

AFD RETIREE NEWS

June 1, 2020

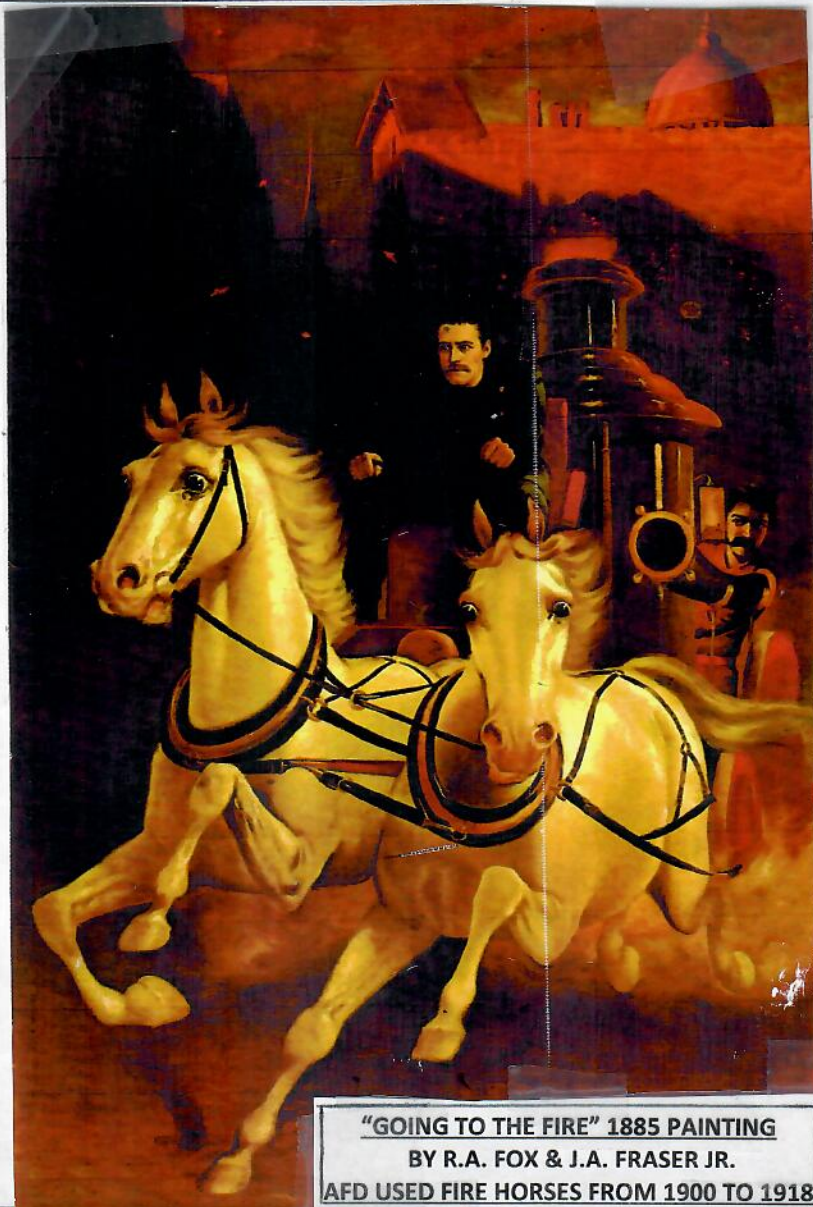
2-2020

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**On June 9, 2020 We Celebrate The 20th Anniversary Of
The Albuquerque Fire Department Retiree's Association**



**"GOING TO THE FIRE" 1885 PAINTING
BY R.A. FOX & J.A. FRASER JR.
AFD USED FIRE HORSES FROM 1900 TO 1918**



**PUBLISHED BY
THE AFD RETIREE'S
ASSOCIATION**



**EDITOR
HERMAN R. BISHOP**

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**AFD Retiree's
Association
20th Year
Celebration
June 9, 2020**

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Manuel Aragon Dies – We were saddened to learn of the death of our retired firefighter friend and brother Manuel A. Aragon age, 85 who passed away on February 25, 2020 after a long term illness. He joined AFD on February 18, 1957. After a short break in service in 1958 he returned to the department in 1961 and served 25 years until his retirement in January, 1984. Chief Art Westerfeld hired him along with 25 other firemen who were needed to open the new fire station one located at 8th Street and Silver Avenue SW. The Chief also opened the fire training center in 1957 at 1510 Kit Carson SW headed by Captain Ray Kuhn. Manuel was in the first class at the new training center. Manuel worked many years at station stations one, two, and three.



Manuel Aragon

He was part of the firemen who were assigned to open the new station three when it opened in 1972 at Girard and central NE. Manuel was a happy, jovial fellow who liked his job and was friends with all his fellow firemen. He was an active member of the AFD Retiree's Association for 20 years. Manuel was a long standing member of our firefighter family and he will be missed by all his firefighter friends. On behalf of our members we offer our sincere condolences to the Aragon family.

March Monthly Meeting - On Wednesday March 11, 2020 the 235th monthly meeting of the AFD Retiree's Association was held at the firefighter's union hall, local 244, 4100 Edith NE. The meeting was called to order @ 7:10 PM by President Kerry Horton. After the Pledge of Allegiance the opening prayer was led by Morris Guterrez. A moment of silence was observed in honor of our deceased members. Roll Call – President Kerry Horton, Vice President, Mike Murphy, Secretary, Fred Casias, Treasurer, Mike Fox, Historian, Herman Bishop. Our guest speaker was Dan Mayfield who is running for the PERA Board. Kerry Horton gave the President's report. He said Fire Chief Dow has extended an invitation to all retirees to join him for the department promotional ceremonies on Friday March 20th 2020 at 2:00 PM at the Kimo Theater, 5th Street & Central Ave. NW. Kerry has requested more retirees volunteer to join our honor guard. Several of our members have resigned due to health reasons. The Association will purchase uniforms and equipment necessary for new members.

