical firehouse meal is like a Thanksgiving dinner, containing about 3,500 calories which is exactly one pound. You would have to run a marathon the next day to burn this off. Still even more calories are consumed

in the same shift by raiding the fridge when returning from fires after midnight. This calls for behavior modification as these extra pounds put you at very high risk for developing hypertension and early coronary artery disease.

A weight loss goal of one pound per week is realistic and attainable with a little effort. Some helpful tips include:

- Keep servings of meat to the size of a hockey puck versus a frisbee.
- Drink at least two liters of water a day.
- Avoid second and third helpings.
- Reduce your daily caloric intake by 500 calories a day for five days of the week. This is doable by consuming one less bag of chips, candy bar, tonic, slice of pizza, donut, dinner roll with butter, or a bowl of ice cream.
- Walk, run or do the elliptical machine for two miles a day for four days a week. This burns nearly 1,000 calories as you use approximately 120 calories per mile.
- These small but very effective changes quickly add up to one pound (3,500 calories) weight reduction a week. Not only will you look and feel better but your blood pressure will decrease just as the weight is coming off.

Many of you have already taken the first important step into getting screened for hypertension. Take advantage of the many resources available from the "Stop, Drop and Control" program. Find the time to attend the BFD nutritional seminars that will be held over the next several months. Now is the time to take action. Make the lifestyle changes necessary to combat this "silent killer." Stay healthy and fit so that you can continue to do the great job you do every day for the residents of our city.



Lt. Mike Walsh, R-2 and Chief Chaplain Father Dan Mahoney.

— Photo by Bill Noonan, FIU K-7





D-11, E-41 & L-14.



Engine 24.

Photos by  
Bill Noonan,  
FIU-K7



Engine 50.



Ladders 9 & 21.



Engine 18.



Marine Unit.



## Recording Secretary's Report

Ralph Dowling, FAO



### We Need Accurate Up-to-Date Information From Our Membership

I know it sounds like a broken record, but we need accurate up-to-date information on our members. Recently we have had members seriously injured, and did not have correct next of kin information. The information that you provide to this office is critical in the event of an emergency. One, if not the worst task a President or other union official has to do is notify a family member of a serious injury or a line of duty death. With the news outlets drooling to be the first to name names, they will call houses and show up at front doors to tell someone their son, daughter, husband or father was just killed and ask what are your thoughts about his/her death... It sucks, but that's what we are up against at times.

On a lighter note, the IAFF has sent out to the membership the 2009 IAFF membership cards. Over 100 cards have been delivered to the union office because of bad addresses. We will attempt to send them to your work assignment or firehouse. A new feature that Local 718 is providing to our members is the Text Message Broadcast; Local 718 can send a text message to your cell phone. This is another great tool we can utilize to keep our membership up-to-date with important news on our Local. If you are interested in receiving text messages, login to the web

site, click on user settings, enter your cell phone number and cell provider and choose to allow text messages to your phone.

By using e-mail addresses we can send instantly, messages to hundreds of members in a matter of minutes. In cases when we endorse a specific political candidate, we can send mailings via US mail to target specific towns and cities that our members reside in. This is a great tool and it continues to grow. If you do not presently receive the Local 718 E-Newsletter and you wish to be added to our list, send your name and e-mail address to [Ralph@Local718.org](mailto:Ralph@Local718.org). You can also visit [www.bostonfirelocal718.org](http://www.bostonfirelocal718.org) and register online.

Finally I would like to thank all our members for your support of Lt. Kevin Kelley's family. Kevin was a friend, a great firefighter, officer and proud union member. His funeral was a beautiful tribute to a man who served this city for 30 years, but was killed so senselessly.

The leadership of this Local will continue to fight for your rights, and the respect that you all deserve for the service you provide protecting the citizens of Boston.

Stay Safe.

## Treasurer's Update

Nick DiMarino, TL-10

### Union Dues Information

Let me first say thank you to the membership for giving me the opportunity to be the Treasurer; it is a privilege and honor for me to serve as your Treasurer.

I am writing to let you know how much you paid for your dental and union dues in 2008.

Union Dues .....	\$ 741.42
Dental – Family .....	\$1,297.66
Dental – Single .....	\$ 512.20

This is for the entire year. If you have any questions please feel to contact me at the Union Hall.

The open enrollment for the dental plan will start May 18, 2009 and end June 19, 2009. This is the only time you are allowed to drop or add members to the dental plan. There will be more information to follow with regards to the dental plan.

Any member who needs to change their address for the *IAFF Magazine* should contact me as I send any changes to the IAFF on a monthly basis. This past month we received back quite a few union cards from the IAFF because of incorrect addresses. We need all members' correct addresses in case we need to contact you in the future. As you will see in this *Digest* we have included a change-of-address form in case your contact information has changed.



Rear of a large frame dwelling is nearly fully involved on Broadway, South Boston. 5 alarms, Box 7137, December 12, 1955. One child was killed during this fire.

— From the collection of Bill Noonan, FIU K-7

The 1917 Seagrave Hose Wagons of Engine Co. 8 and Engine Co. 36 operate at a 3rd alarm in January, 1921 near North Station.

