The Conversation Continues with Captain Claude Buraglia, JAZ MEC Chairman

By Captain Noreen Newton

Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman Captain Claude Buraglia enabled me to continue the conversation he started with the membership during the recent Special Assessment Road Show. The vote passed the assessment, giving our MEC the ability to continue to advance the interests of Jazz pilots. Below is my Q&A with Claude:

Noreen Newton: Seventy-five percent of the pilots who voted agreed to the assessment. Were you surprised by the results?

Claude Buraglia: I thought the turnout would be slightly higher than 60 percent. ALPA has tracked assessment ballots, and in comparison with other airlines, we did quite well—40 percent was the lowest turnout of special assessment votes, and 61 percent was the highest; therefore, with 59 percent, I believe we did reasonably well.

As for the 75 percent who voted in agreement, the MEC would always like to see this number as high as possible. We also believe most of those who disagreed with the assessment were sure to have their vote counted.

NN: Recognizing the limits of confidentiality, can you share the short-term goals for the Strategic Action Committee (SAC)?

CB: The immediate goal of the SAC is to narrow the path of possibilities, similar to a game of chess, where you have to plan many moves ahead and one move is not enough. The SAC and its advisers will be formulating and assessing various paths. The MEC believes there will be restructuring at Air Canada and the process will be dynamic.

NN: Why is now the right time to hire Ron Bloom?

CB: We had a strategic plan in 2009, and since then things have changed; plans never finalize, they change. As I mentioned, the MEC believes Air Canada will be restructuring. We believe engaging consultants Ken Rosenberg and Ron Bloom will help the MEC to achieve the best possible outcome for our members. Your MEC also realizes that we cannot ultimately control the outcome of the process.

NN: How does Jazz management fit into your initiative?

CB: Management understands we must protect our membership. Management reports to the Board of Directors and the shareholders. We (the MEC) report to the members. At the end of the day our goals may align.

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The Effects of Dehydration on Pilot Performance

By Captain Gil Renaud

A pilot's dehydration, or lack of water within the body cavity, can be due to high-body temperatures, a dry aircraft environment, excess caffeine, antihistamines, inappropriate fluid intake, and other factors.

The hot weather has been with us all summer, and in our efforts to keep the operation moving, we can easily forget our human limitations when working in the heat. Most pilots overlook the hot weather, some shrug it off, while others simply don’t know its effects in the cockpit, particularly the devastating symptoms of dehydration that can increase the risk of aircraft incidents and accidents, even during a mildly warm day.

So to heighten pilots’ awareness of this often overlooked condition, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has recently added pilot dehydration to its list of physiological conditions in the latest Practical Test Standards—its symptoms, causes, effects, and corrective actions. The FAA believes that educating pilots about dehydration will not only decrease aircraft incidents, but also may save your life one day.

Most pilots associate dehydration with thirst and assume that an easy fix is just to drink any type of liquid. This is not always the solution. A pilot’s dehydration, or lack of water within the body cavity, can be due to high-body temperatures, a dry aircraft environment, excess caffeine, antihistamines, inappropriate fluid intake, and other factors. Many soft drinks, teas, and juice drinks do not constitute good hydration substitutes, as they contain caffeine and sugar, which can compromise absorption of the water content.

Hot cockpits and flight lines also cause dehydration. The 130-degree ramp at Phoenix, Ariz., for example, is an obvious cause, but what about the 72-degree cockpit? Pilots should concern themselves with hydration in that environment, too, since average humidity in the cockpit is low, causing a dramatic increase in fluid loss.

Everyone must be aware that water losses that equal 2 percent of our body weight will impact our bodies’ ability to regulate heat. A 3 percent loss causes a decrease in muscle-cell contraction times. When fluid losses equal 4 percent of body weight, there is a 5–10 percent drop in overall performance, which can last up to four hours.

According to the Spring 2000 edition of the Federal Air Surgeon Bulletin, there are three stages of heat exhaustion that lead to dehydration: heat stress, when the body temperature is 99.5°–100°F; heat exhaustion, when the body temperature is 101°–105°F; and heat stroke, when the body temperature is over 105°F. It’s possible that there is a subtle change from one stage to another, so you need to be extra careful and continually monitor your condition when flying in hot weather.

