UNITY

THRU STRENGTH AND PURPOSE

Quarterly Voice of the Retired Detroit Police and Fire Fighters *Volume 157, Spring, 2024*

PRESIDENT

Don Taylor

It looks like we made it through another Michigan winter, this one wasn't bad. We only had to shovel snow a couple times and the temperatures were fairly mild. It now time to start thinking about the Association summer events. The Association General Meeting and Picnic in Frankenmuth will be June 17 & 18. The Golf Outing is scheduled for August 9th at Oakridge Golf Course.

There's nothing new happening with the legislatures in Lansing, however the Association is currently involved in possible Lawsuit against some members of State Government for what we believe was improper distributions of Grant Funds from the State Budget. We became aware of proposed funds for Retiree "Voluntary Employees Beneficiary Association" better known as VEBAs in the State Budget. We reviewed the language being proposed and were sure the language would cover the VEBA that all of our members that retired prior to January 1, 2015 belonged to. Once the legislators approved the budget and the Governor signed it into Law, the VEBA Board sent a letter to the State regarding these funds, and as far as I know they didn't even receive a response. It is now our understanding that these funds were distributed to VEBAs formed after the Detroit Bankruptcy. Below is a copy of the actual language from the Law that was passed, Public Act 119 of 2023 Article 9, Section 1010(8):

> **(8) From the funds appropriated in part 1 for healthcare grants, $10,000,000.00 must be awarded to a voluntary employee's beneficiary association located in a city with a population greater than 600,000 according to the most recent federal decennial census that was formed during the city's bankruptcy. The funds shall be used to provide association members funding for benefits that were reduced because of the city's bankruptcy.**

We will keep you updated regarding this matter and notify you if and when the lawsuit is filed.

Regarding Federal Legislation once again legislation has been filed regarding Social Security Windfall and Pension Offset. H.R. 82 Social Security Fairness Act of 2023, Sponsor is Representative Garrel Graves (R-LA) and has 311 current co-sponsors, which is once again enough to require action by the committee, House Committee on Ways and Means, or if no action by the Committee it would require action by the full House of Representatives. As you may recall in the last legislative session there was enough co-sponsors to require action, and what the committee did was voted the Bill out of Committee "Without Recommendation" which removed the requirement for the full House to take action. So this could be the same action they take this time. But we will continue you to monitor just in case by some miracle, they do actually move the Bill.

(continued on page 4)

VICE PRESIDENT

Gregory Trozak

Greetings everyone, I hope all is well with all of you and you survived the winter and are getting ready for the spring and summer months. The past few months have been quiet which is a probably a good thing. The pension system is doing fine so those checks will continue into the future. The City is required to make their annual contribution to the system by June 30th but it appears that they are waiting for a ruling from the bankruptcy court on the systems appeal of the court's ruling on the amortization period. If the systems appeal is denied the amount will be in the area of 70-75 million and if the appeal is approved the amount will grow another 10-15 million. Either way the City has the money and they are expected to pay by the due date.

Switching over to the Association news, we all know that the Annual Picnic and General Meeting are fast approaching. The dates are June 16 17 and 18; the fun begins on Sunday night the 16th with a hospitality room located in the Bavarian Inn then continues on Monday the 17th with the Annual Picnic located at Heritage Park which is located right behind the Bavarian Inn. After the picnic the Hospitality Room will be open again that evening and then finish up with the Annual Breakfast Meeting the next morning on Tuesday the 18th. Those planning on attending can make reservations by calling the Bavarian Inn @ (989) 652-7200 and using the group number, 13O5WA (use the letter O). The nightly rate for the standard room is $139.00 plus tax and new this year is a resort fee of $29.99 which according to the Bavarian Inn will allow them to continually make improvements to their guest experience. So it looks like you will have to dig a little deeper under those mattresses for this year's stay. I hope to see many of you there this year because I always look forward to seeing many of you and finding about all the new medical procedures that have been performed over the past year and don't forget to pack all your medications. Also scheduled in the next few months is the Associations Annual Golf Outing which is scheduled for Friday August 9th 2024 there will be more information to come so stay- tuned.

Again I would like to remind everyone that keeping this Association having the ability to continue to serve our members it is imperative to recruit some younger members. If you have relatives, friends or know of recent retirees, remind them of this Association and ask them to consider joining. This also applies to both Police & Fire Veterans to consider joining the American Legion Post 161 and the VFW Post 1519 which are both Police & Fire organizations.