— From the collection of Bill Noonan, FIU K-7



# Company Runs 1998-2008

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Engine Company Runs</b>											
E-2	1369	1276	1230	1267	1259	1156	1333	1064	1067	1091	1087
E-3	1883	1967	2235	2237	2038	2212	2039	2138	2263	2348	2368
E-4	3157	3060	3468	3222	3287	2898	2994	2777	2711	2771	2838
E-5	1707	1438	1870	1855	1709	1573	1593	1614	1599	1651	1733
E-7	3475	3426	3724	3633	3427	3513	3313	3111	3085	3097	3128
E-8	1293	1080	1436	1442	1380	1359	1215	1127	1199	1270	1272
E-9	1074	1100	1184	1226	1069	1022	927	850	807	885	795
E-10	3340	3358	3753	3469	3170	2915	2706	2587	2505	2600	2549
E-14	3300	3200	3412	3446	3346	3337	2912	2696	2529	2788	2614
E-16	2054	1955	2253	2281	2035	1997	1860	1805	1826	1707	1869
E-17	2683	2613	2706	2643	2574	2319	2034	1787	1837	1805	1867
E-18	2584	2651	2744	2693	2462	2287	2189	1895	1572	1930	2087
E-20	1129	1220	1446	1294	1147	1193	1091	1030	1158	1069	1057
E-21	3763	3712	3863	3921	3826	3677	3410	3236	3215	3379	3357
E-22	2428	2436	2625	2674	2505	2482	2262	2393	2404	2363	2350
E-24	3471	3597	3489	3781	3492	3162	2840	2601	2617	2535	2908
E-28	2365	2416	2433	2490	2293	2276	2219	2154	2042	2051	1972
E-29	2220	2183	2186	2164	2000	2024	1962	1807	1797	1751	1889
E-30	1583	1608	1608	1701	1603	1500	1471	1502	1371	1224	1468
E-32	819	895	1004	897	956	840	717	792	736	810	754
E-33	<b>3948</b>	<b>4154</b>	<b>4139</b>	4118	<b>4031</b>	3850	3815	<b>3780</b>	<b>3582</b>	3476	3473
E-37	3808	3767	4072	<b>4270</b>	3861	<b>3920</b>	<b>3923</b>	3622	3522	<b>3683</b>	<b>3613</b>
E-39	2697	2864	2756	2795	2494	2275	2135	1954	2012	2175	2077
E-41	3015	3122	3127	3179	2913	3044	2827	2646	2586	2683	2773
E-42	2707	2494	2755	2874	2634	2491	2187	1935	2078	2222	2317
E-48	1733	1748	1660	1799	1752	1743	1466	1378	1370	1298	1475
E-49	549	576	596	598	553	529	517	545	577	604	620
E-50	1286	1340	1437	1442	1418	1460	1329	1199	1166	1205	1210
E-51	946	907	929	995	899	878	876	826	837	899	910
E-52	2709	2733	2787	2783	2582	2374	2169	1951	1991	2048	2053
E-53	2612	2632	2579	2671	2707	2507	2255	2132	2129	2098	2141
E-55	963	1046	1113	1144	1045	1079	1028	908	971	1016	1057
E-56	941	1224	1109	1075	1027	903	981	800	810	906	831

*bold italic is top engine*

<b>Ladder Company Runs</b>											
L-1	1015	1154	1272	1150	1207	1256	1036	1129	1303	1407	1301
L-2	1188	1195	1456	1420	1378	1348	1243	1376	1282	1331	1240
L-4	3088	2857	3646	3558	3525	3696	3418	3537	3449	3701	3547
L-6	2596	2608	3127	2986	2736	2874	2714	2631	2477	2655	2759
L-7	3024	3020	3281	3127	3070	3016	2745	2825	2799	2848	2721
L-9	1121	1197	1313	1197	1235	1255	1096	1152	1122	1234	1137
L-10	2108	2206	2482	2530	became Tower-Ladder 10						
L-11	1880	1874	1976	1971	1906	2036	1942	1999	2037	2130	2041
L-14	2522	2535	2844	2792	2625	2862	2563	2626	2652	2767	2759
L-15	3429	<b>3601</b>	3866	3807	3717	3833	3594	<b>3948</b>	3781	3810	3683
L-16	2109	2063	2250	2313	2332	2361	2155	2333	2271	2306	2319
L-17	3374	3370	3915	3742	3564	3935	3725	3779			
L-18	2120	2248	2460	2368	2380	2404	2226	2319	2580	2564	2480
L-19	935	844	940	924	953	930	994	1027	1101	1191	1133
L-21	993	1007	1179	1194	1051	1034	979	1042	989	1127	1094
L-23	2782	2854	3070	3141	2988	3094	2714	2819	2963	3021	2999
L-24	2305	2193	2697	2472	2502	2489	2459	2703	2708	2834	2830
L-25	1258	1277	1474	1460	1430	1531	1468	1524	1581	1490	1594
L-26	<b>3444</b>	3395	<b>3950</b>	<b>4119</b>	3777	<b>4049</b>	<b>3921</b>	3875	<b>3934</b>	<b>3947</b>	<b>3771</b>
L-28	1333	1352	1510	1494	1507	1714	1456	1522	1632	1672	1697
L-29	2277	2302	2724	2642	2428	2516	2268	2258	2464	2356	2234

