

EDITOR'S NOTES

BY JON CARTER, 25/A

ENOUGH ALREADY!

Is it all about the "Benjamins" or are we really that devoid of leadership? Recent events have led many to believe that it's a little bit of both. First our Chief asks for a raise, then he tells us there may be a tiny bookkeeping error that will cost us some money. Would a real Chief officer please stand up; please stand up!!

This should be a time for the Houston Fire Department to embrace its Chief and applaud his accomplishments. Just last month he was one of eight Chief Fire Officers in the nation invited to attend Harvard University for a special government school. And he has garnered plenty of other papers and documents that say we're doing good, and they all point to him as the catalyst. Ask any Fire Fighter on the street and they'll tell you none of it matters; true leaders don't treat their troops like this.

It's getting old; the constant daily barrage of Bulletins and Special Bulletins and Training Bulletins on items that are about as relevant to fire-

fighting as jock-straps are to fly fishing. EXAMPLE: We now know, according to September's continuing education class, that if you keep the red skin on peanuts when you eat them it may reduce your chance of heart attack. Yet here we are, in the midst of a pretty active hurricane season, and I'd wager that you couldn't get a passing score from half the Department on our Hurricane Procedure. I know! I know! We're supposed to read those procedures in between runs and checking plugs and updating TEAPS and all. Let's go ahead and devote time to reading about peanut shells! How about the peanut shells on our down time and some mandatory time spent on things that matter, like policies and procedures? That's called priorities, which is a concept lost long ago on Dart Street.

And that brings us back to the issue of docking people pay for missing their Debit Days, once again a totally mismanaged situation. Instead of making a stink while trying to fix one of YOUR problems, why not offer the people

who are supposed to get docked the opportunity to repay the deficit with benefit time, which is probably what most of them want to use in the first place? That probably won't happen, though, as the city has proven time and time again that it prefers lawsuits to doing the right thing. And if it does come down to a lawsuit, word is that the city will probably end up owing more money that it has allegedly overpaid. That sounds about par for the course!

And all of this came to light before the city's taxpayers on September 11th, which is now, as you all know, a sacred day to the Fire Service because of the loss of life in New York on that day. Our Chief offered no excuse when asked why he released this story on that date, only saying in the newspaper that he "has no agenda to try to harm

any Houston Fire Fighter, because that's my family." Sorry Chief, we ain't buying it; actions speak louder than words. Any Fire Fighter can tell you that.

But we can't complain about these things without catching flack from City Hall. In the meantime, though, the Police Union can call a program requiring them to ask for people's phone numbers "unprofessional", and people call it an appropriate protest. And we're questioning whether or not we should give back \$200 to \$400 that no one really knows for sure that we were overpaid. Where's the logic?

There's no logic in a lot of things, nowadays, especially when it comes to our alleged leadership. Until next time, keep looking for that logic, and let me know if you find any.

Stay Safe!

REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

by Scott Mellott, 15/A

LIST OF LINE-OF-DUTY-DEATH ANNIVERSARIES FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER:

October 13, 2001 - JAY PAUL JAHNKE- Captain - Station 2

October 19, 1971 - TRUXTON JOSEPH HATHAWAY JR. - Fire Inspector - Training Academy

October 31, 1954 - DELBERT HARVEY SHERFY - Chauffeur - Station 17

LIST OF RETIREE'S WHO HAVE RECENTLY DIED:

WALLACE ANDREW WHITLEY served HFD from 1946 to 1973, died on September 5th 2002.

ROGER LANGSTON DANSBY served HFD from 1965 to 1998, died on August 31st 2002.

EDWARD F. CORLISS served HFD from 1948 to 1976, died on August 27th 2002.

LAWRENCE VANWRIGHT JR. served HFD from 1974 to 2002, died on August 26th 2002.

JAMES "JIMMY" P. MILLER served HFD from 1956-1993, died on August 22nd 2002.

SAM RIZZO served HFD from 1952 to 1979, died on July 18th 2002.

GEORGE VINCENT MUSACHIA served HFD from 1969 to 1980, died on July 11th 2002.

ROGER BUELL served HFD 1968 to 1988, died on July 5th 2002.

When a loved one or someone special to you dies, the month that they died seems to be singled out in your mind. The month of February has a special meaning to all Houston fire fighters. This is the month Kim and Lewis died. Valentines Day, 2001 has a definite different meaning now. October last year also became one of those months after our brother firefighter Jay Jahnke died. September always had a special meaning to me personally. On September 8th 1900 a class 5 hurricane made a direct hit on Galveston Island on a Saturday afternoon, and took an estimated 6,000 souls. Then of course 101 years later on a Tuesday morning, September 11, four commercial airliners were hijacked by terrorists and within a short time after the first hijacking almost 3,000 Americans were murdered.

September is not just the month that starts football season, or the month the kids are finally back in school. It is the month that thousands of people died. It is not just the month of February; it is the month that two of our firefighters were lost in one night. It is now not just October; Halloween, cooler weather, lots of football games, it is the month that our dear friend and fellow Fire Fighter brother was lost.

Please visit my web site for more information on these firefighters and many others that have made the ultimate sacrifice.

www.houstonfirememorial.org

Saturday, December 14, 2002 8:00 pm- Midnight

33RD ANNUAL

Christmas Party

Benefiting "The Last Alarm Club"

Tickets Can Be Purchased From:

- Credit Union Main Office
- Angie- CU North Branch
- Brian McLeroy @ 45C Jimmy Campbell @ 4A
- Buddy Russell @ 2D John Burton @ 69A
- Rita @ Union Hall Lisa Simmons @ 8A
- Jimmy White @ 30C Greg Collins @ 103A
- Larkin "Pudge" Williamson @ 31C
- Roger Campbell - 281-447-3310
- Bubba Beasley @ 15C - Pager 713-710-0629

The Houston Fire Fighters Relief and Retirement Fund

Conference Center

4225 Interwood North Parkway

Tickets: \$25.00 per couple in Advance
\$30.00 per couple at the Door
\$15.00 for Singles

Free Beer and Setups
BYOB

Featuring:
"Stephen Brown & Who's Next"