In closing out another Unity I am asking for your support in the upcoming election for Retired Police Trustee on the Police & Fire Pension Board. I'm not sure how many candidates will be running as the nomination period is in progress. It has been my pleasure to serve on the Pension Board and I would appreciate your support and allow me to continue to serve the retired Police members of this Association and all Police retirees.

Until the next time enjoy the upcoming summer months, enjoy them with family and friends, be careful out there and remember this isn't the world we grew up in.

Retired Detroit Police & Fire Fighters Association Inc.
2525 E. Fourteen Mile Road • Sterling Heights, MI 48310-5969
(586) 795-1734 • Fax (586) 795-2183
Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m till 3:00 p.m.

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Allan Grant

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WEB SITE
www.rdpffa.com

SECRETARY/ TREASURER

Al Grant

The Retired Detroit Police and Fire fighters Association annually has a total of five General Membership Meetings, two on the west side, one in March and one in October at the American Legion Carl E. Stitt located at 23850 Military Rd., Dearborn Heights and two on the east side one in May and one in December at the American Polish Century at 33204 Maple Lane, Sterling Heights. The fifth meeting is in June at the Bavarian Inn located in Frankenmuth, MI. We conduct business at the General Membership Meetings, reporting a roll call of deceased members following with financial matters and updating the membership on legislative actions that could affect our members. A meal and beverages are provided to all in attendance.

The business of the Retired Detroit Police and Fire Fighters Association is constantly being monitored by a Board of Directors. The Board meets at the RDPFFA office located at 2525 E. 14 Mile Road on third Tuesday of every month. On July 18, 2013 the City of Detroit filed for Chapter 9 bankruptcy. It was largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history. One of our concerns is membership and our numbers are steadily declining. When Detroit exited bankruptcy in December 2014, a startling figure from RDPFFA entries of members receiving a pension check on payroll deduction was 4,897. The number currently is 3,739 decreasing our numbers by 1,158, over 24 percent reduction for the last nine years.

Previously, the Association was able to recruit new members in the course of the regular cycle of hires and retirements but things have changed with active members. The members are delaying retirement, waiting for Medicare age because of the lack of healthcare after retirement. Consequently, over the last nine years we have only added 274 to our membership rolls which amount to over 30 each year. The present active Police and Fire department personnel numbers are at 2,500 police and 850 firefighters.

The Association has taken the applicable steps with recruiting by making announcements at General Membership meeting, reminders in the quarterly Unity magazine and requesting our members to assist in recruiting. The Police Personnel Unit assists us by passing out information to retiring members requesting that they join the RDPFFA. The Firemen's Fund goes one step further by providing newly retired personnel with a packet to join the Retirees Association along with payment of the first year's annual dues. We truly appreciate the assistance given by all.

We welcome all and any suggestions from our members to promote our organization and look forward to many more years of providing services and camaraderie for the RDPFFA membership. Moreover the Association is always looking for ideas to organize events for members to come together making it attractive and worthwhile to be a member of the Association.

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PRESIDENT *(continued from page 1)*

Now once again I'll give you some numbers regarding our membership, I did this a couple years back and now I thought it was time for an update. As you see, we are an association with an aging and shrinking membership:

Current total membership 4624, highest total membership was in 2013 during Bankruptcy just under 6800. This is the current membership age chart:

AGE	Total Members
80 & Over	1597
Of those 80 and over there are:	
100 & Over	30
90 to 99	377
79 and under	3062
Of those under 79:	
60 to 70	710
59 and under	251

These numbers are approximate because of some overlapping. The current oldest member, Reginald LeBlanc DOB 03/31/1921 (103), retired 2/27/1976 as Lt. with the Detroit Fire Department.

That's it for now, enjoy your summer, and hope to see you at the Association events.

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Bernie Brennan at (734) 420-0250 or bbren16752@aol.com

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE

For your information and the Association's benefit, it is important that when your summer/winter address changes, we are notified in advance of the move and again when you are returning to your home address. That way we can keep you current. We don't want to lose you in the process.

Welcome New Members!

December 2023

LeValley, David - Police

January 2024

Haight, Donald - Police

Smith, Brandon - Police

Gerardy, Charles - Fire

February

Werth, Roy - Fire

Sklar, Jeffrey - Police

Smith, Novella - Police

March

Yakimovich, Jonathan - Police

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UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

11th Precinct Retirees Luncheon
Second Wednesday of the month at 1:00 P.M.
Buddy's Pizza - (586) 566-1233
45841 Hayes Rd • Shelby Township, MI 48315

Fire Fighters Breakfasts
First Monday of the month at 9:00 A.M.
Dimitri's Opa Restaurant – **(NEW LOCATION)**
50875 Gratiot Ave, Chesterfield, MI 48051-3133

Third Tuesday of the month at 9:00 A.M.
Omega Coney Island
22501 W. Eight Mile Rd., Detroit, MI

First Thursday of the month at 10:00 A.M.
Little Chef Restaurant 101 Brookside Lane,
(Enter off Grand River) Exit 145 off of I96

Call the Association Office if you need additional information

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ASSOCIATION CALENDAR OF EVENTS* Updated!

