

COMMO CHECK!

Volume 13, Issue 4

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

1 Aug 2014

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

Hello ladies and gentlemen of the Union. Hope all are feeling well. September is our election month, when the membership has the opportunity to select the leadership of our Union. We have 2 positions that are being contested. The first is the office of the President. Mr. Bill Haaren from Primary Division, and myself from Advanced Division are running for this office. Bill has elected to put a flyer in this copy of the Commo Check. For myself, I simply ask you, to ask yourself, am I better off today than I was before Ron Arsenault became a board member? I say Board Member because, I have been in every position on the Executive Board, except for the Secretary Treasurer position, thus gaining valuable union management experience over the last 14 years.

As many of you recognize, the position that our membership and Union find itself in is a precarious one. If the situation that we find ourselves in is not handled correctly we could derail the train. I know that some members think that the E-Board is not representing them and their wishes, but let's consider a few unions in which the membership lost sight of the bigger picture. What could go wrong and force the leadership into unwise decisions? Remember what happened to the textiles unions, the steel unions, the auto workers unions, etc. What is common among those unions is that they lost much of their work or all of it to lower priced labor overseas. Now obviously our jobs can't be shipped overseas, but we can price ourselves out of a job. The changes to the CBA, that the E-Board has agreed too recently, have all been crafted to make the work our membership performs more valuable to the customer, the US Army. I'm not saying that I or the members of the E-Board are smarter than the membership, but the E-Board and I work very hard to stay informed on the subjects at hand, i.e., union work rules/laws, state/federal laws and Company/Union interaction. By keeping our fingers on the pulse of these issues, as the President of the Union, I feel that we are putting maximum effort into the meeting the core principles of any union; employee safety, pay/benefits and protection of our work (not losing job positions). My opponent is running on a platform of "Change". Is change for the sake of change a good idea? I say, "If ain't broke don't fix it".

Since 2002 this Union has done extremely well in bargaining, outpacing DAC wage increases by over 33%. So, I say again, "If it ain't broke don't fix it". I therefore humbly ask for your support and vote on September 11th for the position of Union President.

The other contested position is the BWS Division Trustee. Current BWS Division Trustee Rick Boylston and Mark Souza are running for that position. Remember only members in BWS can vote for the BWS Division Trustee.

As usual we will have a voting box at Cairns, Shell and at the PHPA office. Please make plans to exercise your membership right to vote. Thank you ahead of time.

There were 4 lay-off letters issued in Advanced Division recently. The Director hopes to keep that down to 2 actual lay-offs. These came about because 3 individuals came back from long term medical groundings.

The October weigh-in is coming up soon. Make sure that you are ready. Don't wait until the last minute. If you are close, let your Flight Commander know ahead of time so that management can have a plan in place if you fail to make it.

I have noticed several people running around in the digital 2 piece flight suits



President
Ron Arsenault
PHPA Local 102

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with no name strips. That issue was settled several months ago. Go out and procure some name strips. Enough said.

Everyone has been asking about the negotiations. Well, we haven't formally sat down with the Company yet, but a lot of the behind the scenes work has been getting done on CBA issues that don't involve money. We'll just have to wait until the first formal negotiations date for those issues. That date is currently set for September 16th. The truth, as the Union knew it, about the pass through window or the "Period of Equitable Adjustment" has changed. It appears that the Contracting Officer has a lot of leeway in how to and when to handle the funding adjustment to the Army contract with URS. That has been a hurdle in the past, but apparently not so today. So the September 15th deadline of yore, apparently, no longer exist. I do not foresee any really tough issues to get through, so the formal negotiations should not take very long at all. We will still have to brief the new aspects of the CBA and get a ratification vote set up, but that should be doable.

So until then fly safe!!