The symptoms of dehydration go beyond thirst. In an effort to respond to the brain’s need for fluid, the kidneys reabsorb water through the urine, creating fluid retention and frequent urges to visit the bathroom. Dry skin is also an indicator of dehydration, as the skin gets most of its moisture subdermally. The brain is 75 percent water, and when it needs to replace lost fluid, it can manifest symptoms such as...
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NN: Why is the union doing management’s business?
CB: We are proactively working for our membership, using our resources to represent our members. If we are successful, a by-product of this initiative will be a positive outcome for Jazz.

NN: You have been the MEC chairman since March 2011. Have your goals for the membership changed in that time?
CB: No. I speak on behalf of the MEC, and their goals have not changed. I initiated the process to engage outsiders in a strategic planning session, which the MEC participated in at the end of November 2011. We identified three strategic goals: to increase pilot engagement, to improve stakeholder relationships, and to capitalize on opportunities from a possible restructuring at Air Canada. We will use all tools possible to advance the rights and interests of the Jazz pilots.

NN: The road show allowed you to connect face-to-face with Jazz pilots from coast to coast. Were there common issues (outside of the assessment) that arose?
CB: Quality and construction of pairings seem to be a common issue across the country. Since most of the MEC fly the line, there is a heightened awareness of this issue. Prior to the road show, the executive had feedback from the MEC. We invited the director of Crew Planning to the May MEC meeting to discuss this topic, which is an issue for the Company as well. It was discussed at length at the meeting: the software program that builds the pairings—the Company is looking at alternatives; maintenance schedule for aircraft; addition of Q400s out east affecting the RJ flying; city pairs now having multiple equipment types; and the size of the roster. Ultimately it is not an easy fix. We are committed to working with the Company to improve the schedule, as we know quality of life is extremely important to our membership.

NN: Chorus has announced the purchase of an additional six Q-400 turboprops and a change to the fleet guarantee numbers in the CPA. How will this affect the pilot group?
CB: The Association is currently in discussion with the Company regarding fleet replacement and CPA. There is protection in the collective agreement regarding the reduction in the covered fleet.

NN: You mentioned during the road show that you believed there would be a reopening of the contract prior to the expiry date of June 2015. Can you expand on this issue?
CB: If Air Canada restructures and we are part of that restructuring, in all likelihood we will be willing to open up our collective agreement.

NN: Are you optimistic about the future at Jazz?
CB: I believe in the Jazz pilots and that we have a lot of potential. I also believe sooner or later opportunity will cross paths with that potential.

I would like to thank Claude for taking the time to clarify his perspective on where we sit vis-à-vis the airline industry in Canada at this point.

Mandatory Age 65 Retirement
By Percy Toop

Pilots have asked about the impact of recent legislative changes respecting mandatory retirement in the federal sector. Section 28-1.03 of the collective agreement provides that retirement shall be “not later than age 65.”

A mandatory retirement age will continue to be legal where it can be shown to be a bona fide occupational requirement (BFOR). A BFOR must be rationally connected to the work, necessary, and imposed in good faith.

ALPA is party to an ongoing complaint before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (Wilcox & Jewell) against the mandatory retirement age at Jazz. The Company’s position in this complaint is that the 65 retirement age is a valid, legal BFOR, given existing ICAO standards and American law, and the transborder nature of Jazz operations. ALPA has adopted the Company’s position in this litigation.

The Company has advised the Association that it intends to proceed on a “business as usual” basis in applying mandatory age 65 retirements.

ALPA will keep you advised of any further developments.
Leadership
By First Officer Brian Goldie

A hot summer day in the early ‘90s. The crew had argued the previous evening about the recurring problem of a nitrogen shortage at the company’s Jeddah base, and they had an incoming DC-8 that had a known flat tire. Between the company’s maintenance chief, who didn’t have a key for the maintenance shed in Jeddah, and the former military captain, who was known to push his crew, a decision was reached to fly one more leg to a spot where a suitable repair could be made. The logbook would show a deferral of the tire.

During the subsequent takeoff roll, the first officer, who was flying, mentioned feeling the bump as the tire blew. The captain pushed to continue the takeoff. It didn’t go well. The first indication of a real problem was a loss of hydraulic pressure as the tire fire ate through the lines, and by then it was too late. The aircraft crashed short of the runway as it tried to return, with a total loss of life.

Leadership is a word that is continually used in classrooms and training situations involving human factors. But all too often, these “buzzwords” are forgotten when the time comes to balance the books; all too often we will agree to be a leader only until our names are brought up or we are put in the spotlight. But the fact is, leadership is everyone’s responsibility, and the responsibility never ends. It is a big part of being called professional, and it is the first line of defence when things go wrong. The above was an extremely short example of an accident that was the result of a complete lack of leadership from the top of the company all the way down.