*bold italic is top ladder*

<b>Chiefs and Special Unit Responses (Chief's Numbers are Incidents per Division/District)</b>											
Div 1	28,444	28,901	33,694	33,290	32,098	32,367	30,923	31,906	32,905	32,831	32,445
Div 2	33,480	33,502	38,970	40,011	37,913	38,667	35,960	35,993	36,789	36,495	36,239
Dist 1	3163	3141	3913	3949	3603	3481	3334	3436	3417	3528	3557
Dist 3	7873	7757	9418	9210	9092	8865	8437	8931	8894	9277	8617
Dist 4	7383	7870	9075	8880	8694	9197	8643	9015	9222	8935	9001
Dist 5	7972	7947	9508	9726	9270	9663	9308	9372	9248	9207	8828
Dist 6	4919	4976	5535	5417	5241	5193	5012	5045	5407	5368	5039
Dist 7	6883	6874	7719	7904	7553	7514	6690	6482	6664	6738	6760
Dist 8	5405	5498	6678	6691	6149	6302	6002	5835	5930	5759	5908
Dist 9	5421	5335	6252	6572	6014	6051	5561	5620	6011	6240	5847
Dist 10	3464	3604	4086	4299	4057	4234	4029	4132	4230	4027	4246
Dist 11	5106	5157	5753	5834	5468	5631	5497	5479	5677	5723	5914
Dist 12	4335	4246	4727	4819	4870	4903	4370	4552	4561	4524	4484



	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
TCU											291
Brush 48	17	4	11	18	14	3	8	14	10	6	9
Brush 55	16	2	27	34	13	7	4	12	10	7	8
W-12											
Air Supply	73	65	71	80	61	35	32	24	37	66	59
W-25											
Rehab Unit	607	600	599	563	515	472	504	387	339	486	486
H-1											
Safety Chief	536	516	572	544	1259	249	232	264	291	334	305
H-2											
Special Unit	510	460	460	469	417	210	194	184	207	183	146
H-3											
Haz Mat	67	48	76	43	56	38	35	30	43	72	65
Tower Unit	2107	2125	2293	2240							
TL-3					1947	2044	2002	1981	2012	2202	1937
TL-10					2740	2440	2329	2469	2527	2531	2238
TL-17									3873	3966	<b>3826</b>
Brigade	135	170	241	275	238	212	273	325	262	298	256
Marine Unit	219	395	446	400	410	305	304	213	150	200	170
Rescue 1	2089	2033	2240	2160	1978	1780	1399	1516	1627	1799	1692
Rescue 2	2382	2155	2353	2342	2249	2315	1681	1740	1825	2222	2166

**bold\* – most responses**

## BFD Response Statistics 1975-2008

<b>Year</b>	<b>Incidents</b>	<b>Multiple Alarms</b>	<b>Working Fires</b>	<b>Fatalities</b>
2008	71,474	54	N/A	4
2007	71,630	62	stopped 3/7/07	11
2006	71,242	22	23	2
2005	71,021	16	21	4
2004	70,473	25	18	3
2003	74,666	30	23	4
2002	75,542	44	25	11
2001	78,826	42	21	8
2000	77,573	41	27	4
1999	74,206	36	21	2
1998	71,961	45	38	10
1997	70,105	42	40	9
1996	62,115	61	60	9
1995	59,826	49	29	8
1994	54,835	65	39	9
1993	47,607	56	41	7
1992	46,563	50	34	11
1991	44,586	68	41	9
1990	45,380	62	43	14
1989	46,265	56	41	18
1988	49,969	60	60	18
1987	50,870	73	43	13
1986	49,300	91	55	17
1985	48,983	92	54	18
1984	43,497	84	58	14
1983	40,568	121	63	27
1982	44,484	177	81	20
1981	50,010	167	108	26
1980	53,717	139	113	17
1979	55,307	108	100	24
1978	58,655	140	135	24
1977	58,151	151	168	28
1976	57,616	183	189	30
1975	63,775	191	226	42

NOTE: In 1980, the Boston Fire Department went from a 5-alarm response system to 9-alarm response system.

