

COMMO CHECK!

Volume 13, Issue 3

Dedicated to the proposition that a career in aviation is not something you do, it's something you survive!

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The Official Newsletter of the Professional Helicopter Pilots Association, OPEIU Local 102

From the President by Ron Arsenault

I write this article having just returned from the OPEIU Triennial Convention. Imagine a Local 102 General Membership Meeting on a very grand scale. All the business of the Union which requires the participation of the membership is conducted at that meeting. The big difference is that OPEIU only meets every third year. There is a lot of business to take care and lot of issues to discuss. One of the most important is the election of officers. I'm proud to report that Mr. Michael Goodwin will continue to lead OPEIU into the future. President Goodwin has done more for the helicopter industry than most can fathom. Our wage scales are a direct result of having OPEIU in our corner. During the convention the membership is called to order every morning at 9:00 am and business is conducted till 1:00 pm. After a lunch break there are training classes every afternoon on subjects such as the Affordable Health Care Act and Right-to-Work Laws, both of which may impact us in the near future during negotiations.

Speaker after speaker spoke of the benefits of being Union and being represented by OPEIU. Most of our workforce understands those benefits, but we have many that don't. A growing percentage of our workforce is now civilian trained and young, real young, both in age and experience in the world of commercial helicopter aviation, outside of the training environment. As late as the end of the 1990's helicopter companies in the Gulf of Mexico were still advertising for helicopter pilots, with starting pay between \$26,500-\$29,000 annually. On top of the dismal pay, the companies hired and fired at will, because the employees had no representation, thus no recourse to management heavy handedness. In the last 12 years, we at Ft. Rucker, have more than doubled our starting pay and we continue to protect our employees and jobs.

Recently, the Executive Board of your local has had to work through a work rules violation and helped a non-member in the process. Regardless of an employees' status as a member or non-member, the Executive Board will always work to ensure that the CBA is being adhered to by both parties to the agreement, i.e., the Company and the employees regardless of membership status. The legal process against the Army is ongoing but very slow. The legal system is part of the Government bureaucracy, which we all know, moves at an alarmingly slow pace. Of late it seems that the Division Directors and Assistant Division Directors are working very diligently trying to hold down overtime. We are watching too ensure that it's not at the expense of the CBA. They are just doing their job, making money for the company. Every company requires a certain amount of loyalty from their employees. I am constantly amazed, that our management person-

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President
Ron Arsenault
PHPA Local 102

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From The President *(Continued from page 1)*

nel are still so loyal to the Corporation, especially after the Corporation was so un-loyal to them. The bottom line is, the Corporation hosed our management personnel, but yet they still expect them to fix the mess and make them money regardless of how bad, they the Corporation, screwed up the bid and put everyone behind the eight ball. I continue to push the Corporation on the idea of unionizing the Flight Commanders/Assistant Flight Commanders and those few personnel that aren't currently covered under the CBA.

In closing I hope that all of our members continue to educate those employees that have not become members. Also the E-Board needs your help policing the CBA. If someone, employee or management, is not complying with the CBA let the E-Board know. Please follow the rules, properly train your students, don't mistreat students or co-workers and be safe.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

June 13, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Vice President Dave Oltmans. President Ron Arsenault was on family business. All other officers were present. There were 21 members present. Recording Secretary: The May meeting minutes were read by Jim Guy and the minutes were approved as read. Secretary-Treasurer: Richard White gave the Treasurer's report and the report was approved as read. There are 293 members.

Trustees' Reports:

Primary Division: Barry Martin had nothing to report.

Advanced Division: Lee Murphy reported that there was a bird strike in advanced division near Troy airport. The bird went thru the IP's side of the windscreen and ended up in the back seat. Everyone was OK except for some scratches suffered by the IP. The visor saved the IP from possible serious damage to his eyes.

BWS Division: Rick Boylston had nothing to report.

Trustee at Large: Rod George had nothing to report.

Old Business

Grievance 13-1: The grievance is filed; we are seeking repayment for the leave the two employees had to take. The first step is choosing an arbitration panel by the two legal teams. This process is well under way. We will keep you informed of the progress.

Leadership/Recognition Board: The board is on the wall. Dave has a list of all past presidents and we are still deciding on who is worthy of inclusion on the board. Members are encouraged to submit names of anyone they feel should be on it as well as the criteria for nomination.

