



# Vancouver Retired Fire Fighters



## NEWSLETTER

2026 MAY

### **PRESIDENT**

John Hudson

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### **President**

*John Hudson*

Brothers & Sisters,

It has been some time since the last newsletter. We had an unfortunate start to the New Year with several brothers passing away which is hard on everyone no matter what time of year. During that time there was some difficulty getting information out to everyone. Perhaps the three biggest problems that arose were.

1. The addresses that we have are on file for each member are sometimes outdated, while we do our best at trying to keep addresses up to date. I do understand that moving is quite a task and updating the fact you have moved is probably not on the top of your list. However, in the event of your passing any correspondence that needs to be sent to



your family is likely not going to find its way to your new home. Please in the event of a move try pass on your new address on to the Retirees Committee. And as the electronic age of instant communications is here, a current email and phone number is most helpful.

2. Please inform your family that there are several steps that need to be taken care of in the event of your passing. This is a trying and stressful time for your loved ones. We have a form that we on the Committee follow. Obviously, you may not know the procedure in the event of your passing. So, the following information needs to be processed. First step is to contact the Retirees Committee, and the current President is John Hudson 604-626-9264 or [jdHUD@shaw.ca](mailto:jdHUD@shaw.ca) or [jdHUD76@gmail.com](mailto:jdHUD76@gmail.com). If I am not available, please contact Howie Brown. The contact information for the Committee is also located in the newsletter.

Once contact has been made to a Committee Member, we will try and keep the same member assisting your family so this will not lead to any confusion as to what has already been processed.

Although we will send out a Group Talk email to VFRS, notify the Union, Honour Guard (if requested), etc., each **family must contact the MPP and Service Canada directly**. I've included their information below.

#### **Family members to contact:**

- **Municipal Pension Plan:**
  - <https://mpp.pensionsbc.ca>
    - or 1-866-876-6677
  - **Death Certificate:** [retired@pensionsbc.ca](mailto:retired@pensionsbc.ca)
- **Service Canada (CPP & OAS):** 1-800-277-9914

#### **INFORMATION WE REQUIRE from family members so we can send out death notices:**

**Deceased Member's Name:**

**Rank:**

**Cause:**

**S.I.N.:**

**Date of Passing:**

**Birthdate:**

**Age:**

**Start Date:**

**Retired:**

**Service years:**

**WorkSafe Claim?**

#### **BENEFICIARY/EXECUTOR**

**Name:**

**Email:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**City/Province:**

**Postal Code:**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Contact:**

**Phone:**

#### **CELEBRATION OF LIFE (If taking place)**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Church or Hall:**

**Address:**

When we contact your family by email or phone, we inform them on the steps that we take to let everyone know of your passing. There are two parts to this process. The area above **highlighted in yellow** is the required information we ask the family to fill in and send to us via email. While it does seem like a lot of information it is to the benefit to your estate.

Local 18 has funds to send to your family. Remember the \$5 taken of your cheques so long ago? This is the money the Vancouver Firefighters Benevolent Society gives the family to assist with funeral. The current amount is \$650.00. No updated beneficiary is necessary. The funds are sent to the Estate if your has pre-deceased you.

Arrangements: The City also keeps a small life insurance policy the money is forwarded to the family (Sun Life).

So, you can see if we do not have the correct information on file, it makes it very difficult for your Retirees Committee to assist your family when they

really need it. We have in instances where the family had little idea on how to process your passing.

The suggestion is to inform your loved ones as to the process. Place it in your paperwork, post it on your fridge just be sure they know about it. In the long run it will likely save a lot of anxiety to your family.

3. Should your passing be a WorkSafe claim that is on the Presumptive list or a claim needs to be started we also assist the family in processing the next steps. This is important as most of you already know that there is a Federal Government Grant for those whose death is recognized as a Line of Duty Death. There is a one-time only \$300,000 tax free grant. There are several steps to make this claim which the Committee members can assist with. The first step is to make sure that there is a WorkSafe Claim has either been accepted or start one.