General Membership Meeting Schedule:

AMERICAN POLISH CENTURY CLUB
33204 Maple Lane - Sterling Heights, MI - 7 PM
December 5, 2024

AMERICAN LEGION
23850 Military Rd - Dearborn Heights, MI - 7 PM
May 2 & October 3, 2024

RDPFFA Annual Picnic
Bavarian Inn - Frankenmuth, MI
Monday, June 17, 2024

East Side Silver Ladies*
1st Tuesday of the month
Time: 1:00 P.M.
See Column for Location

Snowbirds Of Michigan*
Meet 2nd Sunday of the month
May thru November
at "Fred of Roscommon"
430 N. 5th Street - Roscommon, MI
Social Hour 11:00 AM – Meeting at 1:00 PM

***Refer to columns for specifics or program changes**

Articles for the Summer 2024 Issue should be "submitted" by July 22, 2024

Snowbirds

Dan Zemaitis

Greetings from sunny Florida:

The first couple of months have been referred to as unsunny Florida. Finally we're getting back to normal then the spring breakers arrive. It's still better than ice and shoveling snow though.

I'm sorry to say that we lost a long time member and friend, Wilber Christopher. Our deepest condolences go out to his wife Kay and their family.

In January a small group of us met at Piccola Italian restaurant in Zephyrhills. As always great food and friends and no time limit on our stay.

In March we met at "Mamas" in Tarpon Springs. We enjoyed a great meal and camaraderie. Those who attended were: Mike and Sue Kniaz, John and Carolyn Wood, Don and Cindy Rem, Joann Cherry, Tony Fontana and Dan Zemaitis.

March Birthdays: Jerry Rozanski, Evelyn Brehm, Violet Praytherand George Perry

April Birthdays: Karen Haderer, Mike Kniaz, Cindy Rem, Maryann Ponik, Georgette Gekiere and Mary Stano

May Birthdays: Marsha Dreslinski and Jerry Henningsen

Thanks much to our RDPFFA Officers and Volunteers for all you do.

Hope to see everyone at our first meeting in 2024 at Fred's of Roscommon on May 19th at 11:00 a.m. social time and 1:00 p.m. meeting. All are welcome to join us.

I only have the Cell phone now in Michigan which is (989) 305-1035.

In the meantime – take care and God Bless.

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Son of Stephen Parsell
Retired Detroit Firefighter

Grandson of Carl Parsell
Former President of the D.P.O.A. and retired Detroit Police Officer

Members Letters

I appreciate all you continue to do for the Retired Detroit Police & Fire Fighters, and their spouses. Updating new important information. You are always there to help us with any questions and concerns. Please use this check wherever needed. In memory of my husband Lt. Joe Twardzik.

Helene Twardzik
Macomb Twp., MI

Thank you for all you do, your services are greatly appreciated.

William & Shelley Lamb
Highland, MI

The enclosed check is in memory of my husband, Sgt. Harvey Harris. I appreciate so much your hard work and dedication to the association for the retirees and spouses.

Judy Harris
Northville, MI

To all the officers and others who help with the RDPFFA. Thank you for what you do for all the retired members. It would be great if we could get the dead beats to join. Use the enclosed where it is needed. I would also like to commend Chet Opolski and the VEBA committee for all their hard work.

Marvin & Patricia Kammer
Englewood, FL

Please use the well over dues amount check enclosed where needed most. Thank you for all the hard work you do on behalf of all our members.

Charles Archibald
Taylor, Michigan

Thank you for all you do to advance the position of the association members. Please use this contribution as you see fit.

Adrienne Watts
Detroit, MI

In memory of Macy Rolf. Macy was the President of the Silver Ladies.

Del Raska
Chesterfield, MI

We would like to thank all the officers in the RDPFFA for their efforts on behalf of the members, we appreciate your efforts. Please accept the enclosed check for the PAC in memory of John Hangstefer.

Jim & Sandy Purrington
Whitmore Lake, MI

Accept this check in memory of my very dear friends; Cmdrs. Fred Auner, Al Bensmiller, Al Gomez and longtime partner, Sgt. Roy C Hoffman. Use this donation wherever necessary.