2:1 IP/ Student Ratio: There are still issues that need to be worked out. Recently there was an issue concerning CEP in primary division. CEP showed up to conduct a no-notice ride on a primary IP. They did not bring an extra IP to fly his students. The IP was then asked to fly his students after the check ride was

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June Minutes *(Continued from page 2)*

over. CEP should always bring two IP's when conducting a no-notice evaluation. They are not supposed to interfere with normal operations, even on a no-fly day. As far as IP's with students checking, the idea has been proposed that an IP may become a float when his students are checking. This has not been decided yet. We need to make sure that this program would not be abused by management. We are still looking at other options.

New Business

There was a meeting with Scott Allison earlier this month about LTD. We need to come up with ideas to make the program more viable. They are dispersing a lot more money than they are taking in. If anyone has an idea please write it down and get it to the E-board.

Richard Seymour is off his ventilator and breathing on his own. He is still at the SE Medical Center.

From The Floor

It was reported that Roger Richey, formerly from flight 7, has passed away. No details were given.

There was a prepared statement read dealing with liability issues concerning the upcoming solo flights in primary. The statement brought up several liability concerns that every IP should consider. We will seek guidance from our lawyer on this issue. We will also check with the Company for a legal opinion.

A member brought up the idea of having an official "Union Recruiter" designated to talk with new hires about joining the union. MOI and the flight reps are our first exposure they have to the union but it may serve us well to have one person designated to follow up with them after they are flying students.

There are four positions open for elections on the E-Board; Vice President, Recording Secretary, Advanced Division Trustee, and Trustee at large. Nominations will be accepted during the June and July membership meetings. The following were nominated:

1. Vice President: Dave Oltmans ; Barry Martin
2. Recording Secretary: Jim Guy
3. Advanced Trustee: Lee Murphy
4. Trustee At Large: Rod George

Tim Wilson nominated as Election Judge – Tellers are as follows:

BWS – Floyd Emery; Tommy Sullins

Primary – Scott Davis

The winning draw in the raffle took home \$64 at this meeting. Last month's winner received \$74.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM.

On the Other Hand,.... By Dave Oltmans

Our legal challenge of the government's weight requirement is proceeding, thus far to the jurisdiction stage. The judge has asked both parties to present arguments supporting their respective claims that the Federal Judiciary has jurisdiction in the case. The judge seems to be taking his time to consider all arguments, but when all of the posturing is over, what this means is we that have an apple to peel so we can bake the pie, but don't know if we have a paring knife to do it with just yet.

As you know, on the face of it, the 250 pound weight limit is arbitrary and the arguments used in its support by the government are capricious and inaccurate. But what about the idea of a 250 pound weight limit, for say health, as being a more valid reasoning to quit griping about it? Not too long ago every IP went for an annual Army Class II flight physical, the results of which were used to identify potential heart problems. We now know that we were guinea pigs for a rogue flight surgeon's research project. The galling thing about that whole process was that very few Army medical professionals knew what the numbers they were gathering meant because they were too focused on "heart diseases" and the testing for them. Some of us, however, were identified with conditions that were other than heart related and we did not receive a diagnosis or treatment for our conditions. At least not in my case. When the Ft. Rucker doctors deployed to Desert Shield, their positions here were filled by Army reservists, many of whom had become seasoned professional specialists since their active Army days. These guys knew what the numbers meant even if the local guys were too ignorant to understand them. As a result, diagnoses were given and the appropriate therapies applied.

The questions to ask are; "What would have happened if we hadn't been subjected to an annual Army Class II physical? And; "What if these conditions had gone undiagnosed?" Not a pleasant thought to consider. The fact of the matter was that medical data of all kinds was being collected, thereby at least raising the probability that a diagnosis could be made. As obnoxious and unfair and as shortsighted the heart testing program was, it did identify deficiencies that led to treatment in more than a few instances.

How many of us have to weigh more than 242 pounds? That is the max you can weigh before you put on your gear. And if we weigh that or more, is it healthy? What is your ideal weight, not theoretically but realistically? Most of us are not youngsters anymore. We are not active, we eat too much, eat out too often and we have gained accumulated calories that we should have been burning off. We need to work towards our ideal weight, not because we have an unfair 250 weight restriction, but because we have families, wives in particular, who have watched us pack it on and are terrified.