## A NEW PLAN

We have big news coming for all of Retirees. The steering Committee has decided to move us into the computer age. We have achieved this with a great deal of help from Mike Joy who set up a web page. Hopefully this will allow better information exchange for all. The web site will have members information for those that give permission. This should get us around the freedom of information that we all like so much. Other inclusions will connections to the groups we are involved such as the sport teams, fundraisers, Historical site, Charitable site, 314 Society, Wellness Group with links to their sites. This will take some time to get everyone on board, but we should be up and running by the end of May 2026.

Please note there will be security on the Website so your information will be protected. You will be invited to join providing you answer 2 security questions. Keeping your information private is a requirement of the BC Privacy Act. However, you can give your permission to share your contact information such as your phone number or email if one of the other retirees is trying to get a hold of you. A form will be set

up for you to give your permission should you want that to occur.

If that is the case, make sure you select that choice. As always, your Retirees Committee strives to serve you well. If you have any concerns, please let us know and we will do our best to deal with your concerns.

**The web site is:** [www.vanretfire.com](http://www.vanretfire.com)

Cheers,  
John Hudson  
President of the VFFRA  
[jdhud@shaw.ca](mailto:jdhud@shaw.ca)  
604 626 9264



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## Vice President

Albert Drinovz

I hope that by the time this newsletter reaches you spring will have sprung. So far we seem to be off to a good start with a lot of warm dry weather behind us already this year. I suggest you get out all of your toys (rv's, fishing gear, boats, atv's, etc.) and get them dusted off, tuned up and ready for the upcoming warm summer that is being predicted. Hope it will not turn into another heat dome like a few years back. Time will tell.

Since our last newsletter (Sept/25) the following members passed away: Sean Bolan (active member), Neil Austin (active member), Ron Martin, Dave Touchet, Wayne Dairon, Norm Gable, Len Alderman, Phil Janzen, Buster Moberg, John Craigie-Halkett, and Arlend Pargée. Some of the families have had a service while some are not having a service. As soon as we are informed of a service we will notify everyone via email. Your executive attempts to attend as many of the services as possible. I would like to thank the Honour Guard for attending

many of the services when requested. They do a tremendous job of showing respect for the fallen. RIP.

Newly retired members joining our association so far this year are: Mike Anzulovich, Andy Zawada, Dave Mackie, Brent Wold, Pat McKeown, Simon Lessard, Mike Canaday, Joe Chamberland, and Trevor Boldt. Congratulations on retiring and welcome all. We will be publishing a newsletter twice a year, May and September.

This year in September, eight members names will be going on the IAFF wall in Colorado Springs as Line of Duty deaths. They are: Sean Bolan (active member), Neil Austin (active member), Mike Berube, Ted Burden, Dennis Wilson, John Mramor, Tony Neratini, and Dave Touchet.

Our next meeting is June 4, 2026 at #15 firehall with a 10:30 start time.

A couple of VFRS personnel who are retiring this year is long time member in the stores department Al McBeth and the fire chief Karen Fry. Congrats to both.

If you would like to get medals mounted for your dress tunic contact Andrew Siwy at [victorymedals@gmail.com](mailto:victorymedals@gmail.com)

Stores is now carrying the retired flasher that go on the arms of your dress tunic.

If you are on Facebook please join the retiree's group (Vancouver Fire Retirees) that Bob Hollier has created and administers. He shares a lot of information on this page that will keep you up to date.

Please update your personal information (new address, email, phone number (s), etc.) with any one of the executive. If the members (about 25) who receive this newsletter by snail mail (Canada Post) please submit an email address to us. Receiving the newsletter via email is more timely than in the mail.

If there is a change to your beneficiary notify all parties (ie: pension board, banks, life insurance companies, our credit union, us, as a few examples).

Albert Drinovz  
[adrinovz@shaw.ca](mailto:adrinovz@shaw.ca)

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**June 4:** Our next Meeting at #15 Hall – 10:30 am

**Sept. 19:** Annual Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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## Treasurer

*Howie Brown*

As we look forward to the continued warmth of the summer season, the sounds of lawn mowers in our ears, I hope each of you had a good winter.