The Secretary's report was given by Fred Casias. A motion to accept was made by Morris Guterrez and was seconded by Joe Martinez. The motion passed. The Treasurer's report was given by Mike Fox. A motion was made to accept by Tobias Pino and was seconded by Gabe Sanchez. The Historian's report was given by Herman Bishop. We have received positive comments about the March 1st newsletter. Many thanks to Eddie Abeita for his article, "20 Years Celebration of the AFD Retiree's Association." Kerry Horton is commended for the article he submitted about the PERA Solvency Issue, SB 72 passed by the 2020 NM State Legislature and signed by the Governor. We are requesting donations from our members to support the Fire Museum. Herman Bishop donated \$100 to the Museum fund and challenged our members to match his donation. See Mike Fox.

Morris Gutierrez announced that the annual flag pole dedication honoring our deceased members will be conducted on May 11, 2020. Ceremonies will be held at Cosmos Hair Saloon 2721 San Mateo NE. Members will be notified by email and by the phone tree. Later this year Fire Chief Dow has approved moving the flag pole honoring our deceased members to the Fire Academy grounds 11500 Sunset Gardens SW. More details on this move later.

The March raffle was won by: John Barnum, Johnny Marquez, and Morris Guterrez. The closing prayer was led by Morris Guterrez. The meeting adjourned @8:28 PM.

AFDRA 2020 Election

By Kerry Horton

The 2020 AFDRA election process is for the positions of President and Secretary, and the Election Committee Chairman is Louis Trujillo. Nominations were accepted from our April meeting until the day of our May meeting. The following people accepted nominations for this election process, NOBODY, NADDA, and ZILCH. So, by acclamation, Fred and I will be re-sworn into our respective offices at our July meeting.



Jose L. Maldonado Celebrates 91st Birthday
Fire Service Career, Albuquerque Fire Department
 (By: Herman R. Bishop)
 February 10, 2020



Jose L. Maldonado joined the Albuquerque Fire Department on August 22, 1953. After 30 years of faithful, and dedicated service to the Albuquerque Community and to the Fire Department he retired on June 20, 1983. As I joined AFD on September 26, 1960 I worked with Joe for about 23 years. I first met Joe when I was a rookie at the old station eight at Graceland and Menaul N.E. He was a Lieutenant on Rescue 2 there and worked along with the Engine eight crew. I was assigned to station three at Bryn Mawr and Central N.E. When the crew was short handed at station eight I would be re-assigned there for a few days at a time, off and on.

Joe had been on the job seven years ahead of me and welcomed me to station eight. He was a friendly cordial personable man with a quick smile. He served as a mentor to me and readily shared his knowledge of the fire department with me and took me under his wing. He was a good supervisor and was well liked by his fellow firemen and the Assistant Chiefs and Captains alike. As we responded to rescue calls and fires together I began to feel more confident and at ease in my new job as a fireman. He was a good role model, strong, confident, technically competent and willing to assist me when I needed help and guidance.



Jose L. Maldonado
District Chief, AFD.

The population of Albuquerque was about 100,000 in 1953. Starting pay for firefighters was about \$250 per month. Total personnel in the department was 85 people. Only seven fire stations were located through out the City. There was no fire academy when Joe joined the department. The following people were hired at about the same time: Tomas Candelaria, Jose Maldonado, Ernest Armijo, Silver Sanchez, and Joe A. Candelaria. The cadet classes were not numbered in those days and training was mostly on the job. Training usually lasted a few days to a week conducted by the Lieutenant assigned to Engine 1-A at station one, Second Street and Tijeras NW. Joe was hired by the late Fire Chief Art Westerfeld. The fire station was located in the old City Hall along with the City Manager's office, and other City departments. There was a seven story training tower on the back lot behind station one. Training consisted of laying miles and miles of fire hose, connecting to fire hydrants, ladder drills, jumping into the life net from the third story of the drill tower and enduring the dreaded smoke room.

Most firefighters are given nick names and Joe was no different. Shortly after joining the department he was given the nick name "Little Joe," because of his short stature. Because he was good natured and had a good sense of humor he accepted his nick name graciously with

dignity and respect. In 1953 when he joined the department rules stated that one must be five feet eight inches tall and must weigh 140 pounds. Chief Westerfeld realized that Joe was a strong muscular man who could handle the physical aspects required of a firefighter so he waived the height requirement and hired him.

When Joe joined the fire service there was no protective breathing masks like there is today. Firefighters were called "Smoke Eaters," Breathing masks became available for firefighters in the late 1950's. The old timers did not want to use them and said they were too cumbersome. They made jokes about the new firemen and called them sissies when they wore the new breathing masks into fires.

By the late 1950's Joe was part of the senior Lieutenants who were the back bone of the growing fire department that expanded from 85 personnel to over 500 people when he retired in 1983. Joe wore his smartly tailored fire uniform with pride. He was a picture of what a model firefighter should look like and he made the department proud as he made public appearances, fire inspections and talks to school children and civic clubs around town. He was the image of what most school children dream of doing when they grow up, driving and riding the big fire truck to emergency calls and fighting fires.

Joe was an ambitious and intelligent man and rose through the fire department promotional ladder quickly. He was promoted to driver during August, 1956. For several years he served as Chief Westerfelds' personal driver, responding to fires and rescue calls as well as many other administrative duties required of the Fire Chief. Chief Westerfeld formed the first rescue squad in 1956, Rescue One Downtown at station # 1 located at Silver Avenue and 8th Street S.W. When the second rescue squad was formed in 1959 Joe was promoted to Lieutenant and was assigned to rescue two houses at station eight (Graceland & Menaul N.E.)

During the spring of 1964 the new Fire Station thirteen was opened at Louisiana and Indian School Road N.E. just west of Winrock Shopping Center. Joe was promoted to Captain on February 17, 1964 and was assigned to head that station. I was a driver for the district chiefs assigned there and I worked closely with Captain Joe Maldonado and with Lieutenant Don Deblassie. As I was studying for the Lieutenant's promotional examination, both Joe and Donald were most helpful sharing their knowledge with me and drilling and drilling me on fire department practices, regulations, firefighting tactics, supervision, and other finer points required for a Lieutenant.

