

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!

1 Mar 2014

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

President's Corner by Ron Arsenault

Greetings to the membership of PHPA, Local 102. The last month has been an eventful one. Long term lay-offs in Primary Division were completed and started in Advanced Division. The numbers so far are 13 out in Primary, 3 out in Advanced with 5 more to go and 9 to go in BWS. These numbers reflect a huge drop in the first numbers that the Company originally put out. The Company has done an excellent job forecasting the numbers and trying to reduce the final number of lay-offs. The above numbers are not set in stone and could shift a little in either direction. Let's all hope if they shift is for the good.

The next major item to discuss is the Memorandum of Agreement that we have with the Company concerning use of IP's, on checkride days, as floats. As you all know the original agreement ran through January 31st and was a test to see if it would work and what problems might occur. We have modified and extended that MOA to March 15th. The goals for this program are to:

1. Increase the float pool availability by allowing the use IP's who have students on checkrides, to be used as floats on their shift, thus increasing the probability of IL.
2. Significantly decrease or stop the use of Standards IP's from being used as floats to fly student training.
3. Increase the probability of PL approval and decrease the use of last minute SL call-ins that have had a negative impact on the Standards sections...

Why modify the MOA? The original test could not have occurred at a worse time. The lay-offs were starting to hit along with the reduction in the white book numbers. However, the number of students per class has been up and down, rarely hitting the white book figures. Then throw in the worst winter weather that we've had in many years and it has been extremely hardtop validate if the program was viable or not. Now that is not our fault, neither is it the Company's fault. The Army put these schedules together knowing that there was very little wiggle room when it came to weather or maintenance issues. So, all that we can do is try to make it up lost flight time a little at the time. It may take 2-3 classes to get back on schedule. Remember the high pressure system off the west coast Oregon isn't moving anytime soon. Having said all of that, the test that ran through January 31st was not a valid test of the program. The program was conceived to make PL more available, make it easier to get through early thus getting more IL, and alleviate or cut back in the use of the Standards sections as float platoons. I believe that this can still be the result of the program. During the initial trial, there was a hard to understand part of the MOA, which halted the use of the IP as a float if the military was flying the student on the checkride. This caused constant problems, especially with management moving people around so that they could utilize Standards IP's to fly student training, even if it meant pulling them from a checkride. For this part of the test, we've made it management simple. If the IP has students checking then he/she can be used as a float for the number of students checking, regardless of who is giving the checkride. That should alleviate the roster juggling so that Standards IP's can be used as floats. That is not



President
Ron Arsenault
PHPA Local 102

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their job! This will also allow IP's to help their fellow IP's that are behind, get finished. Warning, those IP's that are continually late and always needing help, Flight Commanders will manage appropriately.

Several years ago we had a huge problem with the Monday and Friday flu. It was the most virulent on one shift, in one division. The Company had to act in order to keep the rest of our workforce from becoming ill with the flu also. The medicine the Company used was in the form of a Memorandum that addressed the issue of the same person continually being sick on Mondays and Fridays. Those individuals quickly got better and the force of the memorandum has never been used. After consulting with management I can say with certainty, that if an employee needs PL, then put in for it IAW the CBA. Remember to give management the required notice. If it is disapproved, then call in sick, period. You will not be required to provide a sick slip or upslip unless you are a multiple repeat offender. The Company knows that we all need time off from time to time and our leave system does not have the flexibility to be of use during those times. That is what PL is for, and it also gives the Company some time to plan. The disapproval means only that they don't have a spare IP to cover you without pulling someone else in. Now, I'm not telling you to just go willy nilly and take a 3 day weekend once a month. Save it until you really need it. Remember we get paid very well to be at work. Next I'd like to ask the managers that are still telling their IP's "IFYOU REALLY WANT THAT DAY OFF, YOU BETTER CALL IN SICK" stop it. If you, as a manager, need additional guidance, then call your supervisor. It's time to make PL work like it's supposed to.

I know that change is sometimes hard to accept, but our CBA is a living document, that must stay current with ever changing work conditions, i.e.; Army contract, fiscal reality, etc. This is a test to gather the information required to make an informed decision about the continuance of this MOA. The Army is under immense pressure to cut cost. Lay-offs are going on all around us right now. Rumors abound about what the Army leadership might do next. Remember also, that common sense nor long term results are often considered in these situations involving dollar and cents equations. So we as CONTRACTORS need to make sure that we make ourselves look as valuable as possible to our client, the U.S. Army. Literally, your job might depend on it. Fly safe.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**FEBRUARY 13, 2014**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President Ron Arsenault. BWS Trustee Rick Boylston was on SL. There were 13 members present. The January meeting minutes were read by Jim Guy and the minutes were approved after a slight revision.

Richard White gave the Treasurer's report and the report was approved as read. There are 283 members.

Trustees' Reports:

Primary Division: Barry Martin had nothing to report.

Advanced Division: Lee Murphy had nothing to report.

BWS Division: Rick Boylston was on SL.

Trustee at Large: Rod George announced that the job opening in Academics would be filled by Richard Love.

