

AFD RETIREE NEWS

June 1, 2019

2-2019

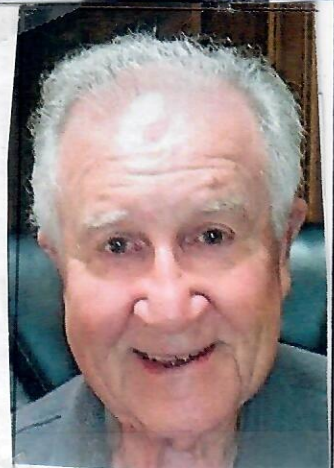
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PUBLISHED BY
THE AFD RETIREE'S
ASSOCIATION



**EDITOR
HERMAN R. BISHOP**



PRESUMPTIVE CAUSATION BILL FOR FIREFIGHTERS PASSED

On April 2, 2019 Governor Lujan Grisham, signed into law HB 324. This bill expands the presumptive causation for firefighters to include PTSD. Attending the bill signing was AFR Administration, Mayor Keller, IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger, Local 244 Executive Board, NMPFFA President George Asji, and Diego Arencon.



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ANNUAL RETIREE'S PICNIC

THE ANNUAL RETIREE'S PICNIC WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY AUGUST 17 TH @ 11:00 A.M. AT ROTARY PARK, DOWNTOWN BERNALILLO, NM. GO TO CALLE DON FRANCISCO, TURN WEST, GO ½ MILE. THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THE PICNIC.

CONVICTS verses FIREFIGHTERS

(February 6, 2019)

FORMER A.F.D. PARAMEDIC LIEUTENANT
FRANK T. MAESTAS

It was in the late 60's or early 70's that I talked with our ball player, my friend, Rudy Sanchez. He told me that he had a contact with a New Mexico Prison official. Rudy told me that the prison had a fast pitch softball team and they wanted to have visitors come and play them some games. As they were inmates, they couldn't travel so teams had to go to Sante Fe to play them. Rudy gave me all the information as to who to contact and schedule.

At our next practice, I gathered our team together and told them that the State Prison ball team wanted us to travel to Sante Fe and play them a game. I told them that as they were confined, they had nothing but time to practice and that they were, probably, "a hell of a team".

We all talked it over and all the team thought it would be a good idea and a challenge for our team. We kidded about that the prison wouldn't let us come home. The guys had no qualms about facing them and looked forward to the challenge.

We talked about Schedules and when we all would be able to travel. Once the dates were agreed on, I told them I would make the date to go play them. I can't remember if it was a Saturday or Sunday game. I made contact with the prison's recreation representative and scheduled our game.

The date arrived and we all loaded into 2 vans and, I think, 1 car and headed for Sante Fe. Once we arrived there, we went through a very tight screening and various check points. We were met by their Recreation guy and their team Captain. Our equipment was taken to a secure area and we were told it would be at their ball field for game time.

We were taken to a dressing room and changed into our uniforms and were escorted to the ball field. I thought "OK" here we go" The ball field was in the big yard and had bleachers on our side of the dugout. It was already filled with inmates and they seemed in a good mood. We started our warm ups and noticed that their pitcher was a little wild. He seemed to be having control problems. After we had finished our warm up. I called the team together and told them what I had seen. I told them "we are going to beat this team. They are just another team on our list. You guys are a great team as you know, we have won a lot of trophies."

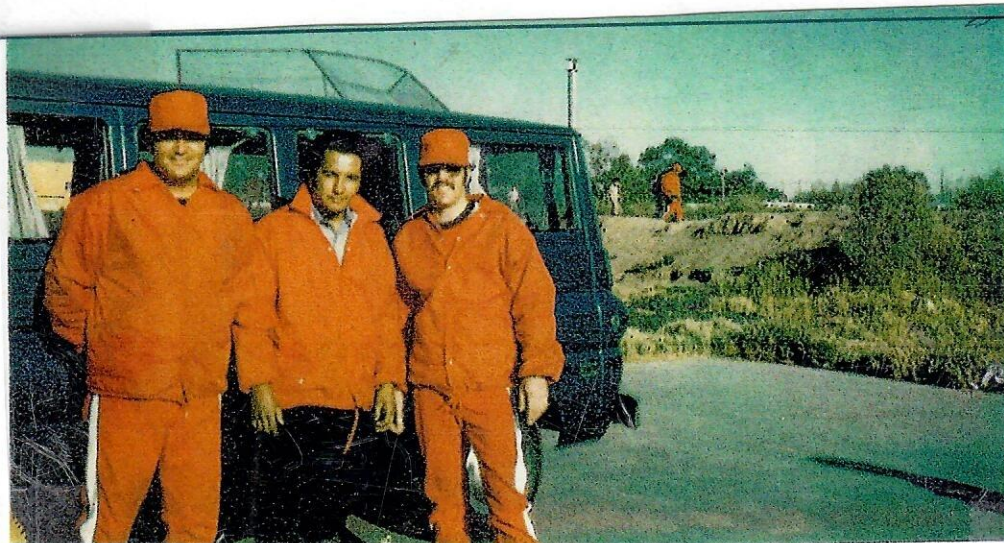
Rudy Sanchez was always our lead off hitter as he could get on base most of the time. He had good speed and was probably our best bunter. Our 2 pitchers were Dickie "pops" Sanchez and Phil Silva. I would rotate them every game so that each one would start every other game. Dickie started and we got off to a really great start. The guys were playing good ball and we soon went ahead and never looked back. Phil; came in about half way through the game and closed it out with no hits against him. The score was so lopsided that I can't remember the final score!