## Here is a breakdown of activity the early morning of February 21, 2009 from 0100-0800 hours. Group 4 working.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Response</u>
1:07	Carbon Monoxide	197 Beacon St.	E7, TL-17, D4
1:16	Unknown EMS	122 Brooks St.	E5, D1
1:22	Street Box Pulled	Box 3358	E24, L23, D7
1:22	Cardiac Disorder	8 Whitman St.	E52, D8
1:23	Still Alarm	1259 Commonwealth Ave.	E41, L14, D11
1:26	Struck Box 514	1259 Commonwealth Ave.	E29, E51, E37, L11, R1, Brookline E5
1:27	Struck Box 3358	616 Blue Hill Ave.	E42, E17, L29, R2
1:28	Struck Box 514	1259 Commonwealth Ave.	W25
1:30	Struck Box 3358	616 Blue Hill Ave.	E52 from Whitman St.
1:31	Second Alarm 3358	616 Blue Hill Ave.	E21, E14, E18, L7, L4, TL-10, TCU, C7, D5, D8, K6, K7, C22
1:32	Second Alarm 3358	616 Blue Hill Ave.	E53, L16, D12 - RIT Response
1:34	Third Alarm Box 3358	616 Blue Hill Ave.	E3, E22, L19, W12
1:35	Unknown EMS	501 E Broadway	E39, D6
1:39	Lock Out	172 Newton St.	L26
1:46	Auto Central Station	109 Peterborough St.	E33, L15
1:46	Fourth Alarm 3358	616 Blue Hill Ave.	E10, E28
1:48	AFBM	45 E Newton St.	E7, L11, D4
1:48	Fourth Alarm 3358	616 Blue Hill Ave.	W25 from Box 514
1:49	Struck Box 2343	109 Peterborough St.	E50 from E14, E4, L24, R1, D4
1:51	Fifth Alarm Box 3358	616 Blue Hill Ave.	E39 from E17, E49 from E52, L26 from D11, X1
1:54	Unconscious Person	1126 Boylston St.	TL-3
1:55	Struck Box 2343	109 Peterborough St.	E51 RIT response
2:04	Fifth Alarm Box 3358	616 Blue Hill Ave.	TL-17
2:04	Motor Vehicle Accident	Congress / Purchase St.	E7, L1, D3
2:04	Unknown EMS	3700 Washington St.	E55 from E53
2:06	Auto Central Station	973 Commonwealth Ave.	E51, Brookline L2
2:10	Unconscious Person	1944 Dorchester Ave.	Quincy E4 from E18
2:10	Unconscious Person	Chatham / Merchants Row	E8, D3
2:12	SOG	Atlantic / Congress St.	E7, L1
2:30	Investigate a Furnace	59 W Selden St.	E16, L6
2:37	Auto Central Station	460 Blue Hill Ave.	E37
2:38	Unknown EMS	10 Park Plaza	E7
2:40	Medical	10 Tiverton St.	Quincy E4 from E18
2:45	Unknown EMS	Berkeley / Tremont St.	E7
2:49	Motor Vehicle Accident	239 Chestnut Hill Ave.	E29, L11, D11
2:53	Investigate Alarm	4 Fountain Place	E8, L21, D3
3:00	Fifth Alarm Box 3358	616 Blue Hill Ave.	E37, E20, L28, L21 fire detail
3:06	Difficulty Breathing	12 Laval St.	E48, D12
3:11	Unknown EMS	1 Appian Way	E41, D11
3:20	Medical	746 Centre St.	TL-10, D9
3:31	Auto Central Station	6 Buswell St.	E33, L26, D5
3:33	Struck Box 2322	6 Buswell St.	E41, E22, L15, R2, Brookline E5
3:37	Motor Vehicle Accident	Atlantic / Summer St.	E10, R1
3:41	Struck Box 2322	6 Buswell St.	W25 from Box 5-3358
3:48	SOG	Atlantic / Summer St.	E10
3:49	Motor Vehicle Accident	Bussey / South St.	E28, TL-10, D9
4:26	Auto Central Station	665 Huntington Ave.	E14, L26, D5
4:40	Vehicle Accident-Entrap	Storrow Drive Eastbound	E7, E4, TL-17, L24, R21, D3
4:45	SOG	Storrow Drive Eastbound	E7, TL-17, D3
4:48	Auto Central Station	210 Longwood Ave.	E14, L26, D5
4:54	XBO	1371 Commonwealth Ave.	E41, L14, D11
5:18	Medical	1371 Commonwealth Ave.	E41, L14, D11
5:21	Auto Central Station	87 School St.	E42, TL-10, D9
5:35	Unknown EMS	30 Castlegate Rd.	E24
5:42	Difficulty Breathing	11 Ledgewood Rd.	E30, D10
5:49	Investigate Alarm	9 Sherman Rd.	E14, L4, D5
5:58	CARST	337 Neponset Ave.	E20, D8
6:02	AFBM	125 Parker Hill Ave.	E42, L26, D9
6:40	Difficulty Breathing	2923 Washington St.	E42, D9
6:43	AFBM	130 Tremont St.	E4, L24, D3
6:49	Struck Box 33-1441	130 Tremont St.	E10, E7, TL-3, TL-17, R1, TCU, W25, D1, D11, D6, C6, K6, K7
6:55	Motor Vehicle Accident	Mass. Ave / Shawmut Ave.	E22, L4, D4
6:55	Cardiac Disorder	1607 Commonwealth Ave.	E29
7:22	Auto Central Station	120 Norway St.	E33, L15, D5

In total, there were 48 incidents received that required 172 responses from Companies, Chiefs and Units.

*Compiled by Principal Fire Alarm Operator Barry Stafford*



*Companies Operating at 3rd Alarm, Box 3647,  
Blue Hill Avenue and Walk Hill Street on February 1, 2009*



Photos by Bill Noonan, FIU-K7

### Health Insurance Legislation

**T**he push continues to take health care off the collective bargaining table. At the meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the governor once again urged local cities and towns to move to the Commonwealth's Group Insurance Commission (GIC).

In theory it all sounds good. The idea is that the larger pool gives the state leverage and that bulk purchasing is less expensive, thus saving money for the Commonwealth. The truth is it may be a good deal for some communities, but for many of us the state plan would result in higher costs for employees.

Under the state plan the employees have no meaningful say in plan design and the quality of the plan. A *Boston Globe* editorial January 29 advocates for the outright removal of health insurance from the collective bargaining process.

The current system allows communities who have adopted Sec. 19, of Chapter 32A, to negotiate with the insurance companies over plan design, premiums, co-pay, deductibles etc. This method puts the city and the union on the same side of the negotiating table. The law requires that the unions who are represented along with the retirees approve any change with a 70% vote.