I attended the *BC Retired Firefighters' Wellness Society* AGM in April. Congratulations to Gord Ditchburn and Mike Joy on their re-election, and to Martie Tammen and Mark Cave on their election as directors. I'm grateful to everyone who recognized the need for this support network for firefighters and worked hard to build it—and to those who continue that work. Special thanks to Mike for extending his vision by developing a similar resource on the MPRA website, which I hope will broaden the reach of wellness support.

Chief Fry has announced her retirement, effective in late July, and I wish her well. While some may disagree, I have always seen her as a strong friend of our fraternity—active and retired—who made a positive impact in many areas. She will be missed, and I hope her successor continues to bring the same positive approach to the role. Chief Connelly (aka The Dancing Bear) has been appointed interim Fire Chief until a permanent replacement is selected.

Finally, as your treasurer, I am happy to report that as the money comes, and the money goes, all is well with the finances of your association. Wishing you all a safe and happy summer season!

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## Recording Secretary

*Gord Ditchburn*

Greetings everyone and like others have said, time is upon us in gearing up for a summer of fun, family and friends. It

has been a particularly busy time since our last update on a variety of fronts, and trust that everyone is doing well.

Sadly, we tend to see more of each other at memorials and services remembering our fallen, and lately there has been a run of them. While we pause to reflect on loss, it remains an opportunity to catch up, share some good stories and laughs as we do our best to honour and reflect. It is also a time to check in on each other and those we seldom hear from.

There are a number of initiatives happening within our retiree realm and I want to congratulate the following individuals for their work with the BC Retired Firefighters' Wellness Society, Mike Joy as Secretary, Martie Tammen and Mark Cave as new directors. We are doing great work in building resources for retirees and sincerely hope that you're watching, and when appropriate, utilizing available resources. Always encourage everyone's suggestions on how we can improve with new resources and being there for retirees. Others within the team include John Hudson, Rod Salas, and Tom Chapman.

A lot of great work is being done by many, and I want to compliment both Mike Joy and Howard Brown for their work with the MPRA (shameless plug) and creating change within an outside association where members can benefit from deals and discounts, as well a variety of insurances. Have a look if you're interested, sign up is easy and the first year is free (firefighter deal).

I recently attended Brother Don Symington's Island luncheon a few weeks ago in Nanoose Bay and really enjoyed catching up with people I had not seen in years. Andy Sojka hosts a luncheon every few months at the Black Sheep Pub in Maple Ridge which is always a hit, and Rick Kearney hosts a breakfast every second Tuesday of each month at The Roadhouse Grille in South Surrey. Poopsie's Friday lunch at the Guildford has been a staple for more than a few years. I know there are others and forgive me for not mentioning. This past April I attended the Knob Derby produced by Andy Sojka and his team, an amazing event that brought together 100 plus brothers.

I mention these events to shine a light on them, they're great for the soul, it's an ab workout with the laughs, and no buns tossed. Lots of stories, lots of

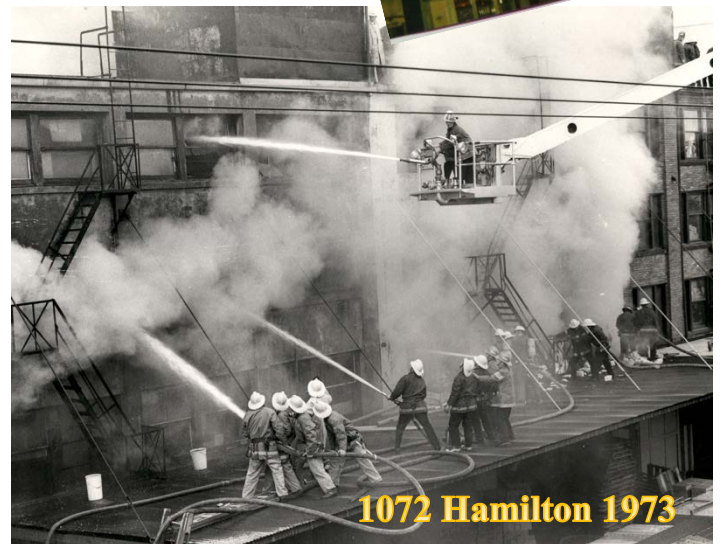
laughs and a great way to better one's mental health as we check in on each other. Some of the best therapy we get is connecting, sharing a meal or beverage and telling lies, or stories. If you get the chance to attend, or are thinking about it, do it and you'll be glad you did.