As the game progressed, we noticed that the inmates in the bleachers were cheering FOR US AND REALLY LOUD. I could also hear them betting packs of smokes as to who would win but mostly as to what the final score would be. Their players thanked us and were really appreciative for the game. Good bunch of players.

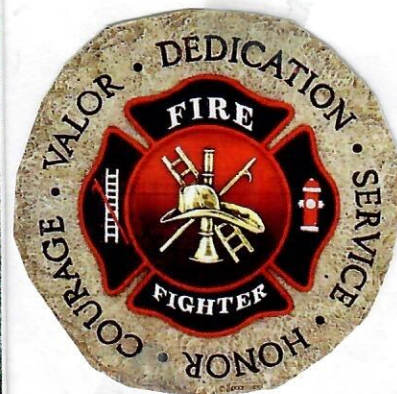
Now then, the biggest high light was when Rudy Sanchez hit his ONE AND ONLY HOME RUN OF THE SEASON. The stands went wild over that one hit and called their team all kinds of names. After the game we went in and changed into our civilian clothes and were escorted to the Officer's Chow Hall. They fed us Steak, mashed potatoes and all the trimmings. We had a happy trip back to Albuquerque and with full bellies!

Information Sources
Herman Bishop
Rudy Sanchez
Personal notes.





**L-R – Richard Sanchez, Al Armenta, Phil Silva (Circa,1970)
At Softball Game, AFD F.F. VS. NM State Prisoners**



March, 2019 Monthly Meeting – On March 13, 2019 the 223 rd monthly meeting of the AFD Retiree’s Association was held at the firefighter’s Union Hall, Local 244, 4100 Edith N.E. President Kerry Horton called the meeting to order @ 7:07 PM. After the Pledge of Allegiance the opening prayer was led by Eddie Abeita and a moment of silence was held in memory of our deceased members. **Roll Call** – President Kerry Horton, Vice President Mike Murphy, Secretary Fred Casias, Treasurer Sam Trujillo, and Historian Herman R. Bishop.

President Kerry Horton Reported he just completed a plaque recognizing all AFD fire chiefs from the volunteer fire department in 1882 to present and it is now displayed at the fire museum. He recognized our guest Cindy Raupfer. The 2019 N.M. State Legislature ends in mid-march and it looks as if our 2% cost of living increase will be saved this year (2019). Kerry has been appointed to the Governor’s task force to study the future of PERA benefits. More on this later.

The Secretary’s report was given by Fred Casias. A motion to accept was made by Bill Raupfer and was seconded by Ed Abeita. The motion passed. Sam Trujillo gave the Treasurer’s report and thanked all our members who made donations for our annual fund drive. If you have not sent your donations in please contact Sam Trujillo, @ 899-1500. A motion to accept the Treasurer’s report was made by Gabe Sanchez and was seconded by Eugene Baldonado. The motion carried. The Historian’s report was made by Herman Bishop. He was glad to hear from our members and that they received their March 1 st newsletters. We are happy that many of our members have contributed articles for the newsletters. If you would like to submit articles or photos please contact Herman @ 294-7165.

President Kerry Horton has appointed L.C. Trujillo, Pablo Garcia Jr. and Noel Baca to the election committee to select candidates for the position of Vice President and Historian. Please contact Louie Trujillo to nominate people for these positions. He reported that Jeff Elks is still in recovery from recent surgery and all our members wish Jeff well. Wednesday’s raffle was won by Noel Baca, Eugene Baldonado and Richard Ortiz.

The closing prayer was given by Ed Abeita and the meeting adjourned at 8:46 P.M.

NOTICE ! NOTICE ! NOTICE! NOTICE!

ANNUAL PICNIC – The annual retired firefighter’s picnic will be held on Saturday, August 17 th @ 11:00 AM, Rotary Park, Downtown, Bernalillo, NM. Go to Calle Don Francisco, Turn west, go 1 /2 mile. There is no charge for the picnic. Families are welcome.

CHARLES BERNARD RUPPE, EARLY ALBUQUERQUE FIRE CHIEF

(By Paul Graves, AFD District Chief Retired)

March 15, 2019

In 1880 a young man of German ancestry with South America on his mind boarded a train in New York City and got off in Denver Colorado. He took a construction train south to the end of the line just north of the New Mexico boarder, bought a burro for \$6 and walked to Glorieta Pass and on into "Old Albuquerque". He hired on at the livery stable and was soon hired by E.V. Kent, a New Mexico pioneer and veteran druggists. This young man had been an apprentice druggist since the age of 14 and had spent a two year apprenticeship in Germany as well as attended the New York Collage of Pharmacy from 1879 - 1880. Mr. Kent built a second store in "New Town" when the railroad came to the area and became the "New Town" postmaster and appointed his young clerk to Assistant Postmaster. The young clerk bought Mr. Kent's store in "Old Town" and remained there until 1892 at which time he moved his stock to 2nd and Railroad Ave.. (Central Ave.) A few months later the store burned down, the cause was thought to be incendiary. The young druggist moved his shop to the corner of the barber shop in the Armijo Hotel and later opened a store at 115 S. 2nd Street. This young druggist became instrumental in the organization of the fire patrol. At that time Billy Sanguinette was the elected Fire Chief among the volunteers. The young druggist named Bernard Ruppe was then elected Fire Chief in 1892 and served five, one year terms until 1900. The city aldermen then appointed Bernard Ruppe to be the first Fire Chief for the Albuquerque City Fire Department.

There is much more to Mr. Ruppe's involvement in the history and affairs of Albuquerque and New Mexico which were numerous as recorded in my manuscript, I would like to add a couple of things of interest in his history for this preview.

Mr. Ruppe was appointed to enforce the new road law of 1882 for Albuquerque and surrounding area. During this project the abandoned court house was to be demolished for a new road. Mr. Ruppe noted eleven notches in the central beam that were used for the ropes to hang out-laws.