Some see the 70% as too high a burden and as an impediment to change. The part that is never mentioned by our opponents is that in a majority of towns, one bargaining unit makes up more than 50% of the weighted vote. If the 70% rule is changed it would allow administration to make a deal with one bargaining unit in exchange for their support on health insurance. Such a change would shift all the power to the teachers' unions.

We all acknowledge that costs associated with health care are a national problem. The *Globe* however, in its editorial speaks to the issue of cost containment. The *Globe* views increased co-payment, and increased deductibles as cost controls. We view these measures as cost shifting, not cost controls.

The Patrick administration is promoting a proposal that would penalize local communities who don't join the state's GIC. The proposal would attempt to compare the health plans of the local communities with the GIC plan and then they will look at the cost of the local plan and compare it to the cost of the GIC plan. If the GIC plan would have saved the local community money, then the state will deduct the equivalent amount from that city or town's local aid money.

The problem is, it is very difficult to compare plans when there are different plan designs, with different copays, deductibles, etc. We can't forget however that this didn't stop the administration from applying a bogus comparison for the pension systems. To compare the returns of local retirement system with all the restrictions on their ability to control their asset allocation against the PRIT Fund which has no investment restrictions is like comparing apples and oranges. It is not a valid comparison.

### Temporary House Committee on Pension Reform

The House of Representatives has established a special committee to begin immediately dealing with pension reform. We may be calling on you to contact members of the committee if you live in their districts. The committee is as follows:

Rep. Jay Kaufman – Lexington  
Rep. Linda D. Forry – Dorchester  
Rep. Martin Walsh – Dorchester  
Rep. James O'Day – Worcester  
Rep. Allen McCarthy – East Bridgewater

Rep. William Straus – Mattapoissett  
Rep. Stephen Kulik – Turners Fall  
Rep. Mary Grant – Beverly  
Rep. Ellen Story – Amherst  
Rep. Thomas Conroy – Wayland  
Rep. James Miceli – Wilmington  
Rep. Robert Hargraves – Groton  
Rep. George Peterson – Grafton  
Rep. Todd Smola – Three Rivers

The Committee held a meeting at the State House on Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup>. The Chairman didn't accept any testimony but said that the Committee intends to file a bill to reform the pension system. He said these changes will be prospective and will deal with issues such as what constitutes regular compensation.

It doesn't sound like we will have much input in the process prior to the bill being drafted but we will keep you informed.

### National Conference of Public Employees Retirement Systems

NCPERS, the voice for public pensions is very active in their advocacy on behalf of defined benefit public pension systems. NCPERS supports efforts to stabilize the economy through specific legislative efforts.

NCPERS is lobbying Congress to consider and include the following provisions which have the potential to bring relief to state and local governments.

NCPERS encourages Congress to look at the public pension as a model to bring retirement security to all Americans. Public pensions are good investments for the employees, taxpayers and they are financially sound. These defined benefit plans provide financial security for millions of public employees and allows them to be self sufficient in retirement and they continue to contribute to their local economies in their retirement years.

NCPERS is urging Congress to require states and their political subdivisions who receive stimulus money to make their actuarially required contribution to the pension plans.

As institutional investors, NCPERS is working closely with Congress and other federal agencies in drafting new laws and regulations with agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission.

NCPERS is working closely with the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Ways and Means on H.R. 710, the so called "Ackerman Bill." The bill calls for using government support to channel funds from a deep, readily accessible source of private capital – the public pension funds – to banks which can leverage that capital in ways which support governmental measures to right the economy. The target rate for this investment is currently 8.5%.

The bill would create a fund called the public pension fund capital infusion fund. The fund would be made up of assets invested by public pension funds from around the country and the target is to fund at a level of \$50B to \$250B.

The bill would benefit the banking system, the government and the pension systems. For the first time private funds would be used to help stabilize the financial system. The use of pension assets allows the federal government to direct more money to other sectors of the economy. The investments by the pension systems would be guaranteed by the federal government with a

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## Executive Board Division 2 Representatives' Report

John Sarro, E-24, Mike O'Reilly, L-29 and Bobby Petitti, E-42

### Condolences to the Boys at Huntington Avenue

**F**irst and foremost our condolences go out to the boys at Huntington Ave. It's a shame that one of us had to lose his life before anyone actually listens to our concerns over safety. It was great to see such a strong showing of support to the Kelley family.

We would also like to thank the membership for all their hard work during November's Election Day stand-out. It was great to see just how much the public still supports us, despite the despicable way the Menino Administration has tried to de-

stroy our reputation.

The war is far from over! We've had to fight for everything we've gotten from this Administration. It started from the beginning with the three zero's, and has continued right up to the present day.

With the warm weather approaching, we will once again be asking for your help. Thank you to all of the members who joined us in solidarity by marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in South Boston on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Health Insurance Legislation

(continued from page 20)

rate of return of 8.5%, thus mitigating the amount they have to invest in the banking system. The guaranteed return would benefit the pension systems that have been decimated by plunging equity prices. In turn this benefits state and local government and taxpayers.

As we go to press we have just received word that the entire \$40B in the stimulus

package, intended for state and local aid, has been removed from the Senate Bill. This was done at the insistence of the Republicans and means that there will be no help for the cities and towns unless the conference committee can restore the funds. The Republicans say they want the money to be used for creating new jobs and they don't consider saving an existing job as a worthwhile expenditure.