Sgt. Frank Krzesowik (Choir Boys)
Ann Arbor, MI

I know it's not a lot. To all the guys @ 2nd Pct., after the riots that shaped me. All the Mounted & especially the Motormen, that I loved. Thanks everyone, use for what's needed.

Dewey Welch
Novi, MI

Thanks for you sometime thankless efforts. Please accept this in memory of Giacomo Buffa our brother officer.

Den & Mag Barton
Caseville, MI

Please use this as you see fit, in memory of my husband, James (Jim) Arthurs.

Judy Arthurs
Macomb. MI

Use as needed in memory of deceased partners, George Ball, Pat Reardon, and John Pasha.

Bill Niarhos
Harrison Twp., MI

Thanks for all you do for us. Please use this where it is needed the most. In memory of partners, gone but never forgotten.

David & Susan Sylvester
Lake Placid, FL

Use this donation wherever it is needed. Thanks for all the hard work the Association does for all of us, including the non-payers who reap the benefits of your efforts. In memory of Mark Amos.

Rick & Diana Irons
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THIRTY THIRD ANNUAL GOLF OUTING FOR RDP&FFA MEMBERS & GUESTS

Date: Friday, August 9, 2024

Time: 9:00 a.m. (Shotgun Start)

Location: Oak Ridge Golf Club

35035 26 Mile Rd.

New Haven, Michigan

***Limited to the first 36 foursomes/144 golfers**

Cost: $75.00 per person (including gifts for every registered golfer). Price includes:

(a) 18 holes of golf with golf cart

(b) Full breakfast beginning at 8:00 am

(c) Prize table

(d) Games played on all Par 3 holes; Skins game (additional $20 per team)

(e) Lunch Buffet served after golf

(f) Beer and beverages served in the club house and designated areas on the golf course

Golfers **MUST REGISTER** individually by 8:00 a.m. to receive tee and cart assignments.

SCRAMBLE format with shotgun start will begin promptly at 9:00 a. m.

Make checks payable to: RDPFFA (GOLF)

Send to: RDPFFA GOLF

2525 East Fourteen Mile

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Phone: (586) 795-1734

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REGISTRATION FORM (*This form must be completed in full for each golfer)

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IN MEMORIAM

Once again, we call the roll and acknowledge those friends and associates who have left us since our last publication. It is hard to let go of good friends but it is easy to remember the good times we shared and realize that now they rest in peace.

January 2024

Name	Rank	Dept.	Appointed	Retired	Date of Death	Age
Bednarski, John	Sgt.	Police	2-15-71	7-6-98	1-30-24	76
Bobzin, Frederick	P.O.	Police	8-5-63	8-5-98	1-4-24	82
Collins, Oliver	P.O.	Police	11-13-86	7-7-95 (Resigned)	1-17-24	61
Cylkowski, Neil	P.O.	Police	5-28-68	7-9-96	1-4-24	79
Gadde, Marvin	P.O.	Police	6-29-70	7-9-01	1-29-24	74
Marklin, Robert	P.O.	Police	4-18-66	4-18-85	1-28-24	83
Mosier, Loren	P.O.	Police	12-6-71	2-10-81	1-8-24	73
Oliveri, Phillip	P.O.	Police	6-24-75	7-15-00	1-4-24	71
Pravato, James	Sgt.	Police	3-10-69	1-18-82	1-31-24	76
Reyst, Gregory	P.O.	Police	4-22-74	1-28-83	1-18-24	71
Slivatz, Robert	P.O.	Police	10-2-72	1-18-77	1-6-24	73
Smith, Timothy	P.O.	Police	5-5-74	4-23-94	1-18-24	75
Wertman, Wilford	P.O.	Police	10-21-57	3-1-83	1-17-24	90
Williams, Marble	P.O.	Police	10-17-78	3-21-90	1-4-24	70
Yamin, “Rick” William	P.O.	Police	2-4-74	6-25-87	1-26-24	76
Zarkis, Charles	Sgt.	Police	8-5-63	11-1-88	1-19-24	81
Christensen, Harold	Dep. Chief	Fire	9-9-57	2-12-91	1-27-24	89
Elkouri, Elias	Lt.	Fire	5-1-61	2-6-87	1-11-24	83
Gerling, Gregory	Lt.	Fire	5-1-67	6-1-92	1-28-24	77
Hale, Wells	FFD	Fire	10-7-74	10-31-89	1-21-24	78
Wiley, Jack	Sr. Chief	Fire	7-5-77	10-29-16	1-9-24	67