June 30, 1906 the city abolished the volunteer fire companies and established the Albuquerque Fire Department. The city selected Bernard Ruppe as fire chief. The first station log I was able to find listed the fire crew for October 10, 1900 six years before the department was established as a city function was B. Ruppe chief, Eugene Southerland (he would have been the wagon driver), Ed Hale, Tony Ortiz (Ed and Tony would have been pipemen or hosemen).

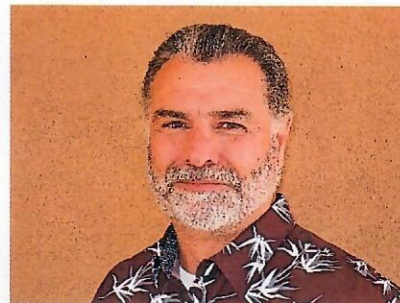
We Were Calling Out for Police to Help us From the Physical Attack

Adrian Glass Story

by Eddie Abeita

Adrian started his career with Albuquerque Fire Department November 1991 and retired December 2013. Adrian's fire cadet class was the first fire cadet class to train at the newly opened training facility located on the west side at Sunset Gardens SW.

Adrian said I was a gunny in the Marine Corp so the fire academy was not too hard to adjust to with its regimented style of training. I did what was asked and trained as required without any problems. I know for some it can be a tuff challenge. Of my old fire cadet classmates, I keep in touch with Chester Thorne the most, Bill Benjey who also retired in 2013 keeps routine communication with us. We had a secret that was kept low keyed somehow our cadet class got the nickname "*Abeita's Clowns*", Adrian said.



My first field assignment was at station three however that did not last long because out of the blue, the order came down that I was going to paramedic school Adrian said. Things were moving fast while in paramedic school I returned back to the fire academy for my 11th month evaluation which included practical and written testing. The next day back to paramedic class where I took my final cardiac test. I've been asked about any bad calls that I went on while on the rescue? As the story goes; one call got so bad we were calling out for police to help us from the physical attack from the patient's family. I guess I should give the whole story Dominic Griego and I were dispatched to a female not breathing. Upon arrival the family was in disarray (it's common) We ran through protocol and things fell into place we brought grandma back, it was a good save. The family was so happy and excited they were mobbing us with hugs, handshakes, slaps on the back and hundreds of thank yous, it was nice but a little scary.

One fire call while on the rescue we responded to a structure fire that was fully involved. We were on scene first so as we were taught, I gave a size up to incoming companies which lead me to be the I C (Incident Commander). Upon the first arriving engine, I was going to transfer command to the officer, but he said you are doing good, continue as I C. Then the Battalion Chief arrived shortly and repeated the same order, "assume I C". I was thankful for the trust the officers placed in me Adrian said.

When I retired, I got deeply involved in family, my father was terminally ill and we moved him into our home where we provided care for him. All the EMT training and skills I received through Albuquerque Fire Department was a tremendous help with my father's care.

Today we like motorcycle runs that help out the needy such as "Toys for Tots" and help in Christmas distribution. Being a marine, I always support military groups such as "Brotherhood of Wounded Marine Warriors", and other type of events that help the brotherhood.

My wife Deanna is employed with Rio Rancho school district and with my wife's support I hold the titles of grandfather, uncle and great uncle or you may say father figure for all and it's great!

In One Work Cycle we had 4 Code Blue Calls with No Saves

James Baca Story

by Eddie Abeita

I was in the 39th fire cadet class with a lot of memories. The academy staff was composed of Assistant Chief Ted Allred, Art Loura, Mel Vigil, Secretary Linda Saiz and Eddie Abeita.

When you are in training and new to the fire academy environment, the pressure you are put under gives you a feeling, like you are not liked. However, after training you solely understand the instructor's motives or maybe you could say their behavior patterns, they were all good people who did their job. There were two Bernalillo County Fire Firefighters who were in training with us. Paul Stritmatter and Denny Sanchez, they were treated just like us.



Upon graduation my first assignment was at station 13, I rode the rescue off and on the officer was Gary Jones. While returning to quarters from a call we stopped at the grocery store Gary said, get me some gum while I pick up the other stuff for the cook. Gary gave me a twenty-dollar bill so I bought \$20.00 worth of gum. When he saw the big bag of gum at the station he said, "I only wanted one pack"! I never heard the end of this buy from the troops, they started calling me; *ChewBaca*.

Later was assigned to engine 9 where I had my first working fire. I remember firefighter Art Pitsford telling me remember what you were taught, put on your SCBA. We were dispatched to a structure fire I was given the order to "catch the hydrant" and I did, after opening the hydrant I walked quickly to the pumper donned the SCBA went toward the structure to help, I met the crew coming out of the building with no SCBA on Art smiled with snot hanging from his nose and he said, "to late it's out".

After some hard work I promoted to driver and then Lieutenant with my first assignment back to station nine. We had a lot of calls especially EMS calls. *In one work cycle we had 4 code blue calls with no saves.* A month later the QA officer Mike Miyaki had given us class on use of a defibrillator that were being placed on some pumpers. The next day we were dispatched on another cardiac arrest call. We used the defibrillator on the patient first hit nothing tried the second time BINGO heartbeat, brought him back, his heart beating just like Mike taught us, so we had a good save.

Getting close to retirement I had a health issue which was genetics passed down the family tree called CCM (cerebral cavernous malformation). This caused me to use all my sick leave, later I was placed in the Light Duty Program which was great, I understand many years ago our union brothers worked hard to get this program in place and it's unbelievable how it helped me and others.

