

The Palmer

Charlotte FireFighter Association

April 2024

www.cffa660.org

704-331-9515

Retiree Fish Fry



On March 8, 2024, Charlotte Firefighters Local 660 hosted the 11th annual Retiree Fish Fry at Station 11. This tradition started by Captain Tripp Fincher originated out of Station 11. Captain Fincher's crew love to hear his retiree stories and he wanted them to share in his experiences growing up surrounded by firefighters. So he told them: "Let's throw a traditional Friday fish fry." The first fish fry hosted 75-100 people; this year's event according to Captain Fincher fed close to 400 people. He knows the retirees enjoy it because "the annual fish fry and October BBQ" is either the first or second thing retirees ask when they see him. Why? According to retiree William "Bob" Summey, local 660 member since 1959, "It's the camaraderie. I go to meet the guys otherwise I could just buy the fish myself." He says he believes there are only nine members including himself who worked for the Charlotte Fire Department in the 1950s and these events are important to both active members and retirees.



According to the March 2024 Battalion Chief's Meeting notes, Station 11 is tentatively scheduled to start demo in June so the union decided to host the fish fry where it all started one last time. This is also special for retiree Summey because he opened Station 11 in 1959 when it houses Engine 11, Engine 14, and Car 2. If you retired out of Station 11, a par tag was placed on the retirement board for you. Captain Fincher hopes to host future fish fry at other interested stations because you cannot substitute that experience. The most memorable part of the fish fry for Captain Fincher is guessing who will get there first (sometimes as early as shift change) and who will leave last. This lighthearted joke has become another tradition he cherishes listening to exchanging of stories into the evening and hearing the pride in the retirees voices as they talk about their careers with the Charlotte Fire Department. He wanted to end this article with a new challenge to continue grow the fish fry. His tradition is the next year a retiree has to bring another retiree with them so the union kindly requests next year that an active attendee bring another active member who has not been next year. By: Mindy Yarberry

Photos courtesy of Andy Toms

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FIRE FIGHTERS



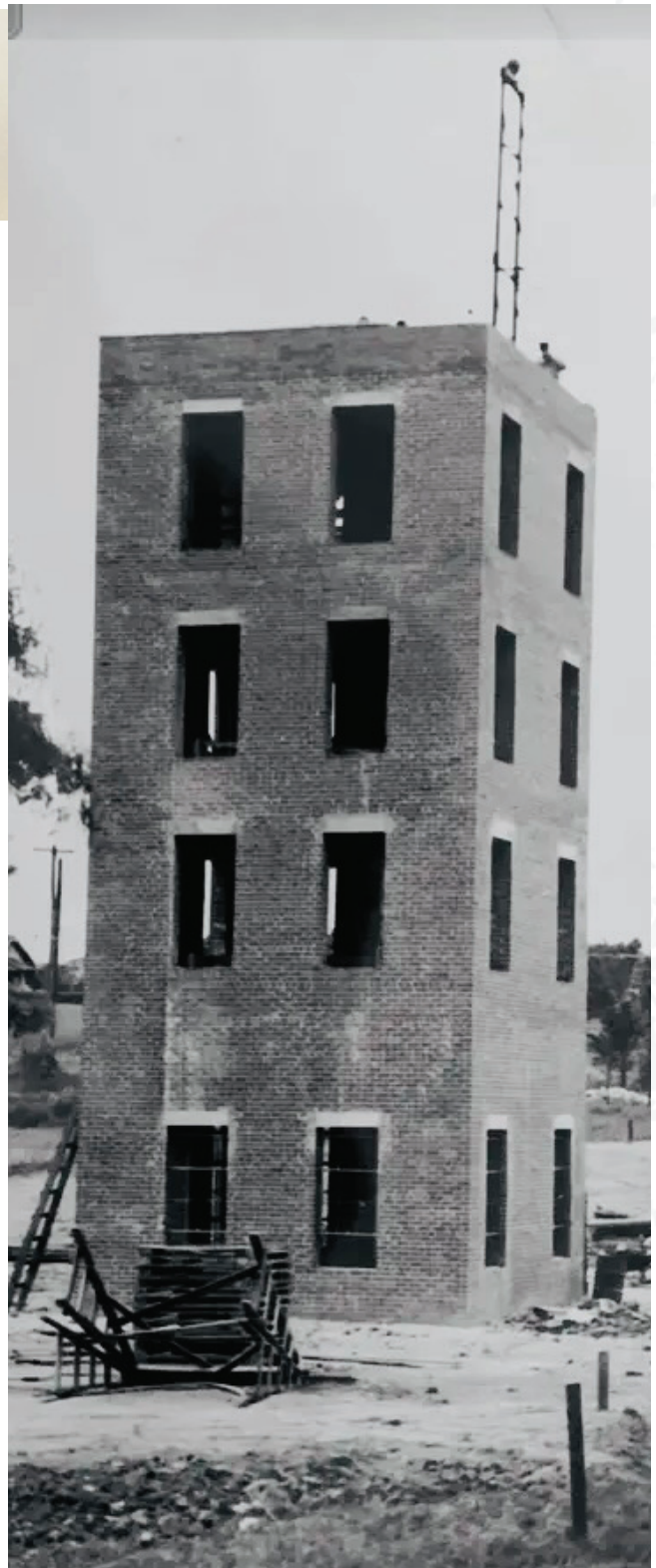
Created in partnership with Advanced Recovery Systems (ARS), the IAFF Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery is a flagship recovery center exclusively for IAFF members struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder, addiction, substance and alcohol abuse, depression, anxiety and other behavioral health conditions to receive the help they need in taking the first steps toward recovery.