### Boston Firefighters Raise More Than \$50,000 for MDA

**B**oston Fire Fighters Local 718 raised \$52,000 last year for MDA's "Fill the Boot." We were the only Massachusetts Local to rank in the top 100 IAFF Locals for this fundraiser, placing #65. Congratulations!

*Local 718 held an appreciation reception for close to 50 MBTA bus drivers who volunteered to drive their buses moving hundreds of firefighters at our Line of Duty funerals.*



The presentations were made by Local 718 President Ed Kelly, VP Rich Paris and the Special Operations Funeral Committee led by Mike Walsh and Ralph Dowling.

The members of Boston's Carmen's Union Local 589 along with their President Steve MacDougall and their Executive Board received windbreakers with the logos of Local 718 and Local 589 on them.



## Municipal Employee Health Insurance “The GIC Option”

**T**his white paper is submitted by the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts, on behalf of its 12,000 members throughout the Commonwealth. This paper explains why municipal health insurance should remain a statutorily obligated subject of collective bargaining. When one considers the nature and inherent risks of our profession – the high rate of injuries, occupational illnesses and exposures to numerous hazards – it is easy to understand why quality and affordable health insurance has always been a top priority for our members.

Numerous media outlets have reported that the Massachusetts Legislature is contemplating amending Chapter 67 of the Acts of 2007: “AN ACT TO REDUCE THE RELIANCE ON PROPERTY TAXES THROUGH MUNICIPAL HEALTH CARE.” (This law is known as the “GIC Option,” as it provides municipalities the option of joining the Group Insurance Commission, or “GIC,” the state health insurance plan).

The proposed change would remove the second paragraph of MGL Chapter 32B Section 19, which currently reads:

Acceptance of this section shall not take effect until a written agreement has been reached between the appropriate public authority and the public employee committee, but the written agreement may condition acceptance of this section upon the transferring of subscribers into the commission under subsection (e). A written agreement to transfer subscribers to the commission under this section shall be the sole means by which the subscribers of a political subdivision may be transferred to commission coverage.

Eliminating this provision would strip municipal employees of their collective bargaining rights and undo fifty years of progress in labor-management relations in Massachusetts. It gives municipal management the unilateral ability to force all employees into the state plan, the GIC, regardless of the rights and concerns of these employees.

Chapter 67 of the Acts of 2007, as it currently stands, already allows cities and towns to join the GIC through a process called ‘Coalition Bargaining,’ outlined in Chapter 32B Section 19. This provision was an integral component of the Governor’s Municipal Partnership Act. Coalition Bargaining simplifies the process of negotiating changes to healthcare plans by creating a single bargaining committee comprised of one representative from each municipal bargaining unit and a retiree representative. This presents an opportunity for management and unions to work together collectively to

reach a consensus on the GIC option and to decide how to share any realized savings.

Quality healthcare is of vital importance and should be left to each municipality to decide for themselves. GIC is not the oasis many claim it to be. This white paper addresses the reasons to keep collective bargaining for municipal health care statutorily obligated and to oppose any amendment to this law.

### Collective Bargaining

**I**n 1961, the Great and General court enacted Chapter 150E, Massachusetts Collective Bargaining Law. In their wisdom, they recognized the need for labor and management to negotiate over wages, benefits and working conditions. Next to wages, health insurance is the largest monetary and most important collective bargaining issue. The Massachusetts Labor Relation Commission and the courts have consistently stated, and rightfully so, that health insurance is a mandatory subject of bargaining. The unions in this Commonwealth understand fully the effects of escalating health insurance costs. In fact, they are painfully reminded by management every year at the bargaining table.

Over the last decade, wages and salaries of state and local government employees have fallen considerably behind those of private sector employees in Massachusetts, according to data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis in a 2005 report entitled “*Local Communities At Risk*.” While casual observers try to suggest that municipal employment contracts have been overly generous in recent years, the fact is that most have been conservative enough to produce an average annual growth per employee of only 0.7% (in inflated-adjusted terms between 1994 and 2003). While this rate increased 1.0% for state employees over the same period, it increased 1.8% for the private sector. This wage growth is reflected in the following chart, in grey for local government, blue for state government, and black for the private sector:

For years, public sector unions have foregone pay raises to maintain their health insurance benefits. The *total value* of any collective bargaining agreement (or “contract”) reflects the balance between wage increases and health insurance options; the collective bargaining agreement is nothing more than a set of rules that are mutually agreed to on how the total compensation will be distributed. To arbitrarily remove the second largest compensation aspect of a collective bargaining agreement undermines the entire process.

During the legislature’s deliberations of this anti-union and anti-worker proposal, it will be said that the right to negotiate over health insurance contribution rates will not be taken away. However, if it



Robert McCarthy,  
President,  
Professional Fire  
Fighters of  
Massachusetts



is solely management's discretion to transfer employees to the GIC, what chance under this process do employees have to gain any equitable contribution split to mitigate the almost guaranteed increase in out-of-pocket costs? The simple answer is none!

### Differences between GIC and Municipal Plans

**T**he Group Insurance Commission (GIC) is a quasi-independent state agency governed by an fifteen-member Commission appointed by the Governor. It was established by the Legislature in 1955 to provide and administer health insurance and other benefits to the Commonwealth's employees and retirees, and their dependents and survivors.

The GIC has a two tiered system of premium contribution splits and has also instituted an extensive system of co-pays, co-insurance and deductibles that employees/retirees must pay when they utilize their health insurance plans.