Vice-Presidents Report

Dave Oltmans reported that the new health insurance premiums should not have been collected from the membership until the first full pay period following the increase which was on January 1st, 2014. Dave submitted a letter to the Company asking that they reimburse all members the overcharged amount. Our next step will depend on how the Company responds to the request. The overcharge amounts are; Employee \$7.52, Employee and Child \$12.18, Employee and Spouse \$14.92, and Family \$15.23.

Dave also reported that the AF has been asked to complete a risk assessment on the Hydraulics Off task. The TH-1 reacts very differently from the UH-1 during this task. Turning off the hydraulics results in a very difficult to fly aircraft than the UH-1H.

Dave is looking into hiring someone to perform routine maintenance on our building. We are also looking into replacing the awning on the building.

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February Minutes (Continued from page 2)

Old Business

LTD Update: Our new rate is \$1.56 per \$100 of salary. The new rate went into effect on January 1st, 2014. Deductions should have begun with the 10 January paycheck but did not. All members with LTD will have to come into the union and pay Pam the amount that should have been deducted. There will be a list with each members name and the amount that needs to be paid.

2-1 IP/Student Ratio: The Bridge Agreement has been extended until March 15th. The difference now is that when your students are checking you now become a float during your shift. This will help in overall production by allowing IP's who would not be flying that day to help other IP's catch up syllabus time and possibly open up more IL across the board. This will also give the Company more floats on a regular basis which should allow PL days to be approved more readily. Allowing IP's to float helps the Company and the Membership equally.

Layoffs: The latest numbers as of 12 Feb 2014:

Long Term:

Primary	13 out / possibly 2 being recalled
Advanced	2 out 13 Feb / 3 out 28 Feb / 2 out 14 March / 8 total
BWS	0 Out / 9 to go, layoff date still to be determined

All Long Term layoffs will turn in all of their gear and clear the Company completely.

The PHPA Compassionate Fund: Nothing so far has been turned in and no one has requested information on the program.

2014 Scholarships: Packets are available at the Union office now. They must be turned in or post marked by COB March 31, 2014. There are six PHPA scholarships and one 1st Command scholarship this year. All seven are for \$1500. There are also OPEIU scholarships available.

New Business

Name Tags / Strips: Name strips need to be worn on the digital flight suits. New hires will be issued one black leather name tag and one set of digital name strips. Everyone else must purchase the name strips themselves. This rule is effective now.

From The Floor

The topic of part-time IP's was brought up. The claim was made that they are not being used as they were promised. We will need to collect more data on this and look into it. The CBA currently allows two part-time employees per division.

The possibility of a "Job Sharing" program was also brought up. This topic was brought up at an earlier meeting. The concept sounds viable and we will look into it to see if the Company will approve it. This will also require that two employees are willing to accept it. The winning draw in the raffle took home \$34 at this meeting. Last month's winner received \$45. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Sick Leave, Family Leave and Company Disability Insurance: A Primer

by Dave Oltmans

On December 27, I had right shoulder surgery to repair a torn rotator cuff, remove bone spurs and reattached my bicep. That was the bad news. The good news is that the Aetna managed Company Disability program can help defray the costs of one's recovery, in my case, eight weeks, with a weekly payment. To qualify for immediate coverage, the employee needs to build the following foundation. If any steps are omitted, then it may be difficult to get the disability benefit rolling in a timely fashion.

First, get with Mary Griffin and start the paperwork for Family Leave of Absence, and Aetna disability. This takes all of about fifteen minutes. Next, you need to go online at www.aetnadisability.com and open an account. This web page will give you all of the forms that are needed to validate your disability and start the clock on your payments.

The soonest that you can expect to begin receiving payments is if you are admitted to the hospital for a minimum of one day. Most orthopedic procedures, like mine, are done on an outpatient basis, but special considerations exist where the doctor **can admit the patient for a day**. Remember this fact. If you are **not admitted** to the hospital, there will be a sixty (60) day exclusion period before the first check comes. That could mean that you are back to work before then and you will not receive any disability money.

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Sick Leave, Family Leave, etc. *(Continued from page 3)*

A Doctor's Statement of Disability must be received by Aetna before the payment is approved. The easiest way to accomplish this is to go to your AME. Many employees have saved themselves a lot of trouble by getting a note from their AME that states "(EMPLOYEE Name), is employed as a pilot and due to (NAME of CONDITION) will not be considered for return to flight status/medical certification for a minimum of (NUMBER OF WEEKS OR SPECIFIC DATE) for clearance." This is much easier than chasing down a signature from cardiologist or oncologist when the AME is really who determines your eligibility for return to work. If you do not do this, your disability payments may be held up until you get your attending physician's statement of disability submitted. Surgeons move very slowly with this paperwork so get your AME to do it. You can monitor the progress of the bureaucratic process on the Aetna portal.