Lastly, another shameless plug in getting yourself checked for cancers. My cancer journey began about this time last year with a series of tests, after my PSA number had skyrocketed, getting a diagnosis mid-July of prostate cancer that had metastasized into surrounding lymph nodes, and a treatment plan including hormone drugs and radiation. As I write this report, I'm headed back into the cancer clinic given spots were found on my vertebrae and pelvic area a week ago. Again, I share this for no other reason than reminding you to get checked, look after yourself and be your best advocate if there is push back from any part of the medical system. Also, do your part and initiate a WorkSafe claim.

I wish everyone a great summer of fun, family and friends enjoying all that retirement brings. Check in on each other, join in on one of the luncheons or breakfasts, you'll be glad you did, and above all, if you need something reach out.

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## News from Retired Firefighters Wellness Society



Since our last report to the VRFA newsletter we feel our organization has taken giant strides to further add to our resources that will benefit our retired members. Over the past few months, we have been interviewing a number of mental health professionals in the hope they will join our team in providing quicker access to support for our members, should they require it.

I am happy to report through the efforts of Rod Salas we now have some 20 qualified Counsellors who are well versed in supporting the needs of firefighters. We feel this is an important step in the process when seeking out the proper certified clinical counsellors given the anxiety that is encountered when seeking this help. We are very comfortable in recommending any one of these individuals who were all too quick to accept our invitation and provide their support to our retired members.

More information concerning the Clinical Support Team and news on the Spousal & Family Program will be posted on our website in the coming weeks.

<https://retiredfirefighterswellnessnetwork.org/clinical-support>

In other news, the RFWN hosted a Social Evening last November where roughly 20 -25 retired members enjoyed a round table discussion reflecting upon their personal experiences leading up to retirement and their thoughts and experiences in post retirement. The evening discussions were moderated by Dr. Jeff Morley and Sally Tan members of our Oversight Committee. This evening was well received by all.

As part of our continuing education series, another Social Event is planned for later this month at the Burnaby Rugby Club, on May 27th Deer Lake Clubhouse. All retired and active members are welcome to attend. The topic will be "Sleep Deprivation and the affects it has on the brain". Sally Tan will be the Host Moderator. Further information is available at:

<https://retiredfirefighterswellnessnetwork.org/#sleep-disorder-series>

Finally, I would like to close by reporting the BC Firefighters Wellness Society held its second AGM last month where Gord Ditchburn was elected as President and Rod Salas appointed to Vice President filling the vacant position previously held by Rick Kearney. Brothers, Martie Tammen and Mark Cave were also elected as Directors.

In related news, Brothers Kearney and Symington were appointed along with Dave Kent (L323) by President Ditchburn to serve as members of the K.I.T. Committee. A committee charged with the responsibilities of "keeping in touch" with retired members who are in need of additional support. We view this appointment as a vital link in the attempts to provide support for those who are feeling isolated, no longer connected to our fraternity.

Lastly, I wish to extend our thanks and deep appreciation to the Firefighters 314 Fraternal Benevolent Society for their generous donation in supporting our efforts to address the needs of our retired brothers, in addition to those who are struggling in silence. Without this support many would continue to suffer, alone.

*Submitted by:*

*Mike Joy*

*Sec/Treasurer | BCRFW Society*

# Vancouver Firefighters' Historical Society

The Vancouver Firefighters' Historical Society (VFFHS) was formed with the mission to preserve, honour and share the long and storied history of the Vancouver Fire Department (VFD) and Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS).

The Historical Society became a registered society in 2010, carrying on the work of our great historian Alex Matches, Rob Jones-Cook, and others who had begun to collect stories, set aside artifacts and keep records for the future. In 2011 we organized the celebration of the department's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Gastown which was well-attended by the public, City officials, Indigenous leaders and firefighters.