I was able to retire but did not have any plans for after retirement. But now it is so nice to see old retiree friends like Tom Velasquez who lives in the area and I also saw Bill Raupfer few times at the VA Hospital which he has some good stories to tell. A friend of ours was in real estate and said she needed help and thought I would be good at showing new homes for sale. I gave it a try and it became enjoyable so I did this for almost 10 years. Today my wife is still gainfully employed with Sysco and I take care of the home.

I Was Given a Second Chance in Life and it Changed Me

James Dahl Story

by Eddie Abeita

James started his career with Albuquerque Fire Department August 1988 and retired July 2006. James said after graduating from the fire academy my career sure went by fast my first officer was Melvin Vigil at station three. Being a rookie in the field you float around where needed one cycle I was the 3rd person assigned at Rescue 12 with Mardo Martinez and Joe McIntyre. We were dispatched to a child bleeding from the neck. It turned out to be that the baby had been stabbed. While Joe and Mardo were getting the equipment ready the baby was not breathing so I started mouth to mouth, it was like, something you just do maybe because it was a baby? All of us on scene worked hard to save the baby but with all the effort the baby did expire.



When I became part of AFD, from the start I made a lot of friends which I felt a that strong camaraderie. Cooking was good in the station(s) and we conversed and joked a lot while eating. Now looking back, in cadet training we were on break after PT and an engine company reporting for in-service training, came into the grounds and firefighter Jeff Eschenburg shouts out hey "Baby Doll", so I was christened with that nickname.

Upon retirement I wanted to start a business so went into selling pre-owned vehicles or you might say an Independent Car Dealer. Boy I must say said James, it was a lucrative business. My wife and I were happy with things working out so well we traveled to far-away places and enjoyed it all. But then the wake-up call happened on April 18, 2015 while riding my bike (motorcycle) down a highway around Roswell NM, I got into an accident. It was bad enough that I was air lifted to Lubbock University Hospital in Texas. I spent so much time in the burn unit because of rode rash and then recovery and of course rehab. Bottom line *I was given a second chance in life and it changed me*. What makes this story unique is when my retiree brothers drove down from Albuquerque to see me in Lubbock.

Like I said a second chance, something happened and it changed my whole outlook on life. My family noticed more of a low-keyed person who made time to talk and listen. My daughter(s) would say, it is so nice to talk with you now, *you have been brought back to us!*

One thing that I anxiously wait for is the monthly breakfast that brother Phil Candelaria organized. You have good food to eat but more important it's being with our sister/brother retirees. Together you can feel the camaraderie believe me it's alive and well. One hobby that I have said James, started back when I was assigned to station five, I picked up playing the guitar and today Donnie Sanchez and I play in a band. We play a little of every type of music. The band is call "Easy Streets", Donnie and I had also played with other bands.

I have a wonderful wife we been married for 33 years and we share the chores around the house. We also have 2 kids and 5 grandkids. They all live in Dallas so we go and visit them when we can and have a super time with them all, especially the grandkids. We love them so much can't wait to see them again.

I Became Interested in the Fire department Because of my Father Toby

Tobias Pino Story

by Eddie Abeita

Tobias began his career in 1989 with Albuquerque Fire Department which started out at the old fire academy located at 1510 Kit Carson SW. Tobias said, you go through a lot with your cadet comrades and learn what the whole fire department is all about. The EMT basic was exciting and we wondered if we would ever use all the skills taught just like running the drill tower over 300 times. One thing about the tower, it built your legs which was good for lifting and also gaining good healthy cardio vascular. In my cadet class were Shawn White, Richard Sears, Zar Horton and these guys had muscles. I think I saw Zar on television good for him. One thing our cadet class had, a runner by the name of Gary Lewis, it did not matter how far or long we ran I don't think Gary ever broke out into a sweat



I became interested in the fire department because of my father Toby, he was an active duty firefighter when I was still in elementary school. His rescue would come to our school and help out with our fire evacuation drills. I remember my dad going on fishing trips with other firefighters that was the brotherhood that I wanted to be part of. Later in my career I used my dad's recipes to cook at the fire station for the boys. I heard Herman Bishop and Eddie Abeita say that my dad Toby made one heck of a meatloaf, my dad said, there is one trick, don't use tomato sauce.

My first assignment was at station 13 and of course being a rookie, you worked all over as needed, I did not mind because you meet firefighters and see the other side of life. One call we went to was an MVA (motor vehicle accident), a couple was T-boned and the lady was in her 3rd trimester, her door could not be forced open, so the roof of the car had to be cut off from the four-corner post, to be able to remove her. The husband accompanied her in the ambulance to UNM, she was so worried about the baby's condition that I let her listen to the baby's heartbeat with our stethoscope. The final outcome we later found out was not good.

Upon retirement Tobias said, you have gained a lot of skills and knowledge so not wanting to waste it, I went to work with Superior Ambulance and later worked with Albuquerque Medical Transport both were OK but not like working with AFD. I always wanted to see what other countries are about so went to Thailand for a short stay I returned back home because my mother had taken ill. Upon my mother passing away, I wanted to see what island life was about. So, I headed to the Philippines. I was told there are over 500 islands in the area which 200 islands are inhabited with 58 different dialects spoken but mostly English. I started teaching SCUBA diving lessons, wonder why I picked it up so easy?

I have been back home for a while seeing doctors as needed, one thing that we (family) deal with is CCM (cerebral cavernous malformation) which is hereditary. You can't do much about that but we try to help others lending support to them at meetings and conference by explaining our own experience.

April Monthly Meeting

On April 10, 2019 the 224 th monthly meeting of the AFD Retiree's Association was held at the firefighter's union hall, local 244, 4100 Edith NE. President Kerry Horton called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The opening prayer was led by Paul Graves and a moment of silence was observed for our deceased members. **Roll Call:** President Kerry Horton, Vice President Mike Murphy, Treasurer, Sam Trujillo and Historian Herman Bishop.