The Center of Excellence is a voluntary treatment facility designed by fire fighters for fire fighters with a mission to address the unique medical, psychological and social needs of IAFF members facing behavioral health issues.

Staff are trained to understand the cumulative effect of occupational trauma, as well as the clinical implications of fire service culture and lifestyle. Treatment plans are designed to return fire fighters to the career, community and family they love.

This process is completely confidential. Center staff cannot discuss treatment with anyone — the fire department, family or friends — unless given explicit permission by the client. This applies before, during and after treatment at the IAFF Center of Excellence.

The IAFF Center of Excellence has earned the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for Behavioral Healthcare Accreditation.



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President Report Tom Brewer

As we move forward, embracing the challenges and opportunities that come with our noble profession, it is essential to take a moment to reflect on the foundation of our strength and success: our unity and active participation. It is with great pride and gratitude that I extend a heartfelt thank you to each of you for your commitment to our union.

To our newest members, welcome to a brotherhood and sisterhood built on the values of courage, dedication, and solidarity. Your decision to join us not only enriches our ranks but also strengthens our collective voice in Charlotte, Raleigh and Washington D.C. We are thrilled to have you on board, ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with you as we navigate the path ahead.

Special recognition is also due to those among us who have recently taken a step forward to become more involved in our union activities. Whether you have taken on leadership roles, volunteered for committees, or contributed your time and skills in other ways, your initiative is the fuel that propels us forward. Your willingness to engage more deeply embodies the spirit of proactive involvement and collective responsibility that is vital for our growth and success.

The significance of active participation within our union cannot be overstated. It is the engagement and dedication of our members that enable us to advocate effectively for our

rights, safety, and well-being. An active and involved membership is the cornerstone of our ability to advocate for better pay and benefits, improved working conditions, and the resources we need to perform our duties safely and efficiently.

Moreover, the strength of our union lies not only in our numbers but in the active involvement of our members. It is through our collective efforts that we can achieve more, support one another, and make meaningful progress towards our goals. As we continue to grow and face new challenges, let us remember that it is our unity and participation that make us stronger and more resilient.

Participation can include reading and sharing this newsletter, coming to an in person or virtual meeting and staying informed. Two of the best things you can do is to share what your Union is doing with others and to challenge your executive board. If you have an issue you want us to address, we need to hear from you. If you do not like something your Union is doing reach out to us and let us find out why we are doing it and what your thoughts on the subject are.

In closing, I encourage each of you to stay engaged, get involved, and contribute to the ongoing success of our union. Together, we have the power to shape our future, protect our profession, and ensure that we can continue to serve our community with honor and excellence.

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Vice President Report Mike Feneis

In the fire service, we train. When a young firefighter comes to your truck it is the responsibility of not only the Captain but the entire crew, to train that new member to the appropriate level. The senior members of the company are vital in passing on knowledge and experience, with the goal of the young firefighter eventually becoming an old firefighter. It is no different in Labor Unions as we must pass down the knowledge of the importance of Unions. As senior members you have experienced wins that not only the IAFF has won but also this Union. For example, Local 660, was the one that won the retirement payouts. Now when you retire you will be paid out correctly. This Local did that. As you will read in Chief Nantz article he will talk about other significant wins this local has had. But how are we passing this down? The word Union is no

longer a dirty word. I challenge all the membership and executive board to teach the new members and nonmembers. Let's train each other in the Union Brotherhood and Sisterhood. Let's all make each other better. But talk is cheap- how will you train today?

On another note with assistance from the IAFF, Local 660 has come up with a potential new logo. See the logo below. Let us know your thoughts and what you think of it. We are open to all ideas.