After I successfully passed the written test we were required to appear before an oral review board (about five people) and were interviewed for about one hour answering rigorous questions regarding the knowledge required of a Lieutenant. Again both Joe and Donald drilled me for several days prior to the oral board interview and conducted a mock interview.



They led me through the process and prepared me for the interview. Their assistance paid off. When the promotional list was published I had passed with flying colors and was number two. A short time later I was promoted to Lieutenant , many thanks to those fine officers.

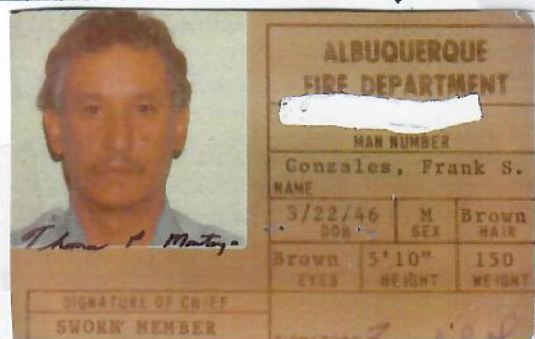
After serving as Captain for two years Joe successfully passed the next promotional test and was promoted to District Chief on December 19, 1966. He was assigned to head the fire department training center located at 1520 Kit Carson S.W. adjacent to the Albuquerque Zoo. During his tenure there he renamed the training/drill tower to the "Albuquerque Fire Academy." After serving there for several years and training hundreds of firefighters he was assigned back to the firefighting division. He served in district three, adjacent to Winrock Center at station thirteen. After that assignment he was transferred to station one, as District Chief Downtown (Eighth Street & Silver S.W.) By this time during 1980 I had been promoted to District Chief and again I worked with Joe. He was assigned to "B" shift and I was assigned to "C" shift. We worked together until his retirement on June 20, 1983. I worked a few more years after Joe's retirement and then I retired on January 1, 1986.

Joe was a good family man and always spoke lovingly of his wife and children who were all dear to his heart. He was deeply religious and was a devout Catholic and an avid church attendee. He practiced the brotherhood of man and was always compassionate and willing to help those in need as he responded to emergency calls.

There is a bond among firefighters like no other profession I know of. We have our immediate families, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, wives, and children. Then we have our other family, the firefighter's family. We consider ourselves true brothers and sisters. We stick together during our active duty careers and also into our retirement years. Shortly after the AFD Retiree's Association was formed in June, 2000 Joe became an active faithful and dedicated member. For the past 20 years he has been a member of the retired firefighters' association. On a regular basis he has attended our monthly meetings, annual picnics, Christmas dinners, and other community activities sponsored by the retiree's association.

To the Joe Maldonado family I am happy to share this story about Joe's fire department career as you are preparing to celebrate his 91 st birthday. He is my good friend, but more than that he was a good mentor and role model for me during my early fire department career. He lent me the benefit of his fire service knowledge, and offered encouragement over the years as I went through the promotional process during my career.

Frank Gonzales Death – We were notified of the death of our fellow Firefighter Frank S. Gonzales, age 74, who passed away on May 9, 2020 after long term illness. He joined AFD on June 24, 1974 and Retired on March 28, 1994 after serving 20 years of faithful and Dedicated service to the department. He attended the old fire Academy when it was located at 1510 Kit Carson SW. Trainee's Were required to jump into the life net, lay miles of fire hose, and To endure the dreaded smoke room. Frank was promoted to driver In January 1984 and promoted to Lieutenant in March 1987. He Was a quite and courteous person and was well liked by his fellows. He was a member of the AFD retired F.F. Association. Our most Sincere condolences are offered to the Gonzales family.





A History of Horses in the Fire Service

Horses in the Fire Service — in 1832, the New York Mutual Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 volunteers purchased a horse to pull their engine. One of the reasons may have been due to a shortage of firefighters caused by a yellow fever epidemic. The other stations were unsympathetic. One evening the anti-equine element crept into the stable, shaved the horse's mane and tail and painted a white stripe down the horse's back, embarrassing the company. To add insult to injury, the Oceanus volunteers beat the horse-drawn Mutuals to a fire.

As steam engines gained popularity they grew in size and weight. Firefighters reluctantly accepted the need for horses. As Ditzel quotes: "A firehouse ain't no place for no stinkin' horse!" At first horses were stabled near the stations. When the alarm sounded, it took valuable time to unlock the barn, fetch the steeds and harness them to the engine. Before long, the horses lived at the station and the reluctance to accept them was replaced by a deep affection for the noble animals.

The stalls were positioned behind or next to the rigs. In 1871, a quick hitch was developed. Two years later, Charles E. Berry, a Massachusetts firefighter, created a hanging harness with quick-locking hames. His invention was so popular he left the fire department and sold his patented Berry Hames and Collars nationwide.

Not every horse could serve as a fire horse. The animals needed to be strong, swift, agile, obedient and fearless. At the scene, they needed to stand patiently while embers and flames surrounded them. They needed to remain calm while the firefighters fought the blaze. This was the case in all weather conditions and in the midst of a multitude of distractions.

The fire departments carefully selected their horses. Veterinarians for the departments evaluated each animal. Both stallions and mares were eligible to serve.

In Detroit, weight requirements were issued for the animals. Those pulling hose wagons must weigh 1,100 pounds, to haul a steamer 1,400 pounds, and to cart a hook and ladder 1,700 pounds. Stations also tried to create matched teams of two and three horses when possible.

Some cities had training stables but most provided on-the-job training. Detroit had a horse college. They claimed to be the only fire department that trained their horses by this method. Ditzel says: "There was a fire station with apparatus, training stalls, hanging quick hitches, a feed room, a horse hospital, and a 700-foot racetrack." Each horse received progress reports and report cards at the conclusion of their training. The horses that successfully completed their education were placed in the city's fire stations. Departments added horse ambulances and horseshoeing wagons to their city's rigs. A horse might work at a station for four to ten years. In 1858, the Philadelphia Fairmount Engine Company gave their fire horses a vacation. This became a tradition in the Philadelphia fire department. This was long before firefighters received vacations.