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

AUGUST 14, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM by Pres. Ron Arsenault. Lee Murphy is in the simulator, and JT Miller is on annual leave. There were 23 members present. **Recording Secretary:** The July meeting minutes were read by Jim Guy in the minutes were approved as read. **Secretary-Treasurer:** Rod George gave the Treasurers report and the report was approved as read. There are 276 members. **Trustees' Reports: Primary Division:** Barry Martin reported that a member asked him about the letter we received from Prime Care. The question came up regarding getting a discount from other flight surgeons as well as Prime Care. Any member can request that their flight surgeon be a part of this program. Have the doctor's office contact Ron at the union. **Advanced Division:** Lee Murphy is in the simulator. **BWS Division:** Rick Boylston had nothing to report. **Trustee at Large:** JT Miller is on annual leave.

Vice-Presidents Report

Dave Oltmans is working late and will arrive later.

Old Business

Layoffs: All personnel on layoff that were able to return have been called back. Some personnel on layoff status are currently working other jobs that have a mandatory one year time limit. They are willing to return after this time but can only be called back if there is an opening. If they can return within 24 months of their current layoff, and have not turned down a call back, IAW Article 906 d & e, they will return at their original seniority number. The upcoming layoffs slated for October have been scaled back drastically. Mr. Price feels that they can get through October with no layoffs. New white book numbers now stand at 38 per class for the first 5 classes and then back up to 40 per class for FY15. They may have to hire in advanced division. The IFE course is slated to go down to approximately 10 personnel, but all of the details are not finalized. The ability for an IFE instructor to bump another employee in another division will be based partially on the letter that they signed when they moved to the IFE course. We are in the process of the getting a copy of this letter. **Lakota Transition:** The transitions are continuing for some army personnel at this time. There is a congressman however, who has requested that the Army show him documentation on how the UH-72 program will save the Army money. This may be a tough one to prove. Until we know more details, we still have to plan for the transition to occur. The transitions will be by seniority, beginning with one group from primary followed by one group from advanced and then one group from BWS. They will then begin with a second group from primary, and so on. IP's can turn down the transition just like anything else done by seniority, they will then go to the end of the line and continue to teach in the TH-67. This transition is scheduled to begin at the beginning of FY16. After the first group has completed the transition, they are supposed to begin teaching in the Lakota.

Officer Elections: Presidential candidates; Ron Arsenault and Bill Haaren. BWS Trustee candidates: Rick Boylston and Mark Souza. All candidates were given an opportunity to make a short speech, however Bill Haaren was not available tonight. He plans to write an article for the next Commo Check.

(Continued on page 3)

August Minutes (Continued from page 2)

New Business

URS Safety Team: A group from URS Corporate Safety visited Fort Rucker to observe our safety program. They attended the Bandit Flight student briefing. Our safety record is one of the best in industry, and Corporate would like to copy as much as they can for their other divisions. A comment was made that was related to safety concerning the uniform tops. A member voiced his concern about older IP's being unable to remove their tops on extremely hot days. He believes there is a high chance of a heat injury occurring. The decision whether to allow anyone to take off their top during preflight is an Army Command decision; therefore, there is not much we can do. Another comment was made on the topic of the "no running on the flight line" policy. A member observed personnel doing PT on the taxiways and feels that this is inappropriate. **250 LB Weight Limit:** The COR was instrumental in getting this limitation put into the contract. In the past he has worked directly for the Brigade Commander. He now works for the Post G3. The Post G3 is not a fan of the 250 pound weight limit, but stated that the Company did not do much to fight it. Ron is working with Bob Price in an attempt to get it removed from our next contract. **Negotiations:** The E- board is ready. We do not have a start date yet. The Company's head negotiator, Lester Jordan, is the VP of HR and is a very busy man. He will not be available until the middle of September. Ron is elevating the request to begin negotiations to higher levels. Hopefully, we can meet with the Company next week to begin the preliminary negotiations on articles in the CBA; however, they will have to wait for Lester to negotiate anything dealing with wages. Ron does not feel that these negotiations should take very long. Ron is also trying to gather more information on when the "pass-through" date is. Their contract is a three-year contract that is awarded one year at a time. Dave Van Conant recently had to brief the CG on the status of negotiations. **Office Manager:** We have received 54 applications but only about 7 met most of the advertised requirements. Dave and Lee will be handling the interview process, and plan to begin these next week. **Academics:** There has been a termination of an academics instructor. This was a 10 year employee that had received the same negative write-ups on critiques during this entire period. We have, however, decided to arbitrate this termination. Our goal is to bring a spotlight to the outdated critiques that are still being used, and see if we can get them updated. The current critiques invite negative criticism, are given a tremendous amount of weight, but are written by the least qualified people on the topics; students. They are also unsigned, making the comments "hearsay".