Kerry welcomed guests Ruby Armenta, Cindy Raupfer, and John Graves. Retiree Paul Graves attended his first retiree meeting and was visiting from his home in Victor, Montana. Kerry notified us of the death of fellow retiree Lieutenant Chris Wilson who recently passed away.

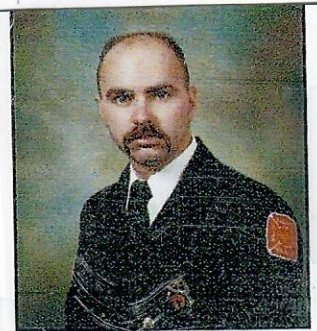
He said that on April 9, 2019 that Governor Michele Lujan Grisham signed into law HB 324 , "The Presumptive Causation Bill," which gives medical benefits to firefighters, who suffer job related cancers and PTSD. The Governor appointed Kerry along with 19 other members to the PERA study committee to determine the future of PERA benefits. We will get a 2% COLA in July, 2019. An election will be held in June to select our Vice President, Treasurer, and Historian for two year terms. Officers will be sworn in at the July Meeting.

The Treasurer's report was given by Herman Bishop due to the absence of Fred Casias. A motion to accept was made by Ed Abeita and was seconded by Ralph Sedillo. The motion passed. Sam Trujillo gave the Treasurer's report. A motion to accept was made by Mike Fox and was seconded by Morris Gutierrez. The motion passed. Herman Bishop gave the historian's report. He read two thank you letters. Karen Sanchez thanked members of the retiree's association for honors paid at the funeral of her husband retiree Richard "Dickie Pops," Sanchez. Carmen Dauber & family thanked members of the retiree's association for the honors paid at the funeral of her husband retiree Moe Dauber.

Our best wishes go to our fellow retirees who are on the sick roster: T.V. Jaramillo, Manuel Aragon, Jeff Elks, And former paramedic John Van Sickler. The April monthly raffle was won by: Vince Holcomb, John Graves, Jesse Gonzales, E.V. Marquez, and Bill Raupfer.

The closing prayer was led by Deacon Santos Abeita. The meeting adjourned @ 8:55 PM

Chris Wilson Dies – Kerry Horton notified us that fellow retiree Lieutenant Chris Wilson passed away recently. He joined the department on September 22, 1997 and was a member of the 58 th Fire Cadet Class. He was a military veteran and served in the United States Marines. He was an active member of the Albuquerque Firefighter's Union, Local 244. He was a good firefighter and was well respected by his fellow firefighters and supervisors alike. After serving several years of faithful and dedicated service to his community and to the fire department he Retired on December 31, 2014. Fellow firefighters have fond memories of working with him and he will be missed. Our sincere condolences and prayers go to the entire Wilson family.



Fire Museum

By Kerry Horton

Progress continues on the Fire museum at a slow, but steady pace. In the past few months we have added a Fire Chiefs board honoring every Albuquerque Fire Chief starting in 1882 with Volunteer Chief William Sanguinette. Pablo has procured a period correct hand nozzle for the hose cart, and we have added a carbon tetrachloride extinguisher display. We have also updated the retiree board to include the 2018 retirees.

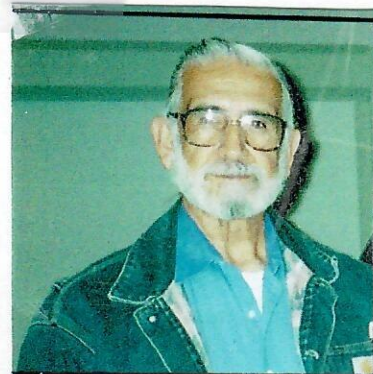
Retired District Chief Paul Graves, who visited us from Montana last month, has donated a 1960's era foam inductor. The unit he donated likely came off of a ladder truck and was at the Academy when he was a cadet. The instructors did open pit oil fires at the Academy in those days, and this foam inductor was a tool of choice during pit fire training. Paul also donated an orange fire helmet that he wore at one point during his career with AFD.

The glass case project is still searching for funding, and I'm working with Deputy Chief Eakes on finding the funds. Mike Fox and Joe Martinez are just waiting for the go-ahead to start building the three glass cases to securely display our hidden gems of AFD history.

Pablo and I are trying to locate two or three mannequins so that we can show the progression of bunker and SCBA advancement through the years. I am donating a set of bunkers from the late 1990/2000 era, and Pablo has a set of silver bunkers from back in the day. I also have an old SCOTT Pressure/Demand SCBA that I'm donating. If you have a set of bunkers or an SCBA from another era that you would like to donate, that would be great. If anyone knows where we can locate some mannequins on the cheap, let us know. So, the next time you are looking for some cheap entertainment for your family, take them to the Albuquerque Fire Rescue Museum and show off your legacy.



Isarel Morales Dies – On April 13, 2019 we received notice that our fellow retiree Lieutenant Isarel Morales age 85, passed away. He was a military veteran. He joined AFD December 4, 1958. Early in his career he worked at the old Station Five at Chico and Dallas NE. His officers were Lt. Reno Stabelton and Lt. Robert Gomez. Fellow firefighters were Jerry Valencia, E.V.Marquez, Pablo Mares, Tom Candelaria, Marc Byrne and Paul Adent. During May 1961 he was promoted to driver and was assigned to the old station # 3 at Bryn Mawr and Central NE and served as Chief's driver for Assistant Chiefs S.B. Skidmore and Carl Macaluso. He was promoted to Lieutenant on February 12, 1964 and was assigned to work the next few years on engine companies and ladder companies. He spent the last few years of his career as a ladder officer on ladder #1 down town. He was a pleasant friendly fellow who loved his job as a firefighter and was looked up to by the new firefighters assigned to his crew. He always enjoyed training the new Members of his crew and taking them to the drill tower for hose and ladder evolutions as well as driver training. After serving the department and his community for 24 years He retired on July 1, 1981. He was an active member of the AFD Retiree's Association and he loved the monthly meetings and visiting with his fellow retired firefighters. Our most sincere condolences and prayers go to the entire Morales family.