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Talkin' Big

When I get the urge to eat,
I'll answer the call
With my feet.
I'll walk away from
All things sweet
And deny myself
Every treat.

Carbs are poison,
Candy forbidden!
I'll lose ten pounds,
Yes, I'll be gloatin'!
(And if I go swimmin'
I won't be floatin'!)

I'll take all stairs
With easy breeze,
No more pounding
To my knees.

Now all this talk
About being thinner,
Makes me think
It's time for dinner!

Wait a minute!
That thought's the worst!
I have a weigh in
October first!!

On The Other Hand *(Continued from page 4)*

Let's step back and take a hard look at the weight standard and admit it is not fair as it pertains to aircraft configuration and our past work performance. Its implementation, however, has motivated us to get the weight off for the wrong reason. It is not for our jobs that we should be motivated, but for our own wellbeing and that of our loved ones. Let's look at the glass as being half full when we get on the scales and the number is less than 242 pounds. Think about the days that your ideal weight will add to your life while serving to increase your longevity on the job, your peace of mind and that of your loved ones. Let's acknowledge that our hunger pains can serve as a reminder of a goal higher than just our appetites. If we prevail in our legal challenge and then shorten our lives because we have no personal internal motivation to do what is right for ourselves and our families, then we will be have been fools and will have poked holes in our bucket lists. Do not let your future dreams and aspirations drain away.

IT IS TIME TO VOTE by Bill Haaren

It is election time again, the position of Vice President is up for vote and I want to be your next Vice President. Our last election approximately one-third of the members voted, for those that voted thanks. Every member should exercise their vote for officers to represent our Union. Given the recent events that have occurred here at Ft. Rucker, the Army and the economy, everyone is looking for ways to reduce costs and increase production. We need strong leadership to ensure changes in our work; modifications to our CBA will not result in a loss of benefits to us.

So what are my qualifications? I have been flying for a living for over the last 30 years; have accumulated hours and hours of flight time. That has little to do with running a Union. However, 7 of those years were spent flying in the Gulf of Mexico, first with PHI, then a Part 91 flight company and then Air Logistics, at a time when there wasn't a Union and the companies were working hard to keep the Unions out. Our living conditions were terrible; no seniority recognition, promotions at the whim of the company and overtime was given only to the employees that the company liked. Anyone who supported the Union, were treated like outcasts and at the first opportunity were laid off and told "it will be a cold day in hell", before they even think about recalling them. I know first hand what it is like working in the civilian sector of aviation without the support of a Union. It was because of the treatment that I began my second career as a Paralegal with training in commercial, civil, insurance and workers compensation litigation.

Lucky for me, I came to work for the LSSI in 2001 and immediately joined the Union; I attended meetings and soon discovered that my flight did not have a Flight Rep, so I volunteered to do the job. As time went by there was a need for members to become involved in committee actions and I volunteered. Eventually there was a need to fill the vacancy of the Primary Trustee I volunteered for the job, and was subsequently placed in the position by a majority vote of the members. I held the position until I went on military leave. During that time I was involved in three grievances, updating the by-laws, contract negotiations, OPIEU seminars and the day-to-day operations of our Union.

As you can see I have been active in our Union and realize that it is only as good as we make it. I take pride in the part I played in seeing our Union grow from that dingy Meeting Hall off of Donnell Blvd to the Meeting Hall **WE BUILT** at our current location. Like most pilots I take pride in completing the mission regardless of the obstacles we face and I apply that drive and ethics to my work, for the Union. My friends and coworkers that work in BWS, Sup-H, Advance and Primary will confirm my strong work ethics.

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CHECKLIST

PH[A General Membership Meeting
6:30 PM August 8, 2013.

MEETING AGENDA

1. Meeting called to order.
2. Officer Reports.
3. Old Business.
4. New Business.
5. Discussion.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



FOR ALL YOUR AVIATION AND PILOT SUPPLIES

SEE JOE & MARGARET SMITH AT **V²**
PHPA MEMBERS GET A 10% DISCOUNT

LOCATED INSIDE CHARISMA, WEST GATE CENTER,
BEHIND RUBY TUESDAY IN ENTERPRISE

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