Lack of leadership was a prevalent issue. Everyone had a chance at one point to make a decision that would have, in the end, prevented the accident, but they chose not to. They chose not to be a leader. And they paid a steep price for it.

We are providing a focus on leadership, and I would ask all of us to remember that being a leader is everyone’s right and everyone’s responsibility. At ALPA we encourage everyone to consider what leadership means to you. And regardless of which seat you occupy, active leadership is vital for us to continue to lead the way as professional, safe pilots. If you have any ideas of how we can improve our leadership capabilities, or you have examples to share, please e-mail me at briangoldie66@gmail.com.

Safe Flying!

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New ALPA Leaders Head Home and Get to Work

By Lynn Konwin, Senior Communications Specialist

ALPA’s newly elected council representatives and MEC officers hit the ground running at the Association’s annual Leadership Training Conference (LTC) in Reston, Va., in February. Unlike most years, the 2012 LTC concluded on March 1—the same day that almost 100 new ALPA leaders began their three-year terms of office. Even as the meeting was wrapping up, most attendees were already preparing to conduct council business once they returned home.

Speakers at the four-day conference told the reps and officers that union service can be hard, exhausting work, but pilot leaders will earn the respect of their members if they focus on planning ahead, setting realistic goals, communicating effectively, and taking full advantage of the Association’s array of resources.

“Doing ALPA work is simply common sense—the pilots you represent want you to be logical, reasonable, and always act with the awareness that you hold their and their families’ future in your hands,” counseled longtime ALPA consultant and pollster Phil Comstock.

Reps from 25 ALPA airlines in the United States and Canada learned about leadership strategies aimed at building consensus and running effective meetings. On Wednesday they received a briefing on the role and function of the National Mediation Board (NMB) by the NMB’s chairman, Linda Puchala, as well as updates on international relations and government affairs, a comprehensive legal briefing, and an explanation of ALPA’s strategic planning process.

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Throughout the meeting, ALPA president Captain Lee Moak stressed the importance of unity, seeing the big picture, and daring to take a new approach to union business and the pilot profession:

“If you’re just looking at your feet, I want you to lift your eyes to the horizon,” he said. “If there’s any message I want you to get out of today, it’s that we need to adapt, we need to pivot, we need to stop doing things just because it’s the way we’ve done it before.”

The leadership conference attendees, as well as the other elected status reps who make up ALPA’s Board of Directors, will meet as a group at the Association’s Board of Directors meeting this October.

First Officer Ricardo Bonito and Captain Dan Adamus at the 2012 Leadership Conference.
Leadership and Communication: Getting the Message Out
By Captain Noreen Newton, JAZ Communications Chair

To lead: to advocate and advance the rights and interests of the Jazz pilot group, while promoting safety and quality of life.

To lead . . . This proclamation introduces the Jazz MEC mission statement, but what does it mean in the context of your union?

Paul F. Clark, a professor of labor studies, wrote in Building More Effective Unions (2009) that leadership is “the process of influencing the activities of the members of an organized group toward the determination and accomplishment of shared goals.”

Time and circumstance determine the most effective style of leadership. We look to company management to provide leadership. When that proves inadequate, the leadership must be provided by the union representation.

Clark asserts that three models can be used to explain leadership in organizations. Laissez-faire leaders take a hands-off approach. Transactional leaders use rewards and punishment to motivate their members (e.g., a leader who suggests supporting a strike in exchange for improved wages and working conditions). Transformational leaders focus their efforts on communicating group goals to the organization’s members and persuading them to put those goals above their own if they conflict; that is, the self-interest of the individual is second to the interests of the group as a whole. Arguably, Jazz pilots need a leader who understands and is able to effectively employ a transformational style of leadership as we move through these unsettled times in labor’s history.

Transformational leadership works to reshape the organizational culture and instill new values. Labor makes a significant contribution to the economic and social well-being of an organization; yet unions have an image problem that stems from myths and misconceptions about greed. You need go no further than the evening news to hear about “unrealistic” labor demands in today’s economic environment.

A transformational leader presents a vision of what the organization can and should be, and encourages others to embrace that vision as their own. By demonstrating optimism, enthusiasm, and energy, a leader motivates others to behave this way. As well, long-term success and the viability of the union depend upon nurturing future leaders. Transformational leadership results in higher levels of member participation, which in turn results in attracting future leaders.