May 2019 Monthly Meeting - On May 8, 2019 the monthly meeting of the AFD Retiree's Association was called to order by President Kerry Horton at 7:01 PM. After the Pledge of Allegiance the opening prayer was conducted by Morris Gutierrez. A moment of silence was held in memory of our deceased members. Roll Call: Pres. Kerry Horton, V. President, Mike Murphy Secretary, Fred Casias, Treasurer, Sam Trujillo and Historian, Herman Bishop.

Our guest speaker was Fire Chief Paul Dow. He gave us an update on AFR current events. The department budget is \$86 million, and 701 personnel are funded. Currently there are 655 personnel and a new cadet class of 45 is set to begin in July, 2019. The age for beginning firefighters is now 18 and the training program is 18 weeks. The department responded to 110,000 emergency calls last year. The department has a new rapid deployment wild fire management apparatus. Also the department is implementing a new risk reduction program as a result of the new PTSD bill concerning the safety, health, and welfare of firefighters recently passed into law by the 2019 NM State Legislature. Ground breaking for the new Station # 9 is scheduled for August, 2019 at Eubank and Menaul NE.

Kerry Horton gave the President's report. He is a member of the Governor's task force to study the future of the PERA. The nineteen members of this committee will study the future solvency of PERA and will make recommendations for the Governor to submit to the 2020 NM State Legislature about the future of PERA. Louis Trujillo Chairman of the retiree's election committee submitted the nominees for the positions of Vice President, Treasurer, and Historian. The election will be held at the June, 2019 meeting. Officers will be sworn in during the July, 2019 meeting. The F.F. Union, Local 244 is sponsoring a membership assistance program for active duty and retired firefighters concerning health issues, stress, financial assistance, and personal hardships suffered by firefighters. Contact Kerry Horton if you feel you need assistance. Retiree Robbie Sanchez is heading up the IAFF Firefighter's motorcycle poker run on Saturday June 8, 2019 to assist retiree Jeff Elks and his family as they battle his cancer.

Fred Casias gave the Secretary's report. A motion to accept was made by Ed Abeita and was seconded by Ray Flores. The motion passed. Sam Trujillo gave the Treasurer's report. A motion to accept was made by Louie Trujillo and was seconded by Ed Ralph Sedillo. The motion passed. Herman Bishop gave the Historian's report and said the June 1, 2019 news letter is ready to go to print. Members should receive their newsletters by the first week in June. It is always fun to produce the quarterly newsletters as there is always interesting stories, pictures and activities of our members. Best wishes go to our members on the sick roster: Noel Baca, T.V. Jaramillo, Manuel Aragon, and H.H. Chavez. Morris Gutierrez is compiling a list of nick names of our F. Fighters contact Morris if you would like to submit names for his list.

The May raffle was won by: Jesse Gonzales, Frank Maestas, and Edward Chavez. The closing prayer was led by Morris Gutierrez. The meeting adjourned @ 8:55 PM.

PERA Task Force Update

By Kerry Horton

If you have been paying even a little bit of attention concerning PERA lately, you are being inundated with opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and accusations going this way and that, as to what is wrong with our pension fund. At times it is overwhelming, but more importantly, it is very frustrating that the people that we have chosen to secure our financial futures are seemingly just a bunch of agenda minded people that would rather watch the system crash and burn than work together, putting personal agenda's aside, and set a plan in motion to secure a plan of solvency. Our PERA board is at best, a dysfunctional, divided group that cannot come to the simplest agreement. Every discussion becomes a personal attack, and votes turn into a walk-out, so that there is no longer a quorum to proceed with the vote.

I sincerely hope, and believe, that the Task Force can avoid this type of behavior, and come to some kind of agreement. The Task Force's second meeting was on May 16th, and it was open to the public. We have three closed meetings in June and July, and then a final presentation meeting in August, and will be open to the public.

Some of the issues that I see facing us are agreeing on what the solvency problem is. Is it a systemic problem, or a problem with just parts of the fund, and do we address it from all sides, or just concentrate on the parts that are underfunded. Is it mandatory that PERA is 100 % solvent in 40 years, or is 75 % solvency Okay? Is the problem entirely an issue with our unfunded COLA's, or is this something that the fund should be expected to absorb? These are just some of the points that I have heard thrown about, but one thing is for sure, all of the reports that I have seen show the fund solvency issues need to be addressed sooner, rather than later. Passing this problem down the road will do none of us any good.

After our last meeting in April, Task Force members were given a report produced by the GRS Retirement Consulting company entitled "Briefing to New Mexico Investments & Pensions Oversight Committee." This report was a PowerPoint presentation and was completed in October of 2018. It started out fine, talking about typical pension reform, identifying and acknowledging the problem, stating what the goals are that are trying to be reached, etc. Unfortunately, for me anyway, it quickly went over my head. Talk on negative amortization, trajectory of UAAL, and fixed rate plans versus floating structure plans is something that I am not educated in. I am willing to learn, but at some point, you have to rely on the opinions and competency of the professionals that are hired to guide you in this decision-making process.