In the fall of 1872, a form of distemper, called epizootic spread among the horses. Within a period of twenty-four hours, 300 horses died in Buffalo. The epidemic spread rapidly to many cities. The cities relied heavily on horses for transportation and became paralyzed. Fire became a major concern. It was late October in Boston. Out of a total of 75-90 horses, four had died and 22 were unfit for duty. Until the epidemic ended, firefighters with the aid of citizen volunteers often found it necessary to drag the equipment to fires manually. On November 9, the Great Boston Fire burnt continuously for sixteen hours. It consumed 776 buildings, left 20,000 unemployed and 1,000 homeless. There were fourteen fatalities, including eleven firefighters. A century later John P. Vahey, a Boston fire chief, wrote about this catastrophe and renamed it the Epizootic Fire, after the disease that felled so many horses.

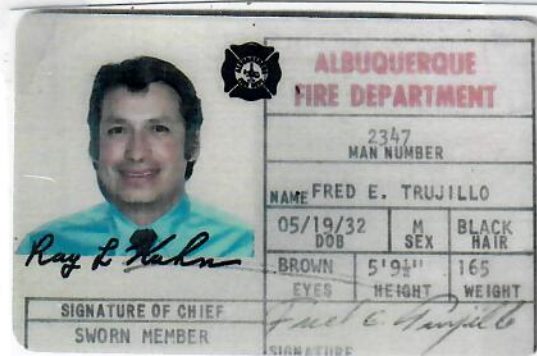
It was a sad day at the fire station when a horse was declared unfit for duty. Many retired fire horses continued to work for the city in less strenuous positions. Some were put out to pasture. Occasionally the noble beasts were put up for public auction. The gallant steeds might be purchased by junk drivers and delivery men. At times, the fire horses would forget their new roles and charge down the streets hauling a wagon after hearing a fire gong.

References:

Ditzel, Paul C. *Fire Engines, Firefighters: the Men, Equipment, and Machines, from Colonial Days to the Present*. New York: Crown, 1976.

Smith, Dennis. *Dennis Smith's History of Firefighting in America: 300 years*. New York: Dial, 1978.

Fred Trujillo Dies- On March 11, 2020 our brother firefighter, Fred Trujillo, age 87, passed away. He joined the department on June 6, 1958. Later that year he took a short break in service and re-joined AFD in late 1959. He retired on August 30, 1983 after serving over 24 years of faithful and dedicated service to the department. He was hired by Fire Chief Art Westerfeld due to new personnel needs caused by the new fire station one that opened in 1957, creation of the fire training division, fire rescue one and the Fire Prevention Bureau. He joined along with eight other new firemen hired at that time, Dale Noblet, William Young, Richard Garcia, Jose Hernandez, Billy Gonzales, Theron Haskins, Jack Lester, and Jack Strange. They went through eight weeks of training which included, hose lays, ladder drills, jumping into the life net, first aid and enduring the dreaded smoke room. Fred was a good firefighter who liked working with his fellow firefighters. He worked at most fire stations throughout the City. He was a pleasant fellow who was liked by everyone he came in contact with. Fred was a military veteran . He was an active member of the AFD Retiree's Association for 20 years. Our sincere condolences are offered to the Trujillo family.



April 8, 2020 Monthly Meeting – Unfortunately the traditional April monthly meeting was cancelled due to State-wide restrictions regarding public meetings because of the Coronavirus situation. However President Kerry Horton called the 236 th monthly meeting to order on April 8, 2020 electronically. The meeting was conducted by our executive board. Participants were officers Mike Murphy, Vice President, Fred Casias Secretary, Treasurer Mike Fox, Historian Herman Bishop and Sam Trujillo President, Emeritus. President Kerry Horton communicated with members of the advisory board via e- mail. Kerry recited the Pledge of Allegiance and asked members to observe a moment of silence in memory of our deceased members. Fred Casias and Herman Bishop submitted the minutes of the March meeting. Board members approved the minutes. Mike Fox submitted the Treasurer's report. \$1,900 is designated for 2 new honor guard uniforms. The fund raiser for the museum fund is nearing our goal of \$2,500. Board Members approved the Treasurer's report.

President's report by: Kerry Horton – During the Coronavirus situation Kerry and Chief Dow have agreed if necessary, retirees will be requested to volunteer their services to assist in department logistics, deliveries and necessary activities to relieve active duty personnel who will be assigned to serve on the front lines. Retirees are invited to attend the Fire Cadet graduation on May 1st at the Kimo Theater providing it is not cancelled. The IAFF Local 244 recently conducted a successful blood drive. Retirees will be requested to participate in future blood drives. Funeral services for our brother retirees Fred Trujillo and Manuel Aragon have been postponed until further notice. Ed Abeita will step down as chairman of the picnic committee. Morris Gutierrez will assume the chairmanship.

Herman Bishop gave the Historian's report: Development of the June 1st newsletter is underway. We are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the AFD Retiree's Association on June 9,2020. Eddie Abeita is writing an article about the development of our quarterly newsletter, which began 20 years ago. Kerry Horton will submit an updated article regarding SB 72, "The PERA Solvency Plan," passed by the New Mexico State Legislature and signed by the Governor. Construction of the new Station # 9 is underway at Eubank and Menaul NE.

During the past twenty years we always close our monthly meetings with a prayer. In honor of our firefighters both active duty and retired we invite you to remember the Lords prayer as we close the April 8, 2020 monthly meeting. "OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME, THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD. AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS, AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL: FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER. "AMEN!"

This concludes the E-Board reports. The April monthly meeting is adjourned. Approved, Kerry Horton, President.