Engage, Inform, and Persuade

Where does communication fit into this discussion? Information, effectively communicated, is perhaps the most important means by which attitudes can be influenced. Information can be used to persuade the members to engage in activities and behavior that move the agenda forward. Varying the channels of message delivery, whether through videos, print, or e-mail, is important in gaining attention. Comprehension is key. A message that is ambiguous will have little impact. Written communication is effective as the complexity of the message increases. The source of the message must be one of us. The message must be acceptable to the membership. Face-to-face in conjunction with written communications can improve persuasiveness.

To produce effective communications, the committee needs volunteers. We need pilots who can actively engage the members and relay the message of the MEC.

Through the member survey, the channels of communication have been determined—websites, print, e-mail, and video messaging will all be utilized to communicate the information. We need volunteers who can produce this media.

If you have any graphic design, public relations, video, media relations, or social media experience, the committee needs your input.

Please consider volunteering. I need your help and commitment. Members in Vancouver have already stepped up, but I need volunteers from coast to coast. Please contact me at noreen.newton@alpa.org or phone me toll-free at 1-866-240-2269.
headaches, light-headedness, and fatigue. Dehydration also contributes to fuzzy thinking, poor decision-making, dizziness, and muscle fatigue. Long-term effects include wrinkled skin, impaired memory function, dry hair, brittle nails, constipation, susceptibility to colds, and, because of extremely dry nasal passages, sinus infections.

So how do you avoid dehydration in the cockpit? You’ll need to permanently attach yourself to a water bottle and drink from it regularly. The Federal Air Surgeon Bulletin suggests drinking cool, 40˚F. water before feeling thirsty. This will help you stay ahead of the game, keeping you hydrated before the “thirst mechanism” sets in.

One alternative to water is mineralized (electrolyte) water. Electrolyte drinks, more commonly known as sports drinks, are generally designed to replace the fluids (water) and electrolytes (sodium, potassium, chromium, manganese, etc.) lost during stress, body temperature regulation, and exercise. But most contain sugars, which may lower a pilot’s systemic blood-sugar levels and precipitate fatigue.

The FAA also suggests staying away from coffee, sodas, and teas, which are all diuretics. These beverages contain caffeine and carbonation, which cause excess urine production or decreased voluntary fluid intake—a sure sign of dehydration. In addition, don’t over-exercise before a flight, since it can cause a large amount of body fluid loss that is difficult to replace quickly.

You also need to keep in mind that acclimation to a major change in weather takes one to two weeks, which can drastically affect your flying abilities. Monitoring personal effects of aging, recent illness, fever, diarrhea, or vomiting can also help you to gauge whether you’re dehydrated.

But perhaps the most important factor in preventing dehydration is to continually be aware of your physiological and environmental conditions. This will help to maintain your rehydration water intake and prevent you from progressing into heat exhaustion and even heat stroke. It’s a good plan for a problem that can easily be avoided—all with just a few gulps of water.

Enjoy the warm weather, because you know it won’t last long. Be safe, and stay hydrated.

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The Communications Committee Needs Your Expertise!

ARE YOU:

- an expert in social media?
- comfortable speaking in front of an audience?
- a whiz at organizing events?

Contact noreen.newton@alpa.org
Jazz Hockey Tournament a BIG Success

By First Officer Joe Cheng

The annual Jazz Hockey Tournament drew eight teams from across the country to the Don Hartman North East Sportsplex in Calgary, Alberta, on April 25–26.

Seventy-nine players (including goalies and coaches) representing pilots, tow crews, maintenance, agents, and SOCC from Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Toronto, and Halifax gathered to form teams and play hockey at one of Calgary's finest arenas, the Don Hartman North East Sportsplex, on April 25–26. The Halifax SOCC team won first place, followed by the Calgary Wings (pilots) and the Calgary Crunch (pilots). Each team played a minimum of four games with the top teams playing a fifth game for the championship. It is fair to say that everyone walked away from the tournament quite sore after two solid days of hockey.

After the first day, the players gathered upstairs in the arena restaurant for a banquet featuring a homemade lasagna dinner, door prizes, and a 50/50 draw. The prizes handed out included NHL jerseys, Calgary Flames memorabilia, swag from local aircraft maintenance companies, and iPod docks.