From The Floor

Lakota Transitions: The subject of instrument tickets was brought up. If the transition occurs, all instructors will need to be instrument qualified. The Company will not pay for your instrument ticket. In this area it will cost you between \$450 per hour for a non-turbine helicopter up to \$800 per hour for a turbine helicopter. Rod George reminded everyone that all of the information necessary for instrument training is already available to you. There are several resources online, as well as the URS Student section on the Company website. IP's can sit in on any instrument classes and Rod can also get you hard copies of the information. Instrument classes are between TD 47 and 75 for each class. This will help defray some of the cost associated with ground school training, however the IP is still responsible for the cost of getting the instrument rating. Scott Davis will no longer act as the Flight Rep for Viking flight. Bob Anderson is reportedly in bad shape at Flowers Hospital. Has there been any discussion about a "buy-out program" for senior IP's? This is more commonly known as the "Early Retirement" plan and is already in the CBA. It is currently very restrictive, and a very small number of people qualify. We plan to negotiate with the Company for a more liberal policy that would allow more people to qualify for this program. The member that had an issue with his flight physical last month still has not provided a copy of the FAA letter to Ron. A member reported that a letter was sent from the FAA to an IP about a certain medication that he was taking that was not allowed. This letter was sent after the IP had been issued his new flight physical certification. The FAA does have access to your medical insurance information, as well as information from the Driver's License division. Make sure you divulge all medications you are taking when renewing your flight physical. The winning draw in the raffle took home \$52 at this meeting. Last month's winner received \$53. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

ELECTION DAY, September 11, 2014

Every two years our Union is scheduled for elections. This year there are only two positions that are being contested; these are for the positions of President and the BWS Trustee. The nominees for President are Ron Arsenault and Bill Harren. The nominees for BWS Trustee are Rick Boylston and Mark Souza. Voting will take place on the day of the September General Membership Meeting, September 11th. There will be a ballot box to be set up at Shell Field for the BWS members. There will be a ballot box set up in the MOI classroom at Cairns Field from 10:00 AM until 12:30 PM for anyone in Primary or Advanced Divisions wishing to vote at Cairns. The AF Division will be at the Union Hall to man the ballot box during the entire day until approximately 6:00 PM. Voting will cease at this time and they will begin counting the ballots so that we can announce the winners at the General Membership Meeting that begins at 6:30 PM.

We have traditionally had a fairly low percentage of the membership that votes. Voting should be one of the reasons you became a member of the Union. Let your voice be heard by helping to select the leadership for our Union. Please help spread the word so that we can have a good turnout this year.

Don't Weight too Long by Dave Oltmans

Just a friendly reminder that as of Wednesday, Sept 3, there will be four more weeks until the 1 October weigh in. Please respond accordingly. The Law of Unintended Consequences will manifest itself with the loss of Sick Leave or AL if you do not weigh 242 pounds or less on that day. There is nothing the Union can do to get those days back. It is the responsibility of the IP to make the weight or lose the time.

As a service to help everybody remember, I have compiled the following phrases. Anchors aweigh! Time and tides weight for no man. What are you weighting for? Don't forget to weight for the green light. Weight a minute! Don't think that you can get aweigh with it! No weigh, Dude! I ran all the weigh home just to say I'm sorry. Let's weigh that in the scales of justice. A weigh in a manger,... If I took aweigh the flight suit, I would not look so fat. Let's weigh the pros and cons of being fat.. Enough, already, I've weighted around long enough. Will somebody please weight on me?

Think of some of your own.

SAMPLE BALLOT**For President**

RON ARSENAULT (I)

BILL HAAREN

FOR BWS TRUSTEE

RICK BOYLSTON (I)

MARK SOUZA

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CHECKLIST

PH[A General Membership Meeting 6:30 PM September 11, 2014

MEETING AGENDA

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

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