

COMMO CHECK!

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

JUNE 2016

The Official Newsletter of the Professional Helicopter Pilots Association.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

June has been a busy month. The E-Board has been working grievances concerning DONSA days and Air Force Goal days, which are essentially the same, to arbitration. They are due to be heard in late August. We also filed a grievance because AECOM changed the age, at which the company provided insurance begins to pay out less. We also notified the Company that we wished to go back into negotiations due to a change in working conditions, specifically teaching three different subjects in the UH-72. We continue to grapple with the changes that are coming out due to the new type of contract that the Army is using now and the continued transition to the UH-72. We have been able to fix some with Bridge Agreements, some may have to wait until the next negotiations,

We recently signed a bridge agreement that deals with overtime. Now an employee who works overtime will receive \$75.00 in addition to the overtime paid after the completion of 8 regular hours. Show pay also went up to \$75.00.

Another change that just came out from the Army is that all new hires will be trained in the UH-72, unless there is a special circumstance that requires that the new hire train in the TH-67. The Army must approve the special circumstances. These new hire employees will be subject to lay-off by seniority just like anybody else. No senior employee who has requested the UH-72 transition will be laid off prior to a junior employee flying the TH-67. We currently have some UH-72 qualified employees flying the TH-67. The Company had asked to move those employees to the UH-72 now, under the same type of seniority, seniority wise and the Union agreed. However the Company is finding it hard to move them because they can't backfill their position with the current training policy. This policy, really only cause's problems for the transition classes in which the student load was not zeroed out, such as the upcoming July class. The transition classes that have two full flight attending aren't affected. So if you requested the transition you will still attend.

June, July and August are nomination months for E-Board officers. The positions coming up for re-election are President, Secretary Treasurer, Advanced Division Trustee, and Trustee at Large. The Election will be in September, with the Board members taking office October 1st. Trustees can only be nominated by a member in that Division. Personnel nominated, need to be at the meeting to accept the nomination or contact the E-Board to acknowledge acceptance prior to the meeting.



President
Ron Arsenault
PHPA Local 102

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(President's Corner—continued from Pg 1)

Recently we've had quite a few people reporting that they have employees asking what has the Union done for me lately. Folks, you really got to keep your eye on the ball. Not everything that is done on your behalf may be advertised. There are some things that get done but may not be exactly what we wanted but were the best we could get at the time. Having said that, this E-Board takes their duties very seriously. Our basic mission is to represent the employees for pay and benefits, work safety issues, and employee discipline cases. We are also charged with safeguarding our job positions. Now everybody knows that there is no way that this E-Board can make everybody happy, we try hard to do what is best for the biggest percentage of the workforce. Some of what the Union does for this workforce is hard to see at times and may be hard to quantify, but ask yourself this question. How much protection do you think that you would have as a Flight Commander. Do you think that you could get the Company to maybe pay you more than another IP because of your skills. Would you be better off at a non-union worksite in the Gulf of Mexico. Most people are going to say a resounding NO to all these questions. So why do we have so many people that are non-members? They don't know anything about unions in general and especially about our union, or they have some beef with unions, or they are in a financial situation that leads them to believe that they cannot afford to, and then there are the cheapskates who refuse to pay for the benefits they receive for free. These employees enjoy all the benefits of the union but refuse to be part of the team that it takes to make it happen. That team includes every member, even if all that member does is pay his/her dues. It obviously also takes manpower, but this union cannot run without sufficient funding. So step up and be part of the team, join the union.

Last, it has sure enough gotten hot. The temps are running somewhere the second and third levels of hell. Remember to hydrate often, take plenty of water with you and watch your students for heat injuries. We recently had some students that needed minor medical attention after flying in a UH-72 that was not air conditioned. The Army is indeed full of good ideas. Stay safe!

Vice President's Note

By Alan Hauenstein



What person in their right mind, who has their own business does not hire an attorney to ensure they stay within the law? Or, what man having a lot of wealth does not hire an accountant to ensure they stays within the tax code? Why would you not hire the Union to ensure that your rights as an employee are upheld? Who will stand with you if the unexpected were to happen? Who will represent you if you were called into the office because of a student critique. Who will stand up for your job against the company?

You!?! By yourself!?!

Your Union is / has been designed to represent its membership. Your Union ensures that the CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) is followed correctly by the company. We have completed and argued for many a CBA to get to where we are presently. Some of this agreements have been developed over years of negotiating with the company. DOSS Aviation, PAN AM, Lockheed Martin, Lear Sigler, EG&G, URS, Big Global Aviation Services, AECOM, Star Command, the Federation of United Planets, and who can forget Darth Vader....okay maybe we haven't negotiated with all these entities but the CBA is in place in case we have to. Can you image asking Darth Vader for more vacation time...hahahaha.