All who attended the tournament thoroughly enjoyed this great event, organized to bring employees together, develop teamwork, and boost camaraderie. The organizers, Joe Cheng and Ed Everard, would like to thank the company for their financial assistance, the team captains from across the country—David Blackmore [YHZ], Corey Robinson [YHZ], Dean Ticehurst [YYC], Rob Sidhu [YYC], Walter Koehl [YYZ], Dale Graff from the Fokkers—the staff at Northeast Sportsplex, the kitchen staff and bartender at North East Sportsplex, Dave Peyton, RDT, Aero Aviation, and the Calgary Flames for door prizes, Dean Ticehurst for organizing the banquet, and all the players who attended the tournament.

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At the ALPA Air Safety Forum August 6-9 in Washington, D.C., JAZ Captain Tom O’Toole was recognized by his peers by receiving the 2011 Pilot Assistance Award from the ALPA Air Safety Organization. The award is the culmination of the many years Captain O’Toole has dedicated to the Pilot Assistance Committee.

Pilot Assistance volunteers, a corps of trained, dedicated, and experienced individuals, serve the membership by their willingness to work with various issues, from a distressed pilot who may have lost his medical privileges, to dealing with a loss of child, or the complex process of recovery from an addiction.

Tom joined Air BC in May 1987 and is presently a CRJ captain based in Calgary. He first joined the Pilot Assistance Committee in 1989 as the representative of the newly opened Edmonton base.

I spoke to Tom about receiving this award, and asked him how he came to be involved in the Pilot Assistance Committee.

Tom’s family background supported his desire to help his fellow pilots:

“Dad was a doctor, Mom a nurse,” he said. “In high school I studied sciences; I was interested in medicine. But then the flying bug took over.” Asked what a PAC volunteer does, Tom explained, “The Pilot Assistance Committee’s mandate is to offer support to those in need and connect them with the professionals who can provide further assistance.”

Since 1989, Tom has been on site at the accidents of Swiss Air 111, Alaska Air 261, and, most recently, First Air 6560.

With his 23 years’ experience on the committee, I wanted to know what he perceived the issues to be. He summed up the answers in a word: “Volunteers.” The PAC is busy from coast to coast, he said, and as the MEC focuses more on pilot wellness, there is no lack of initiatives to keep volunteers busy.

Tom said education of the membership is also a priority. Presently, volunteer Captain Rob Keller briefs the new hires on the work of the PAC.

Captain Isabelle Caron, also nominated for the 2011 PAC award, brings a unique perspective to the committee. Isabelle has been a pilot with Jazz since 2000 and a member of the Pilot Assistance Committee since 2004. She said that as a Francophone, she is able to connect with her coworkers in their first language, and as a mother, she has a special empathy for women. Isabelle attended the First Air 6560 accident with Tom and Murray Monroe. Her gender and language skills proved invaluable; she remarked that being able to express emotions allowed her to connect with those impacted by the crash.

Tom shared his long-term goals for the committee. As the average age of the pilots at Jazz increases, the issues relevant to them change, and he has witnessed age degeneration. He would like to see more pilots use the resources of the Pilot Assistance Committee—no notes are kept on conversations, and confidentiality is sacrosanct. Tom’s pet projects are the Critical Incident Response Program and pilot rehabilitation sub-committees.

Looking for an answer to long-term well-being, I asked him how he recommends that pilots keep a balance in their lives. “Make time for yourself. Have a life away from work. Maintain a healthy lifestyle,” he answered.

We can all appreciate the impact Tom has made and recognize that, in a time of need, the presence of Pilot Assistance volunteers is invaluable.
March 8, 2012, saw us gather at the Lonestar Restaurant on Airport Road in Toronto to honor six of our members who have seen their great flying careers through to completion. Everyone had a wonderful time as stories were told and appreciation was shown for Captains Dave Weber, Dave Lockhart, Ken Smith, and Keith Freeman (all YYZ), as well as Captains Terry Young (YYZ) and Paul Mosher (YHZ), who could not attend. First Officer Derek Wickham, chairman of Council 223, presented each retiring member with the Crystal Goose to congratulate them for their long, successful careers as ALPA pilots.

A well-attended reception celebrated the retirement of Captains Hans Lammers, Cyril Williams, Jens Thomson, and John Paterson on March 21 in Richmond, BC. Jens and John were unable to attend the function, but were well thought of during the event. LEC 231 First Officer Rep Kris Reaville was in attendance to present Cyril and Hans the Crystal Goose, commemorating their careers as ALPA pilots.

Captains Steve Linthwaite, Cal Purves, and Mitch Cady were on hand to represent Jazz during the ALPA/Jazz co-hosted evening.

Congratulations to Jens, John, Cyril, and Hans on their safe careers.

It’s not what you’re retiring from, it’s what you’re retiring to, that’s important.