On the other hand, municipalities provide health insurance to its employees using either a premium based system or a health claims trust fund (self-insured). Regardless of the system used, each local community determines the types of plans offered, the design of each plan, the level of benefits that meet their employees' needs, the level of co-pays, deductibles and the premium contribution split.

Both the GIC and municipalities offer HMO, PPO and Indemnity-type plans. However, the GIC, unlike most municipalities, does not offer Blue Cross/Blue Shield products. Whereas Blue Cross/Blue Shield has nation-wide network areas, the GIC's UniCare State Indemnity Plan, which is the most expansive plan, is the only non-medicare plan that is available throughout the United States, thus greatly limiting the options for non-medicare enrollees. Differences exist in the premium contribution rate as well.

Non-Municipal enrollees in the GIC pay between 10% and 20% of the premium cost for the health plan they choose. Municipal employees pay between 10% and 50% of the premium cost. A survey of PFFM Locals shows that almost 70% of them pay more than 20% of the premium cost. In fact almost 20% of our Locals pay 50% of the premium.

Significant differences between out-of-pocket expenses exist as well. The GIC typically has higher co-pays for office visits, prescription drugs and

emergency room visits than municipal plans. In fact, under the GIC, co-pays for hospital care are sometimes as high as \$400 per admission or outpatient service.

Considering our hazardous occupation - with the increase of co-pays, deductibles, utilization fees, outpatient surgery, prescription drugs and mental health cost - a member could see their out-of-pocket cost reach several thousand dollars a year in the unfortunate event that they become sick or injured. As firefighters, we have a moral obligation not to allow this to happen to one of our brothers or sisters. We risk enough from daily exposures to sickness, toxins and hazards; we should not have to risk our financial security!

### The Reality of the GIC

**M**uch has been made about the Group Insurance Commission's ability to keep rate increases down in comparison to cities and towns in Massachusetts. There are some that look upon the GIC as a panacea for local officials as they struggle to keep up with rising healthcare costs. But *why* in many cases, *do* cities and towns premiums exceed comparable GIC plans?

First, the *primary* driver of health insurance rates is the 'claims experience' (claims history) of the group. This is true for the GIC as well as municipalities. A single terminally ill employee or an older, sicker workforce can wreak havoc on the claims experience of a small municipal group, whereas with the GIC, there is a larger subscriber pool to smooth this increased risk across.

Secondly, administrative costs are factored into any health insurance premium. The GIC, due to its sheer size alone, may have the advantage of lower administrative costs as compared to many municipalities. Other factors leading to higher administrative costs for municipalities may be lack of bargaining power with insurance carriers to reduce the administrative fees or the poor management of self-insured health claims trust funds.

Thirdly, there is a direct correlation between the premium charged by a health insurance plan and the out-of-pocket costs. The greater these 'out-of-pockets' (co-pays and deductibles), the lower the premiums can be set. Because of the higher co-pays and deductibles, a switch to the GIC plans could place a 10% cost shift onto public employees resulting in potentially hundreds or thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs.

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In reality, the GIC does not attain better discount rates with hospitals or doctors than other large providers in the state; they merely keep shifting more costs to the subscribers to keep the premium increases as low as possible. However, an important fact to remember is that while a percentage of the premium is shared by both employer and employee, the out-of-pocket expenses are borne solely by the employee and the employee's family. In essence, co-pays and deductibles become a "sick tax," an unfair tariff on those who fall ill.

Each community has a long and unique history of how wage increases and health insurance offerings have evolved. If an individual community's bargaining history is ignored when comparing the GIC health plans to municipal plans, one is not comparing apples to apples, but rather is conducting an unfair and incomplete comparison.

Is the GIC the Solution for Controlling Municipal Health Insurance Costs?

It is premature for anyone to make a declarative statement that the GIC is the solution to containing municipal health care costs. It will take many years of actual data until a meaningful conclusion can be drawn. Nonetheless, this does not mean that municipalities and unions should not jointly examine the "GIC Option."

Municipalities benefit from being able to offer quality health insurance plans to their employees. This aids in the recruiting and retaining of employees. When communities compete with each other to recruit employees, such as highly qualified teachers, the health insurance benefits offered can play a critical role in the prospective employee's decision. No one benefits if the plans offered are either prohibitively expensive or if the plan design is not comparable with other employers.

For some communities, it appears the GIC could provide significant premium savings over what they currently pay. However, all factors must be considered and the principal of 'balance' is critical when evaluating health insurance offerings: balance between plan design and plan cost, balance between the cost of the premium and the cost of co-pays, and the balance between the share of the premium paid by the employer and the share paid by the employee. The value of an employee's health care could be reduced if municipalities are allowed to unilaterally enter the GIC without the unions having an opportunity to bargain the premium contribution split to help off-set the higher co-pays and deductibles. Additionally, this unilateral ability would provide an unfair advantage, and in some cases an incentive, for municipalities to keep all of the potential savings in premiums.

Whether municipalities should receive all of the savings or whether they should share the savings

with the employees is a complicated question. The only way to resolve this issue, short of the Legislature mandating communities entering the GIC to do so at the contribution split enjoyed by state workers, is for municipalities and public employees to jointly work out the details through the Section 19 process, as per the current law (coalition bargaining). The concept of the municipal GIC option is to free up much needed dollars in cities and towns. As previously stated, without involving the employees in this critical decision, there is no obligation by management to compensate their workforce for the loss of the existing plans and the often-higher out-of-pocket costs that many will experience. This compensation can be as simple as splitting the cost savings of entering the GIC, but that formula should be left to the parties that have a long collective bargaining history on the subject.