The disability benefit pays \$300 per week before taxes, or about \$250 after taxes. It is obvious that the more SL that you have accrued the easier it will be to weather the financial impact of your recovery should you find yourself in the exclusion period. The benefit payout is limited to 26 weeks per event. If you have a shoulder rebuilt, you get 26 total weeks for that. If you go out for something else, the benefit will be 26 weeks for that one. The reason for this is to handle post op complications a being part of the original disability claim for your shoulder or whatever.

Family Leave of Absence, FMLA, is unpaid leave, the conditions of which are explained in Appendix D.4 of the CBA. Employees may be required to use all accrued sick leave and annual leave prior to being placed on unpaid FMLA. Health Insurance will remain in effect up to 12 weeks under FMLA. You will still be required to pay your part of the health insurance but this is a good deal. What does this have to do with your disability claim? Plenty. When you are logging your timesheet you will be using AL or SL for four days of the week and on the fifth day will log "FMLA". This is the code for Family Leave of Absence, but it also will serve to save you an AL or SL day per week. The disability benefit will not offset your daily rate of pay for that day, after taxes I received \$257, but it beats spending an AL or SL day. And remember, you are accruing SL while you are using it and AL.

What should you do right now? Go to Mary and increase your SL election to 60 days, or at least 45 days. You really should be in the mindset of having as much of it as possible in preparation for your coming surgery. The peace of mind that a huge SL balance gives you is very satisfying feeling. Once an event like this happens, too little SL will make you very uncomfortable. Hopefully you will never have to use this benefit, but it nice that we have a provision like this one to fall back on.

2014 Scholarship Season by Bob Timmerman

We are approaching the final month of the application process for the PHPA Local 102 scholarships. This year we are offering six (6) \$1500.00 scholarships plus one additional from First Command Financial in the same amount. The application packets are available at our PHPA Local 102 Union building. The packets are self-explanatory and must include all documentation requested on the application. A 250 to 400 word essay is also required (the topic is provided in the application).

The application window will be through 31 March, 2014. Hand delivered applications must be at the PHPA office by COB 31 March, 2014. Mailed applications must be post marked by 31 March, 2014 and received at the PHPA office by 4 April, 2014.

Eligibility criteria:

1. The applicant must be one of the following;
 - A. Dependent child of Union Member in good standing (Local 102), pursuing an undergraduate degree.
 - B. Union Member in good standing (Local 102) pursuing an undergraduate/graduate degree.
 - C. Spouse of Union Member in good standing (Local 102), pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree.

The definition of a dependent child mirrors the definition found in our health plan. To wit: an unmarried child age 25 or less, not working full time, **chiefly depending on the union member for support**, and will be

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2014 Scholarship Season *(Continued from page 4)*

a full time student at a state accredited school. This child may be: a) a natural child, b) a stepchild residing in your home, c) a legally adopted child, or d) a foster child.

2. The Union Member sponsor (or applicant) must be in good standing with the union (PHPA/OPEIU Local 102) for at least one-year prior to the scholarship award and not only paying administrative fees.
3. The scholarship award amount will be awarded directly to the college or university in the applicant's name. Therefore, the applicant must already be accepted to or enrolled in the college or university listed on their application and his/her social security number or student number must be provided before the check can be written.
4. The college or university listed on the application must be an accredited United States two or four year private or public institution, but not a military service academy.
5. The winning applicant agrees to attend the college or university full time during the school year the scholarship is awarded for.

If you have all ready started the application make sure to get it in on time. If you haven't yet picked one up there is still time. The Scholarship Committee

LTD Insurance by Ron Arsenault

Recently we had a rate increase for the LTD insurance. There was a 3 pay period lag before the higher deductions went into effect. Consequently the last check received by the office from the Company for insurance premiums was just over \$10,000 but we paid out just over \$31,000. The Union has covered the short fall and everyone's policy is up to date, however each person carrying LTD coverage will be notified of their dollar amount due. Payment by check to the office will be expected NLT April 30th. We are sorry for the hassle and thank you in advance.

Name Tags/Strips by Ron Arsenault

Starting immediately, the Company has agreed to buy all new hires one leather name tag and on set of name strips for the new A2C2 flight uniforms. This agreement does not allow for the guys already on the contract to be re-imbursed for the new name strips when they are required to change flight suits to the new A2C2. Past practice has always dictated that the employee was responsible to replace the issued name tags when they became unusable. So, all personnel wearing the new A2C2 flight suit need to go out and get the name strips and wear them. You should have your name over the right breast pocket, URS over the left breast pocket and Ctr on the center Velcro tab. There is no change in the hat policy. If you have one you may wear it. If you do not have one then don't worry about not having a hat on.

Basic Life Insurance

Every member automatically gets a \$5000 life insurance policy when they join PHPA, this is at no extra cost to the member. As of right now we have a large number of members who do not have a beneficiary designation on file at the PHPA office. Please check with Pam to make sure that if something happens to you that the money will go where you want it to.

PHPA, OPEIU LOCAL 102
POST OFFICE BOX 427
DALEVILLE, ALABAMA 36322

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CHECKLIST

PH[A General Membership Meeting 6:30 PM March 13, 2014

MEETING AGENDA

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

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