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Secretary Report Travis Cash

Brothers and sisters,

I'm glad to report that our numbers are growing slowly and doors are opening where before we didn't even know those doors existed. We can't take full credit for the recruitment effort because some events are doing the recruiting for us and we also have some jam-up members who are actively bringing new members to our doorstep. We still have a long way to go but this Eboard is actively setting up the local for future success.

We have developed and published an app for iOS(Android coming soon don't worry) for members to get updates and notifications on current Local 660 activities easily. We have added 6 new positions and 6 members have stepped up to fill those roles. Those positions are 5 division reps that divide the city into north, south, east, west and a non-emergency rep. Additionally, we have decided to add a communications director position who will be a great asset to this local. I want to personally thank those individuals for stepping up. This is a great step forward and we need to keep this momentum moving forward so if you are interested in serving in a similar role please reach out.

In closing, I want to reiterate what I said in the last newsletter that we can put all these great things in place but if it falls on deaf ears and apathy we are letting down the folks that got us to this point and the ones that will get on the rigs after we are gone. I take responsibility for our shortcomings as well. I am not going around to stations, calling members, or talking to our department and city leaders as much as I should and I apologize for that. I want you to hold me to the same expectations I have for you.

**Scan QR code below for
the Local 660 app from
the Apple APP store.**



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Divisions



Fire Alarm continues to work on overcoming staffing issues and currently has 5 Telecommunicator trainees who are in the late stages of on-the-job training and should be all cut loose in late April or early May, this will immediately be followed by another round of hiring. If you know someone interested, keep an eye out on Alarm's and the Local's Facebook Pages. April 14th through the 20th is National Telecommunicators Week and we will be naming the TC of the Year and Supervisor of the Year. This is a great opportunity to let the folks in Alarm know you appreciate them. Alarm is actively participating in the STEP program and several newly promoted Captains have sat along for a 4-hour observation period in Alarm, overall this has proved to be a positive experience as all participants have

had lots of questions and your Telecommunicators are enjoying the exposure to our folks in the field. Alarm dispatched nearly 8,000 incidents in the first 21 days of March which included 13 working fires in the first 19 days.

A few quick reminder tips and hints.....

- 1 Alarm cant resend your incident to your MDT
- 2 When changing trucks you won't be able to log into your MDT unless your unit is showing available and in quarters, just call Alarm and we can help you
- 3 Resist the urge to Helicopter your Lapel Microphone cord, these can be pricey to repair and we see a lot with frayed wires. If you have any doubt that your lapel microphone may be malfunctioning, do a radio check and by all means, if it isn't working please have it switched out quickly.

*David Bradshaw
Telecommunicator II
Shift Supervisor*



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History

In this episode of fireside chats, we talk about three of the biggest wins that Local 660 has had that impacted you the member.

When we discuss wins and losses we often think of a winner and a loser but in these types of wins every member wins, every taxpayer wins, everybody wins.

The first is the lawsuit of 1967 of Arkins versus the City of Charlotte. Most people think this was only about Union Membership. It was not. This lawsuit was about an approved Promotional process that would produce a list and not promote based on seniority off the company you were assigned to only to be transferred right before being promoted to captain. The lawsuit was about being able to grieve a write-up or policy decision without the fear of retaliation, it was also about a fair transfer policy. The lawsuit went all the way to the US Supreme Court where it was won. All of these things were enjoyed from 1969 until recently. It took the majority of the firefighters to stand together to see it through. Freedom is not free.

The second "win" discussed is health and safety. Enclosed cab fire trucks as the standard starting in 1988, turnout pants, SCBA as a requirement following Baxter Harriss, and even Leather Helmets were first mentioned by your Union in 1988 by President Marvin Wilson in a letter to City Manager Wendell White as the best possible protection. Following NFPA

guidelines on apparatus, physicals turnout gear, all brought as issues by this Union well before they were put in the budget. The Physicals were put in the budget for free for all members and not a requirement but for you as a benefit well before they became a mandate. There was no repercussion for taking them.

The third win and maybe the most important is the vacation and sick leave payout. Kurzel versus the City of Charlotte. This issue had been a point of contention since the change to peoplesoft. 24 hour shift workers were getting the same payout as 40 hour daylighters who worked over 700 less hours annually. The lawsuit and subsequent meetings between City Manager Marcus Jones and Union Leadership lead to a fix that will increase your retirement monthly pay by 8 to 10 percent in some cases. This may not seem like a a lot but in a system that has no COLA this is huge. Think about this, add all your Market adjustments, not your steps, and see how many years it takes to get to 10 percent. 3 years or more, now imagine leaving 20 years past retirement with no raise, 10 percent is a lot.