- Kerry's Bicycle Jokes –**
1. What do you get if you cross a bike and a flower ? A. Bicycle Petals
 2. What do you call a bicyclist who just broke up with his girlfriend ? A. Homeless
 3. What is the hardest part of learning to ride a bicycle ? A. The Pavement
 4. What do you call an artist who sculpts with bicycle parts ? A. Cycle Angelo

I first became interested in the history of the Albuquerque Fire Department during the late 1960's when as a young Captain I was assigned to fire station one downtown at 8th Street and Silver Avenue S.W. It was there in an obscure storage closet I discovered numerous hand written ledgers from the late 1880's through the 1920's which gave daily accounts of activities conducted at the fire department. Many items were listed such as dates, names of firefighters, fire chiefs, hose wagons, hose companies, the hook and ladder company, City Managers, City Councilors, fires attended, visitors to the fire house, names of the fire horses, their weights and daily checks for their welfare, supplies received such as hay, oats, coal, kerosine oil, stove polish, beds, mattresses, ice, etc. Also listed were current events, such as the State Fair, famous boxing matches, Jack Johnson VS. Fireman Jim Flynn,(Las Vegas, NM) and the announcement that World War I had ended in 1918.

As I began discovering the AFD history in these hand written ledgers I began taking notes. Over the next few years the books started falling apart. During the late 1970's when I was an Assistant Chief I made a decision along with Assistant Chief Don DeBlasie to turn the books over to the Albuquerque Public Library to be placed in the official archives. Many years later, (about 2013) I contacted officials at the main library downtown and inquired if those old ledgers were still there? Indeed they were still there but a few years earlier they had been transferred to the Albuquerque Museum the Library's sister organization and were in the official Albuquerque Museum Archives. After contacting museum officials they verified they had custody of the ledgers. Arrangements were made for me to get an appointment to visit the archives. On the appointed date I spent a day viewing the ledgers. Today they are there, preserved and in good condition as when I turned them over to the main library.

When the AFD Retiree's Association was formed in June, 2000 I was appointed as Historian of our association. Since that time I have researched and written a history of AFD dating from 1882 to current date (September, 2017) As historian I have become a focal point for information surrounding AFD history such as, photographs, stories, inquiries from citizens, firefighters, retired firefighters, firefighter's families, City Officials, Library and Museum officials and other interested people.

I have given lectures to members of the Albuquerque Historical Society, Friends of the Library, citizen groups, and on a regular basis I give lectures several times a year to the AFD fire cadets on AFD history. I have worked closely with officials at the special collections library at Edith and Central Ave. NE. Library Officials at the Main Library downtown, Geneology division, and Officials at the Albuquerque Museum.

As historian of the AFD Retiree's Association I am the editor of the quarterly newsletter for retiree's. I have held this position for the past 17 years. We have put the newsletters on two C.D.'s" (2000 - 2010) & (2011 -2015). We are preserving the news letters from (2016 - 2020) and at the end of that period they too will be preserved on a C.D.

- The history of AFD is available on a C.D. (50 pages of text, & 50 pages of photos)
- Over 60 stories of AFD Retired Firefighters is available on a C.D.
- We have 15 volumes of history in three ring binders (100 pages each), Includes text & photos
- There is a photo I.D. book we compiled of AFD retired firefighters (over 300 people)
- There is a beautiful black marble plaque with gold letters (8 foot X 4 foot) developed and displayed at the AFD Fire Academy honoring over 400 AFD retired firefighters both living and deceased.



"The Passing of a Retired Firefighter Means You Lost a Brother"

Sam Trujillo and Funerals

By Eddie Abeita

Prior to the start of our Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association (AFDRA) in the year 2000, some retirees died and were buried without the association's knowledge. In the early days the need for some type of connection with the retiree's funeral was desired. Our first few funerals that we attended as an association we wore black arm bands to show our solidarity. Sam continued with; A few retiree deaths were still missed because of us just not knowing about it. However, we still felt that our association was still the main source of being contacted when a retiree died. Some families would contact an active duty firefighter or retiree and sometimes the fire chief's office to report the death of a retiree.

I asked Sam about retirees who slipped through the cracks? Sam said, some retirees have dropped out of sight right after retirement and never heard from again, for whatever reason. Then we get the call, the retiree has died, after working side by side, now their gone. Some retirees who do not attend meetings regularly, may send in a donation from time to time which leads us to believe they are still upright. One of these retiree's died and we knew nothing about his death until we saw it in the PERA newsletter now that was another sad moment.

Sam said, upon our initial involvement with funerals as an association, we knew making direct contact with the deceased family was needed. We needed specific funeral service information to forward to the retiree's association membership, Sam said. From the start of the retiree's 20-year history "*we lost approximate 156 retirees*". Because of the epidemic the last three retirees who passed this year, we have not been able to give them our *AFDRA Ceremony*.

There were times when we met with the deceased family, they asked, if the fire department or retiree's association helped in any way. It was apparent that some deceased brothers did not share a lot of their last wishes or vital information with their loved ones.

Some families had their own disagreements with funeral plans, not knowing what the deceased last wishes were, from religious services, cremation or to be put in a box. One thing I would ask the family said Sam; if the deceased was ex-military and if so, do you have their DD 214? Sometimes I got a yes but many times the response was, what is a DD 214? Also, some families were unaware that *some* retirees had a paid-up life insurance policy through the City Sam said.

Our association had discussed how maybe we could start educating our retirees as not to put so much burdened on their family when the time comes. Lucky Louie Trujillo spear headed this task and developed a form to help guide the family. Louie said this is a simple check list to be filled out now while you have a clear mind(?) well try, the best you can. The checklist includes; Do you want a "Firefighter Funeral", church services, cremation etc. said Louie. This is just one thing we all have to be reminded of, *clearly this is not a legal declaration or will*. We have also found a lot of families had planned things down to the "T" so little help was needed.

