



Upcoming Union Events in "The Month Ahead"

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# THE WORKER



PRESIDENT  
RANDY MARLER

## President's Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Change is often met with a mix of emotions, and as we stand on the cusp of a new era for our fire department, we find ourselves in a unique position of apprehension and optimism. The recent replacement of our former Fire Chief with the temporary appointment of Chief O'Berg brings forth a range of feelings, including understandable concerns about the past and hopes for a positive future. In this transition, let us address the challenges while embracing the opportunities to build a renewed, collaborative relationship between the Fire Chief and our union.

The department has a lot of injuries, and the appointment of Chief O'Berg is meant to begin the healing and chart a course for friendly waters. She is here to build a plan to improve morale, empower our people, solve some of our immediate problems through collaboration with the Union, and help Mayor Brown find a permanent future Fire Chief, which will be done with a national search and include your involvement. She is

here to provide a positive transition to a brighter future for the SFD.

The departure of our former Fire Chief marks the end of an era that presented significant challenges for our department and strained the relationship between SFD leadership and the union. It's essential to acknowledge our difficulties and their impact on morale. However, Mayor Brown's swift action signifies a chance for a reset and a commitment to rebuilding trust and collaboration.

The appointment of a Fire Chief with the support of our union opens the door to a fresh perspective and the opportunity to redefine our shared goals. Chief O'Berg's alignment with the values and needs of our members provides an opportunity to address longstanding issues, improve working conditions, and foster a culture of mutual respect.

The key to success in this transition is building a positive relationship between the Fire Chief and the union. Open communication, transparency, and a commitment to working together will be essential. Chief O'Berg has expressed a willingness to collaborate and listen to the concerns of our members, signaling a new chapter where our voices will be heard and valued.

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It is only natural to harbor concerns about change, given our experiences in the past. However, let us view these fears not as obstacles but as opportunities for positive transformation. The union has a role to play in ensuring that the concerns and aspirations of our members are considered, and by actively engaging, we can collectively shape a more harmonious and influential future for our department.

Now, more than ever, unity within our ranks is crucial. As we navigate this transition, let us stand together to support positive change. The strength of our union lies in the collaboration of our members, and together, we can overcome challenges, foster a positive work environment, and elevate our department to new heights.

In the spirit of optimism and solidarity,

Randy Marler, IAFF L29 President



**VICE PRESIDENT**  
LEE MCNAMEE

## From The VP's Desk:

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

I hope you all were able to take some time and enjoy the holiday season with your family and friends. As we begin the new year, I am more optimistic than ever on what the future holds for Local 29 and the SFD. We have a great opportunity to foster new relationships with our current administration and help build our future by having a say in what our department will look like moving forward.

We have had a lot of struggles over the last several years that could have been avoided just by having better working relationships and open lines of communication with our administration and some members of the city leadership. In the grand scheme of things, we are all on the same team. We share the same goals of providing excellent service to the citizens we serve, attracting the best and brightest to our organization and providing them with the tools, training, and protections they need to perform those services.

I think the difference now is that we have individuals in those positions that are willing to at least engage and listen to the things that are important to us. It seems like a large percentage of our grievances and problems that arise between the administration and the local could be solved or even be avoided just by being able to sit down and discuss the issues with open minds and a mutual respect for each other's point of view. We have already begun to experience a little of what that might be like during a few of our recent meetings and communications with the administration.

There is a document that was created a few years ago during a joint labor management alliance conference that is a pretty good outline of how that relationship should function. Unfortunately, we were never quite able to get to that place where there was enough trust and mutual respect between both sides to be able to live up to the intent of the values captured there. If you are interested in reading what our relationship with admin could look like, it is in the SOG's. It is titled "Spokane Fire Department Administration & IAFF Local 29 Guiding Principles". Chief O'Berg has already affirmed her commitment to these guiding principles by agreeing to include them in our updated policies and procedures.

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Executive board members Austin, Walker, Staggs, Davis, Newman, and I will be traveling to the IAFF Affiliate Leadership Training Summit/Human Relations Conference in a couple of days. One of my most anticipated classes is centered around effective labor-management relationships with actual case studies. I am hopeful that some of the subject matter experts from our IAFF leadership will have some unique insight and practical experience to help build trust and navigate the issues that we all face throughout the greater organization. I will have a report back on this and other subjects to share with you all next month.