Each year, our VFFHS members volunteer dozens of hours planning and attending events all over the City with our antique apparatus, the 1961 LaFrance fire engine. This engine was sold in 1981 to the village of Okanagan Landing by the City of Vancouver, later purchased by District Chief Rick Jennens of West Kelowna and was donated back to the Historical Society in 2019 when he passed away.

The LaFrance is owned and operated by the Society and is used for LODD funerals, for Vancouver Firefighter Charities events like the annual Toy Drive, civic events like the Pride parade as well as some private events. Requests for this parade rig have increased over the years as awareness of its curb appeal, impact on fundraising, and attention to the work of our department and its members grows.

**Use this link for requesting its use.**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdFKMcIQzK9p73hm0Tlrjdf\\_4i4iq\\_Wvs6uhCQF8CqOoTKvfg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdFKMcIQzK9p73hm0Tlrjdf_4i4iq_Wvs6uhCQF8CqOoTKvfg/viewform)

The Historical Society not only provides the upkeep and maintenance of this classic fire apparatus, it also maintains displays of vintage firefighting equipment and photos to all of our firehalls.

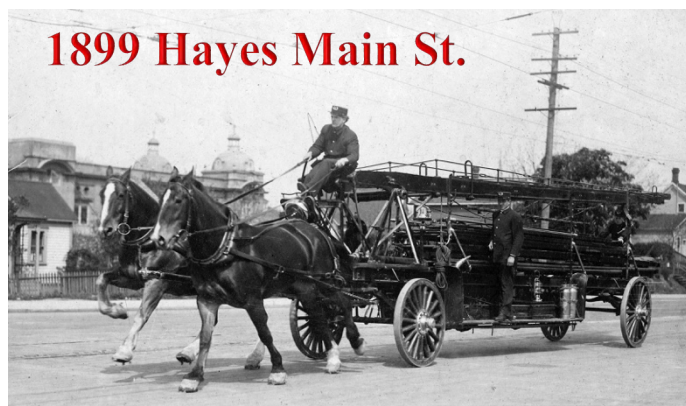
As the custodians of this legacy, we recognize the need for ongoing financial and human resources to maintain our historical archive, facilitate the many projects and events we attend, and continue to promote the history of the VFD/VFRS.

Thank you to our partners, Local 18, Firefighters 314 Fraternal Benefit Society, the Benevolent Society and the City of Vancouver (through VFRS) for their financial support over the years. With these funds, we have been able to pay for several big projects; bodywork and paint, electrical wiring and brake and clutch servicing, as well as ongoing fuel and insurance costs. In 2024 we were able to undertake an extensive restoration on the 1961 LaFrance firetruck with over \$20,000 spent on bodywork, paint, airbrushing and a complete brake rebuild. The truck looks amazing now!

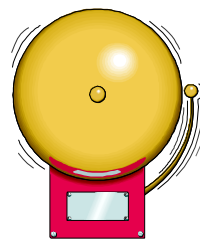
We have plans to restore other apparatus and to display these in a worthy setting in the future, surrounded by displays of our history protecting the City.

If you have items from the job that you wish to see returned home, please consider donating them in your will. We are happy to accept financial donations at any time but we cannot issue tax receipts as we are not a registered charity. Every active and retired member is welcome at our annual general meeting held in the fall.

*Submitted by:*  
*Rolyn Potter | VFFHS*



# Last Alarm



|                               |    |                  |
|-------------------------------|----|------------------|
| A/Battalion Chief Sean Bolan  | 56 | leukemia         |
| A/Captain Neil Austin         | 54 | cancer           |
| Mechanic Ron Martin           | 70 |                  |
| Captain Dave Touchet          | 74 | leukemia         |
| Captain Norm Gable            | 82 | natural          |
| Captain Philip Janzen         | 83 | multiple myeloma |
| Battalion Chief Len Alderman  | 78 | post surgery     |
| Battalion Chief Buster Moberg | 87 |                  |
| Captain Wayne Dairon          | 85 | alzheimers       |
| Captain John Craigie-Halkett  | 84 | prostate cancer  |
| Deputy Chief Arlend Pargee    | 87 | natural causes   |

## Alberta Lumber 1961



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### Treasurer

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