"The Passing of a Retired Firefighter Means You Lost a Brother"

Sam Trujillo and Funerals

By Eddie Abeita

In 2006 Fire Chief Robert Ortega dedicated a fire engine that would be used to transport the deceased from a funeral home, church and to the cemetery. What a major compelling addition to our funeral involvement, to have a dedicated fire truck for the retiree's final ride. The fire engine was christened "LAST ALARM". The fire engine was red in color which is great for front line equipment. Chief Ortega said make any modifications you want, so Pablo Garcia already had ideas in mind. Painting it black would make it stand out with gold leaf lettering and striping happened. Pablo said we need to dress it out more so chrome wheels were added. The Last Alarm fire truck was taking shape but the thought, lifting the coffin up onto the hosebed for transport could be hard on the back, said Sam.

Well the thinking process still was active during the body work and painting, so an idea was to copy how the funeral hearse has a bed of rollers that allows the coffin to slide in and out of the hearse with ease. With no budget, I am always asking for donations so I asked a funeral home if they might have an extra set of rollers not being used? Well we hit paydirt and were given a used set and modifications were made to attach it to the truck it worked out well. To decrease the angle of the hosebed again more modifications were made. A hydraulic system was installed to raise and lower the hosebed. Sam said; "looking at the Last Alarm truck, this is the most dignified way a firefighter can be transported to their final resting place. Use of the Last Alarm truck is contingent upon approval by the AFR Fire Chief. Procedures were developed in a joint effort to ensure use would be only for active duty or retired firefighters.

If there is a memorial service the family makes the arrangements, our part is to coordinate with the funeral home in transport of the deceased. The association will pay tribute by; honor guard standing vigil at the funeral home and or church, fire eulogy, resolution of condolence read and presented to family, striking of the four fives. All active duty and retired firefighters are asked to come forward to show our unity and support to the family. The striking of the four fives is a long-standing fire tradition which is by a fire bell ring. In the beginning we would ring the fire bell that was mounted to the fire truck. However, depending where the truck was parked sometimes the bell could not be heard at graveside. We came up with the idea to build a cart with a bell and alarm box mounted so it could be wheeled close to graveside. Bill Raupfer did a great job in organizing and getting our Honor Guard in form.

When a firefighter retires the comradery continues. So, *the passing of a retired firefighter mans you lost a "brother"*. I've been asked, what if there are two funerals scheduled at the same time? Well it happened we divided up our association and it worked out well!



“It was the Newsletter that Triggered the Thought for More Information”

Herman Bishop Newsletter Story

by Eddie Abeita

Herman said, from the start of the retiree's association, an objective was to keep all retirees informed of happenings pertaining to all retirees. With communication being the focal part of keeping retirees informed a phone tree system and electronic mail were up and running. There was still a need for larger amounts of information to be disseminated to retirees and also archive information for the historical aspect, thus our retiree's newsletter was born.

The retirees first newsletter was one page in length and called *Newsletter*, and I was asked to be editor of the newsletter, said Herman. Twenty years later I have been asked the same question from retirees; why is the name still called newsletter? Herman said well, because that's what it does, provides news and mailed out like a letter!

The first few newsletters were our learning editions in layout addressing and mailing. Sam Trujillo and I did this all by hand even got some help at some fire stations. The firefighters would help but you could tell it became boring to them I guess with stamps or address labels found up-side down it was obvious. However, we were thankful for any help we got so thanks again guys!

Herman said I've been pleasantly surprised when a deceased retiree's family member contacts me and ask, if they could purchase a newsletter subscription. They mentioned how the family has enjoyed reading them over the years. As the historian I do a segment of fire department history in each newsletter which all articles are our AFD history. It is not unusual to receive requests for information about a deceased retiree most are for pictures. The family member might say; **it was the newsletter that triggered the thought for more information**. Many years back *it seems* there was an era when pictures and old documentation were not considered important to some and discarded. One thing was I did receive calls from a few asking if we wanted some old memorabilia which was music to my ears.

I asked Herman it appears that the newsletter is fine-tuned, how do you maintain it all? In a few words Herman said I will tell you!

The quarterly newsletter is published on March 1st, June 1st September 1st and December 1st. Current distribution is about 650 copies; however, we print 700 copies because we always need some extras. During the past several years it has evolved into its present form from one page in 2000 to 16 pages today. We have learned to develop and publish this newsletter through trial and error. During early 2020 Chief Dow and his staff began printing our newsletter in color at no cost to the retirees. September first all information should be in to the editor by the 15 th of the month. (August 15 th in this case.)

After the 15 th a master copy is developed and copied on to a flash stick. Because our newsletter publishing dates usually fall on holiday week-ends we try to get a final copy to the printer by the 20 th or 23 rd of the month. When we meet with the printer, we request a sample copy to ensure it meets our requirements. (Be sure to specify no staples.) The printer usually completes the job in three days ready for us to pick up.

“It was the Newsletter that Triggered the Thought for More Information”

Herman Bishop Newsletter Story

by Eddie Abeita

Continued...

Next, we take the completed newsletters ready for mailing to our mailing service, Adelante, with the current mailing list copied on to a flash stick (thumb drive). We try to get the finished newsletters to the mailing service 25 th or 26 th of the month. The mailing service usually takes 3 days to get them in the mail.

Our target is to get the newsletters delivered by the first to third day of the new quarter. The old adage, “Trust But Verify,” is in order both with the printing service and mailing service. In our past experience we have found that things do not flow smoothly and in a timely fashion. Follow-up and verification of events are a must.

We request the mailing service send us a copy of the undeliverable mail and a copy of the address updates from the U.S. Post Office. The bill from the mailing service should be mailed to our Treasurer. The Treasurer should call the editor to verify that the bills are correct.

Undeliverable mail addresses and mail address updates should be forwarded to Sam Trujillo who keeps a master mailing list of our retirees.

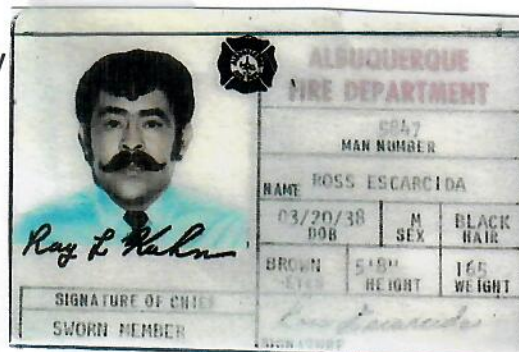
To ensure our retirees have received their newsletters we spot check by calling a random sample of people (usually 4 to 6 people) and verify that they have received their newsletters.