February 2024

Name	Rank	Dept.	Appointed	Retired	Date of Death	Age
Cathey, Nathaniel	P.O.	Police	4-29-68	11-30-94	2-17-24	82
Day, Mary	P.O.	Police	8-13-84	3-15-11	2-18-24	73
Ekaut, Gene	Sgt.	Police	2-11-63	2-11-98	2-3-24	83
Fegins, Charlie	P.O.	Police	6-10-68	10-27-76	2-4-24	77
Finch, James	P.O.	Police	9-16-68	6-23-89	2-27-24	87
Garrison, Ronnie	P.O.	Police	8-5-70	8-5-83	2-28-24	74
Garstecki, Raymond	Sgt.	Police	4-27-64	4-27-89	2-29-24	88
Hedtler, Juan	P.O.	Police	1-8-73	2-21-86	2-4-24	77
Jones, George T.	P.O.	Police	3-1-74	8-1-00	2-9-24	80
Keillor, Arthur	P.O.	Police	4-19-71	1-2-97	2-15-24	74
Lapum, Francis George	Sgt.	Police	11-18-63	12-16-91	2-28-24	82
Lepage, Lyle	P.O.	Police	12-1-71	3-27-81	2-2-24	81
Mangum, John	Invg.	Police	9-12-74	8-6-01	2-29-24	75
Monroe, Everett	P.O.	Police	8-12-85	4-18-11	2-17-24	67
Newkirk, Danny	Cpl.	Police	1-6-86	Died Active	2-12-24	64
Oliver, James	Insp.	Police	2-11-63	12-3-88	2-1-24	85

(continued on next page)

IN MEMORIAM *(continued from page 12)*

February 2024 (continued)

Name	Rank	Dept.	Appointed	Retired	Date of Death	Age
Patti, Michael	Corp.	Police	2-22-93	Died Active	2-1-24	57
Pongracz, Steven	P.O.	Police	4-26-72	1-6-88	2-1-24	74
Poole, Alpheus	P.O.	Police	9-6-71	7-9-04	2-20-24	75
Respert, Henry	Sgt.	Police	6-2-77	4-6-94	2-19-24	76
Stewart, Charlotte	P.O.	Police	11-16-81	2-13-96	2-8-24	81
Zupanic, Edward	Insp.	Police	7-10-61	5-9-92	2-5-24	85
Baumann, Richard	Capt.	Fire	12-5-66	3-2-98	2-12-24	77
Breitschuh, Ernest	Capt.	Fire	1-4-66	10-27-95	2-7-24	78
Howell, Jamel	FF	Fire	8-10-92	7-6-11	2-21-24	53
Wooden, Marquis	Capt.	Fire	7-9-73	1-5-06	2-14-24	76

March 2024

Name	Rank	Dept.	Appointed	Retired	Date of Death	Age
Cheney, Ralph	Lt.	Police	9-28-59	4-12-85	3-20-24	86
Daniels, Nancy (Kunna)	P.O.	Police	3-27-75	9-5-98	3-22-24	72
Dosen, Joseph	P.O.	Police	6-3-68	6-4-93	3-30-24	81
Dunn, Patrick	Sgt.	Police	9-24-56	12-29-81	3-9-24	88
Evans-Lee, Annette	P.O.	Police	5-4-80	4-15-85	307-24	74
Fuson, Gary	P.O.	Police	3-10-69	4-14-89	3-26-24	77
Gurnow, John	P.O.	Police	10-27-86	4/23/90 (Resigned)	3-15-24	62
Hicks, Phillip	P.O.	Police	12-16-68	1-12-04	3-18-24	79
Lafata, Harry	P.O.	Police	10-4-71	9-14-77	3-20-24	73
Lewis, Alexis	P.O.	Police	7-29-85	7-30-07	3-24-24	58
McClanahan, Carl Jr.	Sgt.	Police	12-17-81	5-6-06	3-17-24	77
McLaughlin, James	P.O.	Police	1-21-72	3-10-99	3-27-24	78
Mounsey, Leslie "Ron"	Sgt.	Police	1-25-65	8-4-03	3-15-24	84
Weinand, Phillip	P.O.	Police	1-31-55	6-3-81	3-25-24	91
Charron, Thomas	FFD	Fire	9-2-69	4-7-86	3-23-24	76
Hunt, Michael	Lt.	Fire	6-15-59	3-4-86	3-29-24	89
Kulish, Donald	FEO	Fire	9-12-55	2-7-81	3-22-24	90
McConnell, Timothy	Bt. Chief	Fire	7-7-64	5-15-00	3-31-24	83

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