One of the things that I found interesting is that as far back as the 1970's, COLA's were funded, either through appropriations from the State General Fund or contribution increases as percentages of payroll. Then in 1987, the State tried to base COLA's on the consumer price index, but also called for a two-year COLA deferral. In 1992, the PERA Act was amended to remove all references to the CPI, and provide a fixed annual COLA of 3 %. The PERA Act amendment stated:

"This increase to a permanent fixed-rate COLA reflected the maximum range of the adjustment factor previously used by PERA's actuaries to determine the annual COLA rate annually. As a result, no funding source was identified."

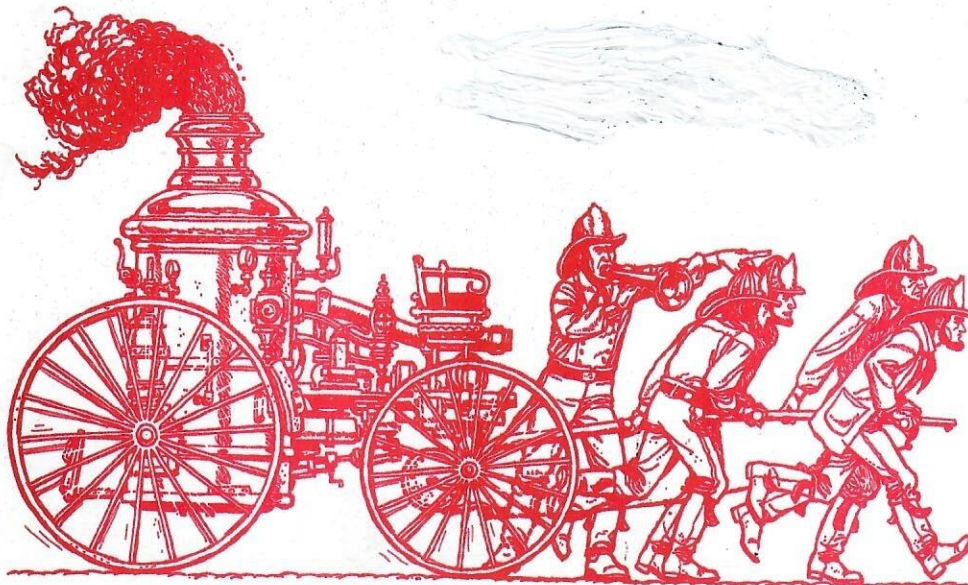
In 1998, an amendment was made to the New Mexico Constitution Article XX Section 22 to state:

"The legislature shall not enact any law that increases the benefits paid by the system in any manner or changes the funding formula for a retirement plan unless adequate finding is provided."

The Constitutional amendment precludes the legislature from creating additional liabilities to the retirement system without providing adequate funding for those liabilities. An amendment to the PERA Act that increases the benefits paid by PERA without adequate funding on an actuarial basis is contrary to Article XX Section 22 of the New Mexico Constitution. All adjustments to the PERA Act's COLA statute, including COLA rate increases, reduction of deferral periods or ad hoc COLA's, become permanent liabilities to the retirement system and require a funding source for them to be deemed constitutional."

These are not my words, but are copied directly from documents obtained from PERA. It would seem that we knew the importance of funding COLAs at one point, and then forgot. I assume that the economic environment in 1998 was a lot different than it is today. I will be pursuing the question of whether or not any PERA Act amendments since 1998 have violated the New Mexico Constitution. I found documents from actuarial firms that stated proposed changes to the PERA Act, since 2009, would be in conflict with Article XX, but I do not know if those changes were enacted. My assumption is that we have not violated our own constitution, but these laws are in place for a reason. If we have out-grown the statute, then we should change the statute.

Again, no one's intent is to eliminate the COLA, I too look forward to the pay raise, but I do believe that we should follow the wisdom of those that came before us, and find a way to fund future COLA's to preserve the solvency of our entire fund.





**Albuquerque Fire Department
Retiree's Association**

Checklist for AFD Retirees

Have you discussed the following with your Family ???

- 1... Any Life Insurance Policies that you have, and where those policies are located.
- 2... Your paid up Life Insurance Policy with the City Of Albuquerque. This Insurance should be about 1/2 of Your Final Annual Salary. If you don't have a copy of your paperwork, (which you should of received at the time of your Retirement), check with the City's Insurance & Retirement Section(Personnel / Human Resources Department).The City of Albuquerque Insurance Department phone # is 768-3700.
- 3... Do you have a Last Will & Testament, if so where you do keep it ?
- 4... Do you have a Safety Deposit Box, if you do, does your family know about it?
- 5... Are you a Member of the New Mexico Retiree Health Care Authority ? If you are, you are automatically covered with a \$6,000.00 Basic Life Insurance, Accidental Death & Dismemberment Policy. The NM Retiree Health Care Authority # is 1-800-233-2576.
- 6... Have you discussed your funeral preference, as to which Mortuary you want your family to use?
- 7... Do you want AFD involved with your services (Fire Fighter Funeral) ?
- 8... Have you checked with Social Security to see which benefits you are entitled to? The Social Security # is 1-800-772-1213.
- 9... Do you have any other Retirement Plans? (401 K- IRA- CD's). If you do, does your family know about them ?
- 10... If you are a Veteran, you are entitled to certain Death Benefits. Have you made your DD - 214 available to your family? The VA Phone # is 1-800-827-1000.

After The Fact

- 11... Request at least a Dozen (12) original Death Certificates.
- 12... To contact : PERA: 1-800-342-3422. Local Albuquerque Office: 2500 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite# 420 Albuquerque, NM, (1-505-883-4503).