Additional Notes: Indicia, the non-profit mailing permit printed on each newsletter. Non – Profit Org. The Indicia includes permit number of the mailing service, used only by that mailing US Postage Service. Return Service Requested – Printed on each newsletter ensures we get a PAID list of undeliverable mail, and address updates from the mailing service after each Albuquerque NM mailing. Each returned newsletter is sent to Sam and he is required to pay Permit No 1322 The post office \$.55 each for returns. Currently our newsletters are costing about \$.36 each

Herman said we have come along way since our first meeting in 2000. The newsletter has been an important piece of our operation. We have some out of town retirees who have submitted stories which is great and of course local retirees who also submit articles for the newsletter. Some retirees will ask, how to get a story published about a particular retiree or an event? I tell all what they need to do; I give them the basic layout, maximum number of page(s), letter size (font) and script and if possible, place it on a flash/zip drive or send it to me by electronic mail.

The amount of returned mail by United Postal Service is small however to help minimize undeliverable newsletters, we continue to remind retirees to keep their mailing address, telephone number(s) and e-mail updated.

Rosenaldo "Ross" Escarcida – We regret to report the death of our fellow retired firefighter Lieutenant Rosenaldo "Ross" Escarcida who passed away on Monday April 13, 2020 after a long term illness. He joined AFD on November 2, 1964 and retired on May 1, 1986 after serving 22 years of faithful and dedicated service to his community and to the fire dept. He joined the department along with nine other new firefighters to meet The staffing needs created by the opening of station # 13 at 6500 Indian School Road NE. Ross was a pleasant easy going fellow who knew his job and was well liked by his fellow firefighters. He followed the footsteps of his brother Victor Escarcida who joined the department earlier that year. Although the brothers did not look alike we affectionally called them the Escarcida twins. Ross was promoted to driver in 1968 and to Lieutenant in August 1980. He served as a paramedic Lieutenant until his retirement in 1986. He was a good and faithful member of the AFD retiree's association for 20 years. Our sincere condolences are extended to the entire Escarcida family.



Minutes May 13 th Monthly Meeting - The 237 th monthly meeting was conducted electronically on May 13, 2020. The traditional monthly meeting was cancelled due to restrictions regarding public meetings resulting from the Coronavirus situation. President Kerry Horton called the meeting to order and participants were members of our executive board, Vice President Mike Murphy, Secretary Fred Casias, Treasurer Mike Fox, Historian, Herman Bishop and President Emeritus, Sam Trujillo. President Horton communicated with members of the advisory board via e-mail. Kerry recited the Pledge of Allegiance and asked members to observe a moment of silence in memory of our deceased members. Fred Casias submitted the minutes of the April monthly meeting. Board members approved the minutes. Mike Fox submitted the Treasurer's report. Board members approved the Treasurer's report.

President's report by: Kerry Horton – PERA board member John Milia gave a report regarding the PERA fund's performance during these rollercoaster investment times. John stated that the fund has been able to sustain the ups and downs so far, and that there is optimism that things will get better as the economy opens up in the next few months. Recently we lost two brothers, Ross Escarcida on April 18 th and Frank Gonzales on May 9th. Services are pending. Hopefully, we can conduct our regular monthly meeting at the union hall on June10, 2020.

Herman Bishop gave the Historian's report: We recently received a nice letter from our fellow retired District Chief Paul Graves who lives in Victor Montana. He sent a generous donation for the museum fund and submitted an article for the newsletter, "AFD's first self contained breathing apparatus." We appreciate the assistance we are receiving from members of the fire administration in publishing our quarterly newsletter. We continue receiving good service from our mailing service, Adelante, who hires handicapped workers.

We have temporarily suspended our monthly raffle due to state-wide restrictions on public meetings. So far as we know we have not had any reports of our fellow retirees stricken with the Corona Virus. Hopefully we can maintain our social distancing, wear face masks, wash our hands and follow societal rules to prevent the virus. Traditionally we have always closed our monthly meetings with a prayer. We ask you to say a silent prayer this month in honor of our active duty first responders and retired firefighters alike.

Kerry's Bicycle Joke: A tandem rider is stopped by the police. "What have I done wrong?" he said. "Perhaps you did not notice sir," but your wife fell off a mile back." "Thank God, he said," "I thought I had gone deaf."

This concludes the E-Board Reports. The May meeting is adjourned. Approved, Kerry Horton, President.

The Economy, PERA, and Retiree Health Care

By Kerry Horton

The world, national, and state economies sure look a lot different today than they did three months ago. The economic shut down caused by Covid-19, and the surplus of world oil supplies, have had a detrimental affect on the stock markets and our PERA Fund. Be glad that pension funds do not rely entirely on the S & P 500 for their investments because the markets have looked like a rollercoaster the last three months. Everyday there seems to be a two or three hundred point swing either in the negative, or positive. I have reached out to PERA Board member John Melia, regarding the performance of our fund, and he stated that the fund has been riding the rollercoaster with the markets, but that the losses so far are sustainable. Though no one could have predicted the speed of this economic downturn, this is the exact reason that it was so important to make the changes to our fund in the last legislative session. The fact that our fund will not be burdened with the compounding COLA's for the next three years will help the fund weather this recession. The only adjustment that has taken place is that the 76 million dollar appropriation from the state has been reduced to 55 million, but our "13th Checks" will not be affected by this state budgetary adjustment.

I have been fielding some questions regarding the future of PERA and how the changes implemented by SB 72 will affect our retirees, so below is a handful of Q & A's that I borrowed from the PERA web-site.

Q. I am a retiree over the age of 75, will I still receive a COLA?

A. Yes, effective July 1, 2020, if you are 75 years of age on or before June 30, 2020, you will receive a 2.5% COLA, an increase from the current 2% COLA. Disability retirees and retirees with pensions lower than \$25,000 after 25 years of service also will receive a 2.5% COLA.