#### Alternative Ways to find Savings

**T**here are other viable ways to save money, outside of the specific health plans. To begin, cities and towns could properly manage and fund their health claims trust funds. This would prevent the roller-coaster ride many of them have experienced as a result of poor oversight and poor decisions. Cities and towns can implement aggressive wellness programs and disease management programs to reduce future costs from preventable illnesses related to high-cholesterol, obesity, smoking and a host of other behavioral causes of illness. Moreover, cities and towns can join purchasing groups to pool their experience. In fact, many communities have done this with great success. However, many communities choose not to, but continue to complain about the increasing costs. It appears that the mere option of the GIC has caused a drop in premium rates from many insurance companies and has saved communities money. Additionally, carriers like Blue Cross Blue Shield have created a new product portfolio called Municipal Blue that was developed in cooperation with municipal leaders and input from public employee unions and allows similar savings as the GIC.

Public Employee Committees formed under Chapter 32B Section 19 are educated, energetic players who tend to ease the burden of management to force changes upon the unions. Employees recognize that reasonable plan changes can result in savings to both the municipality and themselves. Coalition Bargaining allows local communities and the employees to maintain "control" of their health care choices. Public employees should not be viewed as adversaries but rather as partners who have as much to lose because of escalating healthcare costs. More than a dozen communities have already successfully used Chapter 32B Sec-



tion 19 to jointly solve health insurance issues. One can reasonably assume that this can continue in other communities.

No municipal leader should be allowed to declare the current system broken until they have attempted in good faith to reach agreement to enter the GIC option through the Section 19 process. Does one think that employee representatives would deny the members they represent potentially thousands of dollars in savings, if it is shown that the GIC Option could produce overall long-term savings for the employee, the retiree and the taxpayer?

### Summary

**N**umerous communities are exploring the option of purchasing their health care from the GIC. Considering that the GIC rates, plan design, and structure were just released in March and the law allowing municipalities to join the GIC is still in its infancy, it would be premature to say that the law is not working. Health Insurance is a major portion of the total compensation package for all of our members. Just as pay rates and benefits differ in most communities so do health insurance contribution rate splits and health insurance plan offerings. Fire fighters in one community may enjoy higher base pay but more than likely they pay a greater share of their health insurance costs. To pick one part of a total compensation package and strip it away is totally unacceptable and unfair. It is equally as unacceptable and unfair to create a law that allows for municipalities to unilaterally shift a greater share of the health insurance burden

onto employees while potentially capturing the savings for their exclusive use.

Firefighters are not opposed to finding ways to reduce the cost of providing health insurance. Firefighters believe that potential savings should be shared by both the municipality and the employee.

The current law that requires the adoption of Chapter 32B Section 19 to enter the GIC should be maintained so all interested parties have a voice in this important decision. If labor and management work together, as has been done in many communities, solutions on how to deal with a community's escalating health insurance costs can be found. For some communities, the GIC will be the best option for addressing their health insurance needs; for other communities, retaining local control will be the best option for addressing *their* health insurance needs.

The decision to enter the GIC is for local communities and their employees to make, not for the state legislature to mandate. Removing the right to collectively bargain over the second largest piece of an employee's compensation package does not advance worker rights in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but rolls the clock back 50 years.

You cannot say you support workers and unions while stripping away the right to collectively bargain.

***The Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts asks you to please oppose any changes to MGL, Ch. 32B, Sec. 19, to our health insurance and to our collective bargaining rights.***



Ladder 4.



Tower-Ladder 10.

— Photos by Bill Noonan, FIU K-7



**Temple Street Fire, 2 alarms,  
January 16, 2009.**

— Photo by Jake Wark



**Lt. Neal Mullane and Commissioner /Chief of Department  
Leo Stapleton – together 79 years of service to the people of Boston.**

— Photo by Bill Noonan, FIU K-7



**Gerry Welch, L-23; District 12 Chief John Howard and  
Ed Doherty, L-23 at 3-3647 on February 1, 2009.**

— Photo by Bill Noonan, FIU K-7

**Local 718 Vice President Rich Paris and  
President Ed Kelly keep in touch on their cell phones.**

— Photo by Bill Noonan, FIU K-7





***All Companies Working at Box 7431, 631 West 6th Street  
on January 31, 2009***



Photos by Bill Noonan,  
FIU-K7



**Save The Date!**



Boston Firefighter's Burn Foundation

**Firefighter Cook-Off**  
Fundraiser

May 16, 2009

**FENWAY PARK**

4:00-8:00 pm

120 METRO BOSTON FIREFIGHTERS

90 RECIPES

500 GUESTS

**ONE MISSION**

To ease the suffering and hardship of burn victims and their families

More Details Available on the BFFBF Website  
[www.BFFBF.org](http://www.BFFBF.org)

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The color guards stand at attention on the steps of St. Ann's Church in Quincy to honor Lt. Kevin M. Kelley.

Engine 37 carrying the casket of Lt. Kevin M. Kelley moves down Hancock Street in Quincy to his final rest.

— Photos by Bill Noonan, FIU-K7