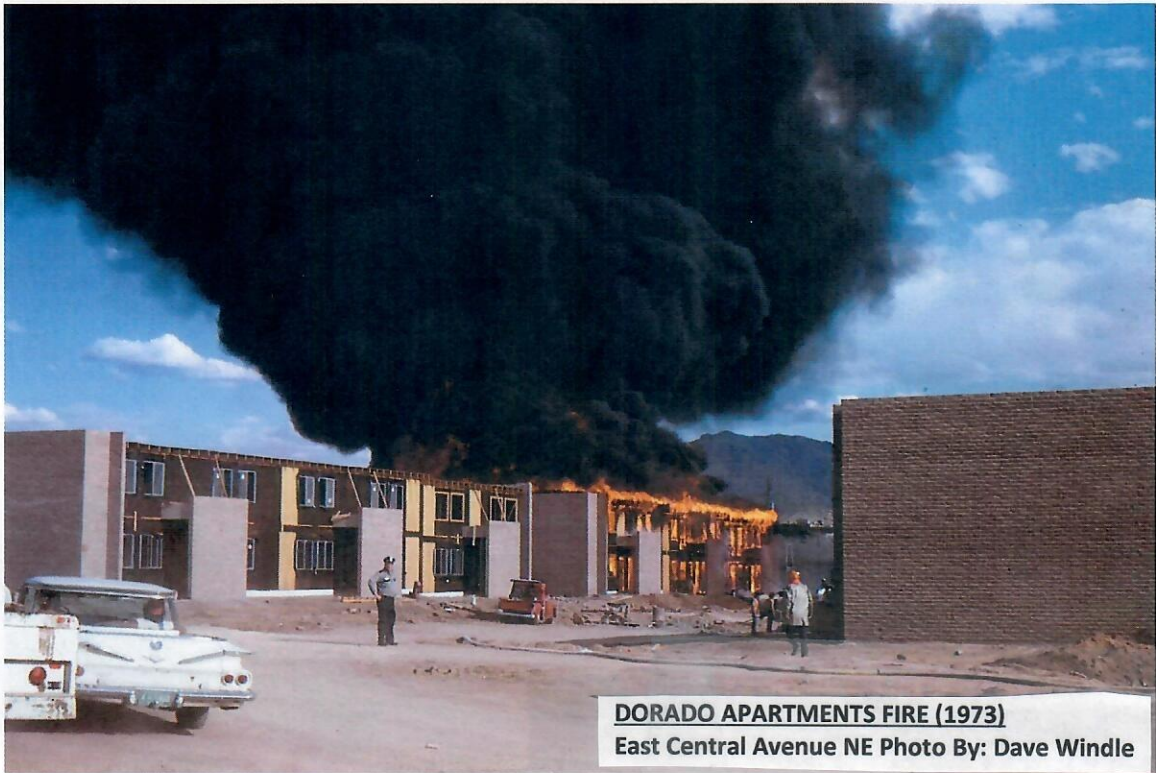
Albuquerque Fire Dept. Retiree's Assn. Funeral Procedure

1. Notify:

Kerry Horton, President - Albuquerque Fire Dept. Retiree's Assn.
Cell: 505-934-2969
E-mail: firkdh@gmail.com

Sam Trujillo, Treasurer - Albuquerque Fire Dept. Retiree's Assn.
Funeral Detail Coordinator
Phone: 505-899-1500
Cell: 505-400-3644
E-mail: Samtruj@aol.com

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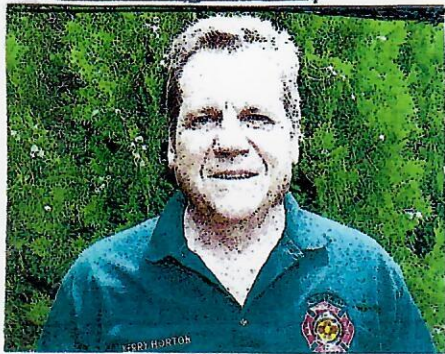
DORADO APARTMENTS FIRE (1973)
East Central Avenue NE Photo By: Dave Windle



Engine 12, Dorado Apartments Fire (1973)
East Central Avenue NE, Photo By: Dave Windle

ALBUQUERQUE FIRE DEPARTMENT
RETIREE'S ASSOCIATION
5318 LA COLONIA N.W.
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87120

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KERRY HORTON

President's Message

By Kerry Horton

Hello everybody, summer is here and in less than two months I hope to see you at our annual picnic. There's more about that somewhere else in this newsletter. On June 12th, at our monthly meeting, we will be holding elections for the offices of Vice President, Treasurer, and Historian.

The exciting news is that for the first time in AFDRA's history, we have a contested election. For the position of Vice President, Michael Murphy, the incumbent, has accepted nomination for another term. Bill Raupfer, has also accepted nomination for the office, and will challenge Michael on election night. The position of Treasurer has two members seeking election as well. Our incumbent, Sam Trujillo, has accepted nomination to continue for another term, and Michael Fox has accepted nomination to challenge Sam on election night.

I find it very encouraging that we have people willing to stand up and get involved in our association. As I have always said, I completely respect our E-Board members, but we need to get more people involved in this association to carry on our mission and traditions. I wish all those nominated all the best on election night, and I hope this trend continues next year when the positions of President and Secretary are up for re-election.

I contacted all the news stations to see if I could get a televised debate going, but for some reason all my calls went unanswered. Oh well, I think you know these guys well enough to make up your minds. I was reminded that I now need to make ballots, as in the past we just swore in the only guy that raised his hand. So, let's get a great turnout on June 12th, and get your voice heard in a for real AFDRA election.

I think we need to explore online balloting as well. It is to soon to get it done this year, as it will require a By-Law change once we even figure out how to do it, but I think it's worth looking into. Let me know your opinions on this issue, or if you have any ideas to make it work.