Q. When will the 13th Check begin?

A. COLA eligible retirees will receive a 2%, non-compounding, additional payment for the next three years (2020, 2021, and 2022). This payment will be paid in addition to your regular July pension payment.

Q. Did the COLA wait period change?

A. Effective July 1, 2020, retirees are eligible to receive a COLA after they have been retired for two full calendar years.

Q. I am retired and currently in my seven-year wait period for a COLA. When will I receive my first COLA?

A. Current retirees in the seven-year waiting period who have been retired two calendar years are also eligible for the 13th check July 1, 2020, and will be part of the "profit-share" COLA after the three-year period of 13th checks.

Q. I am a PERA retiree who returned to work for a PERA-affiliated employer before July 1, 2010. Will my COLA be reinstated?

A. Yes, effective July 1, 2020, you will receive a COLA. You are not eligible to receive retroactive COLAs.

Q. I am a PERA retiree. Will I be able to go to work for an ERB-affiliated employer and still receive a COLA?

A. Yes, you will now be able to work for an ERB-affiliated employer and still receive a COLA. If you are COLA-eligible, you will automatically have your COLA reinstated July 1, 2020.

Q. How will PERA pay for the 13th checks?

A. PERA received a \$55 million General Fund appropriation to cover the cost of the 13th check payments to eligible retirees in FY 21, 22, and 23. For clarification, that's July 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Many of us retirees have our health insurance through the New Mexico Retiree Health Care Authority. It is not as good as the health care we had while we were active duty, but it sure beats what is out there on the open market. The NM Retiree Health Care Authority has struggled for years to keep up with the raising costs of health care while at the same time trying to keep our benefits competitive, and our premiums affordable. As you know, back when we were active duty, we complained about the few dollars that the NMRHCA took from our paychecks every two weeks. This is done to offset the high costs of medical coverage, and to keep retirees premiums as low as possible.

In the 2020 legislative session, the NMRHCA introduced House Bill 45, a bill designed to improve the funding status and to ensure the long-term viability of the program for future generations. HB 45 sought a direct appropriation from the state General Fund, and an increase in employee and employer contributions. While the direct appropriation was removed from the bill in the legislative process, HB 45 went on to be passed by the House of Representatives by a 53-11 vote, and the Senate by a 29-11 vote. All that remained was for the Governor to sign the bill once it landed on her desk.

With the economic downturn and the oil money that was supposed to bolster our General Fund drying up faster than anybody anticipated, Governor Lujan Grisham made the hard decision to veto numerous bills that previously passed the House and Senate. HB 45 was one of those casualties. The Governor has promised to consider New Mexico Retiree Health Care Authority a priority during the 2021 Legislative session. So, what does all this mean to you and me? While the program faces uncertainty with regard to rising health care costs, an aging population, and limited growth in revenues, the NMRHCA Board of Directors do not feel that the challenges are insurmountable. According to the article in the latest NMRHCA Benefit Messenger Newsletter, the board "continues to develop and promote a balanced approach toward aligning the benefits of the program with the contributions made over the course of an average career." What that last line means in the real world I have no clue, but NMRHCA says its goal has been, and will continue to be, providing access to affordable health insurance coverage for current and future retirees.

Let's hope that the 2021 Legislative session will find a way to bring some relief to the financial challenges facing the New Mexico Retiree Health Care Authority, so that there will be no reduction in benefits, or increases in premiums for all retirees who have their health coverage through the NMRHCA.

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PRESIDENT



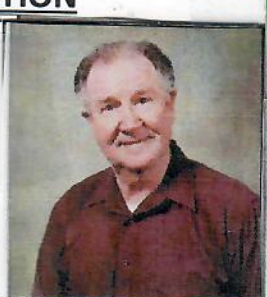
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PRESIDENT, KERRY HORTON

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
BY KERRY HORTON**

Hello everybody. I certainly hope that you and your families are all staying safe and making it through this isolated world without too much difficulty. I am writing this in the middle of May, so I don't know if there will have been any big changes by the time the newsletter is delivered, but I hope that the gathering restrictions have been lifted, or at least relaxed. As you know, our April and May meetings were cancelled, and we conducted business with e-mails. That's not a bad way to do AFDRA business, but the meetings are essential to keep up the camaraderie that we all enjoyed at the firehouse during our careers. The advantage of the e-mail meeting report is that we reach a lot more people. I think that putting out a meeting report after our meetings would be a good idea, and I will discuss this with our E-Board.

As of right now, we are still planning on holding our summer picnic in August, and we will keep you all informed as the summer progresses. Eddie and Roberta Abeita have done an outstanding job with the picnic for many years, and they have decided to take a much deserved break from the planning duties attached with putting together the picnic. Our Brother Morris Gutierrez and his wife Geraldine have stepped up to fill their shoes. In advance, I thank you both very much.

I have been getting a lot of inquiries and well wishes about my accident, so I thought I would address it here. On April 17th, I was riding my bicycle in the bike lane on Montano, across the river. A hit and run driver entered the bike lane, and hit me from behind (place jokes here). I am very fortunate that my biggest injury is a separated clavicle, and some bruising down my left side. I am rehabbing every day at home, and should be back to 100% in a few weeks. Now, there has been a lot of speculation that this was a coup d'etat by one of our E-Board members, looking at you Mr. VP, so I appointed a group to be AFDRA's CIA and look into this matter. I quickly realized that we were lacking one key ingredient, intelligence. So, I have disbanded the AFDRA CIA, and I will just practice better situational awareness while I ride my bike in the future. Just for the record Mr. VP, all you have to do is ask and I will gladly cede the Presidency to you.

KERRY'S BICYCLE RIDE - "The Pig." The day before my bicycle accident on Montano Rd. NW I was having a beautiful ride along the river bosque. A man standing on the trail was yelling at me and saying, "Pig, Pig, Pig!" He pissed me off so I shouted some bad names that I dare not repeat here. Still fuming about this awful man and his shouts, I rounded the bend and collided with a pig.