"Yes, but Mister VP I don't like that I can't take my vacation in the summer when my children are out of school." Yes that is a problem. Come join us and help us change the CBA to ensure more vacation time for everyone or to fix this problem.

"Oh, Mister VP I think that if I come in on the AM shift and they send me home then, call me back for the PM shift that I should get extra money." Ha! Good one! We did that and now the CBA says "The flight instructors who provide instruction to Army students during a second training period will receive \$75.00. "

I guess what I'm trying to convey is that we need everyone to be a member of this Union and collectively (that's altogether) we will all stand together to make this job the safest and best job in the industry.

WHY I AM A UNION MEMBER?

By Jock Spencer

When I was a junior employee, no one really sat down with me and explained the benefits of Union membership. I did not understand what the Union did or could do for me. There was very little Union activity and, except for during the time of contract negotiations, no one thought much of it. It was only after someone did take the time to speak with me, did I learn the value of Union membership. The Union provides representation during times of discipline, gives me a collective voice with my Union brothers during negotiations, and keeps the company from cheating me out of my time and ensures fair treatment.

The Union is required by law to represent the workforce, whether a member or not, until it comes time to expend Union funds during times of arbitration. The Union however often takes the cases of nonmembers to arbitration in order to defend the CBA. I have only known of twice that this did not happen. This is epically important during times when the company is pursuing a disciplinary action against a member. You are represented during each phase of the process and someone speaks for you with enthusiasm. In fact, under the law, if a counseling session is to take place which could have an effect on your employment, you may request and the company cannot deny, Union representation before the action may proceed. This keeps the company honest and prevents a member of management who may have it in for you from treating you unfairly. This I have seen happen several times as you may be managed by people who consider themselves a company commander and all of the employees as W1's. Many times I have known of members of management that were "heeled" and kept under reasonable control. There was one time when a member attempted a takeoff with one of the tie down chains still connected to the helicopter causing a roll-over accident. As the Army dragged out the investigation, the company decided that they would do their own so that they could terminate the employee and thus get him off of the payroll. The company went from step one of the disciplinary process directly to step four and terminated him. The Union grieved the action as the company did not follow the disciplinary process and took the grievance to arbitration and won. The employee was reinstated with back pay. The question was not whether the employee committed an act for which he could be terminated, but to defend the CBA and keep the company from doing whatever it wanted. The Union wins the majority of what it takes to arbitration.

When this contract was first let several decades ago, every time the contract changed hands, the current employees were let go and the new employees were hired by the new company, at entry level wages set by the new company regardless of the seniority accrued working on the contract, and the company set the wages. The Union was organized to prevent this from happening and to see fair wages were paid. Vacation time was bargained for, and working conditions and hours were specified. The student load was defined and working hours were set and a system of sick leave was instituted. Overtime pay was specified and instituted. When I first began working for the company, I had to wait four years before I received a vacation at other than during the Christmas break, and one of the years was during the first Gulf War where we worked during that break for regular wages. The next CBA brought changes which saw those who we not eligible for vacation would be granted a week of vacation during the coming year and any time worked during the Christmas break be worked at time and a half. Later negotiations gained vacation after one year of service. During this time the company always pointed out what pilots flying the gulf would make, which was very low, and try to tie our pay to those wages. The Union affiliated itself with a national organization a few years ago and finally had access to professional negotiators. With this we were able to get the pay we rightfully deserved and began to set the standard for the whole industry.

I believe that we all know that the health insurance that we have is quite good. The level of coverage came by way of Union negotiations.

I know it can be rough being a junior employee. I have been there. I felt cheated, especially during times of vacation selection. I have been laid off three times, but if were not for the CBA, I would have just been terminated and offered a job at entry level pay when the student load picked up again. It is worth it to have that kind of protection.

Our safety is in our numbers. The higher the representation, the more power we have at the bargaining table, and the more the Army respects us. We are just a small amount of people who are employed by a multinational company that only values us for the profit that they make on our backs. We are perceived at the corporate level as a financial liability that cuts into profits. I know that all can't be pleased all of the time, and I think that we all know of a few who will never be please anytime. I know that we don't always agree with our leadership and sometimes believe that they don't always look after our interest. But we do have to realize that there is often a bigger picture which we don't completely see and that the relationship of the company can be a difficult one. We don't always get our way and sometimes a compromise is all we can do. Sometimes we don't win and as things change with the contract, the CBA can seem ambiguous and no longer covers the working situation. The bottom line is as I have said before, we have safety in numbers and that is what brings us respect from those whose only desire is to exploit our labor. I am grateful for what the Union does for me and I know that its representation of me is really a lifeline that protects my job and keeps me from working for the minimum benefits required by law.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

6/9/2016

Meeting called to order at 1830 by President Ron Arsenault, Recording Secretary Jim Guy still out recovery from surgery, all other Board Members present.