Your Union has done a lot and this is just a few things that impacts every member. Next time we will discuss your retirement and will it be here when you retire.

by: Chief Nantz

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Charlotte Fire Dept Victim Rescue Survey

When it comes to saving lives, every second counts. That's why CFD is always looking for ways to be better. One way we're doing this is by collecting information about fireground rescues. Understanding the dynamics of rescues is more than a duty—it's a mission to constantly improve. That's where data comes into play.

Since 2016, the National Firefighter Rescue Survey has been collecting voluntary submissions from fire departments nationwide to understand the challenges and successes of fireground rescues. Fast forward to 2021, and Charlotte Fire Department took a bold step forward by initiating its own internal survey, aligning with the national effort. This is intended to dive deeper into the specifics of Charlotte's rescues and improving our survival rates of fire victims.



Over the past few years, CFD has compiled data from various rescues. Thus far we have collected a total of 45 fireground rescue surveys; 5 in 2020, 14 in 2021, 8 in 2022, 15 in 2023, and 3 so far in 2024.

What does this data reveal? Well, it's not just about numbers and statistics. It's about understanding the details of each rescue: How many firefighters does it take to affect a rescue? How long does it take to locate victims? Where are victims typically found, and how are they extricated? These are some of the questions that we look at and we will use to improve our training.

It's not just about brute force or heroic feats. Rescues come in various forms, from pulling unconscious victims through smoke-filled rooms to getting individuals to safety and sheltering in place. The victim does not have to survive to get recorded. We then categorized these rescues into three main buckets: Rescue, Evacuation, and Assistance. While the distinctions may seem technical, the importance is in the outcome; did the fire department's intervention make a difference? This focus on

outcome instead of awards highlights CFD's commitment to being the best fire department in the country.

Anyone can

contribute to this

ongoing mission. Whether you're a firefighter, engineer, captain, or chief your observations matter. Simply drop an email to CFDrescues@charlottenc.gov to notify us of any potential rescue situation, and we will take it from there. You can be on the crew involved or you just heard it on the radio and remain anonymous. The importance is that we are notified. We will determine if it qualifies and which "bucket" to categorize it. The success of the program relies on input from everyone.

Exciting updates are on the way! The IT department is currently working on a dashboard that will be accessible to all CFD members. This dashboard will display all the latest fireground rescue data, providing insights into where these rescues occur, the timing of incidents, the methods used for removing victims and more!

While CFD collects local data to refine our tactics, we also submit our rescues to the national survey. The national survey serves as a vital resource, offering insights and best practices from fire departments across the country. The Firefighter Rescue Survey has collected over 3000 rescues since 2016! For those curious about the broader trends and findings go to www.firefighterrescuesurvey.com They have a TON of information from the data that they have collected. We do ask that you DO NOT submit CFD rescues on their website. CFD has partnered with them, and we will submit every Charlotte rescue. They do not want duplicate entries.

Captain Matt Clark

Engine 29



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Division Reps

Local 660 has changed from Battalion Reps to division reps. This breaks the city down into 4 divisions and non-emergency divisions. If you have any questions or concerns reach out to the division rep representing your station. Your division reps are:

North-Matt Harrington

Engine 34 C shift

mch565@hotmail.com

704-488-3071

East-DJ Shipp

Engine 15 A

dashipp100@gmail.com

704-298-2152

West-Jordan Hood

Engine 43 B shift

caterpillarh@gmail.com

484-368-1005

Greetings, my name is Jordan Hood currently serving on the B shift of engine 43. With more than two decades of experience in the fire service, I bring a wealth of knowledge to my current role in the Charlotte Fire Department. As an experienced firefighter, I am responsible for overseeing, as a union division representative of the West side of the city, which includes firehouses 2, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 21, 30, 41, and 43.

My interests lie in the areas of mental health, leadership, training, and more importantly making not only us better, but our department better and I am proud to say that the union has played a significant role in supporting these areas throughout my career. My family and I have personally benefited from the positive impact of the union, and I am eager to share this experience with other members.

I am thrilled about this opportunity to share my positive experiences as a proud union member. I believe that my extensive experience as a firefighter, combined with my passion for mental health, leadership, and training, make me a valuable asset to the Charlotte Fire Department.

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South-Francis Matera

Ladder 24 B shift

aces2704@yahoo.com

704-359-7812

Non-Emergency Personnel

David Bradshaw

Alarm

dpbradshaw30@gmail.com

980-318-0347

Communications Director

Mindy Yardberry

Ladder 16 C

Mindy.yarberry@gmail.com

865-607-4496



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Membership Application**



REBOOT RECOVERY
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Reboot First Responders Program
with Joe McBryde starting on May
13th at The Palmer Building. 12-
week program open to all first
responders. 6:30pm to 8:30pm, meal
is provided.



UE 150 Local 660



SOLIDARITY

Have a article or idea for next issue send it to us:
Secretary@cffa660.org





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