In Solidarity,

Lee McNamee (509)280-7489 vicepresiaffl29@gmail.com



**TREASURER**  
KIRK GRIFFITH

## From The Treasurer:



**What:** Local 29 Night at the Spokane Chiefs game

**When:** Sunday 2/4 at 5:05pm

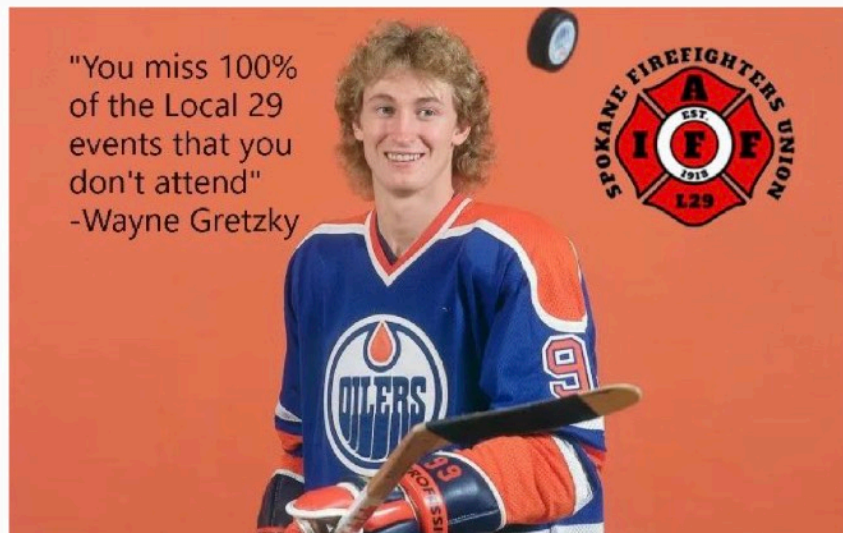
**Where:** Spokane Arena

**Who:** You and your family

**Who is paying for the tickets:** Local 29

**RSVP by 1/24/2024 to Kirk at [TreasurerIAFFL29@gmail.com](mailto:TreasurerIAFFL29@gmail.com)**

**(Please indicate how many adults/kids)**



"You miss 100% of the Local 29 events that you don't attend"  
-Wayne Gretzky

# ALTS

By E-Board Member Ryan Davis

Brothers and Sisters,

This month many members of your elected L29 leadership had the privilege of attending the Affiliate Leadership Training Academy (ALTS) in Orlando, FL. Vice President McNamee along with E-Board members Mike Walker, Eric Staggs, Kasey Austin, Corey Newman and myself were able to take a myriad of different classes and workshops that will help us better navigate in advocating for our great union. Much like firefighting, there are so many different avenues of subject matter to be proficient in that it's hard for any one person to be an expert in all of it. We went into it with a divide and conquer strategy so that we could come back and collectively share what we learned.

VP McNamee was in grievance and arbitration classes as well as getting updated where we're at with some of our IAFF legislative issues with the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. Walker immersed himself in various Cancer network, research and peer support classes while Newman sat in on the latest with the PFAS lawsuit, firefighter sleep fatigue studies and their associated health effects as well as bargaining for retiree health insurance. Staggs sat in on GIS and how to use that data as a powerful tool to advocate for better/safer responses and shine a light on our problem areas. Austin had workshops on discipline process, ethics and how to leverage best practices in firefighter health and safety with new concepts in station design.

I was able to take a class on the importance of building local political power. Every single decision about our pay, benefits, working conditions and retirement is made by someone elected to office or appointed by someone elected to office. Sitting on the sidelines is not an option when it comes to improving the lives of our members. I learned some great things about engaging new members and the importance of membership participation. The strength of this union depends upon the active involvement of its members. It's not uncommon to hear guys sometime talk about the union as if it's some sort of third party . . . "the union is gonna do this or the union is trying to do that." You're in it! This is your union, show up and make a difference. The firehouse might have rank and seniority, but when it comes to Local 29, we're all on equal footing. Doesn't matter if you're a thirty year Captain or just finished gold room. Lastly, understanding the importance of labor history in today's fight. Not just labor history, but our own Local 29 history. We have to know where we came from to better understand where we're going. We're all sitting in the shade of trees planted by our brothers and sisters that came before us, those that fought and bled for everything we enjoy today. Just remember, what has been gained can always be lost, the work isn't done. When we all pull the same direction, woe is our enemy.

As always, reach out anytime with any questions, I'm always happy to talk union. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Local 29 Spokane Chiefs night next week!

Ryan Davis (509) 710-1793

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## THE MONTH AHEAD

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<b>Union Meeting</b>	02/13
<b>WSCFF Legislative Conference</b>	02/15 - 02/16



**SECRETARY**  
BILL GRUMMONS

## From The Editor:

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns, and thank you for allowing me to serve you in this role.

Bill  
509-939-5275

## Local 29 Executive Board

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