Recording Secretary- May minutes read by Bill Haaren, minutes were approved as read.

Secretary-Treasurer – Rod George read the May Treasurer's report and the report was approved as read. There are 217 members, approximately 69% membership.

Trustees' Reports

Primary Division; Bill Haaren – Nothing to Report.

Advance Division; Mel Strobel – Missed 401K payments from the company have now been corrected. Members wondered why they were signing a roster about time keeping procedures. Ron responded that the company was on a short list to be audited. Reminded members that they should be logging the time they work.

BWS; Mark Souza – BCBS issues that members were having have now been resolved to the member's satisfaction.

At-Large; Matt Hedger – Air Force Academics now has 2 people retiring, 1 slot looks like it has been filled the other is just now open.

Vice President's Report

Nothing to report

President's Report

Old Business

By Law Revisions – Jim Guy is still out which has stalled the process, next month will be the 1st reading.

BWS 72 transition – The 2 IPs from BWS that failed the NVG final check ride – company requested to move them to Cairns and COR will not allow the move. Class now in session has 2 IPs having issues. Still no word on a July Class regarding the number of slots, company is requesting 5 slots. Oct class number has been raised to 24.

Overtime Pay – Logging of overtime does not start until 8 hours have been completed. However, an additional \$75 payment will be included when doing an additional shift.

Goal and DONSA Days – An Arbitrator has been selected, waiting for the next step in the process.

Nominations – Nominations were opened for the positions of President, Secretary/Treasurer, Trustee for Advance division and At-Large. Lee Murphy was nominated and accepted for Secretary/ Treasurer.

\$30 for the drawing and meeting adjourned at 1950.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The undersigned, Treasurer of the PHPA, submits the following report for the month of May 2016:

Beginning Balance Checking:	\$110,568.38
Received from All Sources: (+)	\$53,964.14
Total: (=)	\$164,532.52
Disbursements: (-)	\$54,286.74
Ending Balance	\$110,245.78

AACFCU Share	\$44,754.34
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The annexed statement of receipts and expenditures will show in detail the source of funds received and expenses to which disbursements were applied.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Rodney M. George, Treasurer

June 7, 2016

AACFCU CD values as of 31 May 2016:

Certificate #37543-6	\$30,831.13
Certificate #37543-7	\$30,831.13
Certificate #37543-8	\$30,831.13

Total Value of CDs:	\$92,493.39
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Total Members: 217 of 316 or 69%

Comparison with May 2015:

Members: 220

Checking Account Balance: \$88,923

An Invitation

By Alan Hauenstein

So, you still haven't joined the union, why not? As the vice-president I want to invite you to our next meeting which will be July 14 at 6:30 pm. Normally we have pizza and soft drinks at 6 just to eat and chat. Think about it and write down your questions and we will try to answer them. If you can't think of any questions here's a few to consider:

- Why should I join? (I hate unions)
- Why are the union dues sent to Hillary? (why not Bernie)
- Why does the union need me? (warriors stick together)
- Why don't we go on strike? (I hate standing in line)
- If I join, how can I make changes? (let your voice be heard)
- What other benefits can I get? (it is really about me)

I can't think of any more questions. But consider coming if just for the pizza and a few laughs.

**“ALONE WE CAN
DO SO LITTLE;
TOGETHER WE
CAN DO SO MUCH.”**
- Helen Keller

Office Manager's Spot

By Teresa Hess

Hello Members

Since the UNION MEMBERSHIP is the topic of this issue, I thought I would share a quote shared with me from Rodney George:

'Don't Take Union Membership for Granted

In the United States in 2016, many union members are living a lifestyle of financial security and dignity because of their union contracts. Some, however, take their union for granted and don't realize what life would be without the union movement.

The average union worker makes a higher salary, receives more paid time off, and has more generous health and retirement plans than does the average nonunion worker. This is in addition to job security.'

*-Richard Lanigan
President, OPEIU*

If you have questions regarding the insurance or office perks you receive as a member, please give me a call or stop by the office.

All the best,

Teresa

CHECKLIST

Your next general membership meeting will be 14 July 2016, 630pm at the Union hall.

MEETING AGENDA

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



PHPA, OPEIU LOCAL 102
PO BOX 427
DALEVILLE, ALABAMA 36322

PHONE: 334-598-4121
FAX 334-598-1620
E-MAIL: LOCAL102@PHPA.NET
WW.PHPA.NET