

A N EDITORIAL  
by the President

AIR line pilots have organized! Air commerce has developed to a point where rapid economical changes have in the natural course of events caused all air line pilots to band themselves together to safeguard their own welfare, as well as that of their loved ones.

Our right to band together in a conservative, common-sense association is a right of heritage. Surely we would not be denied a seat at the round-table of common conference affecting the air commerce to which we have all contributed, and are contributing, the best part of our lives.

We should be heard, as our collective knowledge of flying is of great value to the industry, to the Department of Commerce, to our employers and to the public. This highly specialized and collective knowledge should be of paramount consideration to the safety of air passengers and to their dependents, who depend on the air line pilots of this country to give them safe passage.

The membership of this Association includes air line pilots only, flying recognized air lines in the United States, Mexico, Canada, Central and South America. All of us have had at least 2000 hours ( and some of us a great deal more ) of actual flying experience.

It has been said that we cannot agree or stand together on any common problem affecting all of us. This theory has been disproven by our Association. However, we must keep up the good work. We must think and act collectively. There is no middle of the road on this proposition. You must be whole-heartedly with your brother pilots.

You must be willing to cooperate to the end for a strong, common-sense organization. Most important of all, you must do some work and take some interest yourself. Don't just wait for things to happen and then sit around and grumble because they do not, by chance or otherwise, come about. Jump in and do your part!

Sincerely

*Gov. President*



ALPA's first president, Capt. David L. Behncke, center, discusses a course of action with pilots after the Army Air Corps announced it would take over air mail in 1934.

# ‘There Is No Middle Of the Road.’

“Air line pilots have organized!” This stunning pronouncement arrived in the midst of the darkest days of the Great Depression. It was offered as a call to arms to the founding members of the Air Line Pilots Association, International—and as a warning to the corporate titans in the corner offices.

No matter how many times I read or reread the words written by the founders of our great union, I am always struck by how direct, clear, and wise those men were. The words printed on the opposite page come from the first edition of *Air Line Pilot's* predecessor, *The News and Progress Bulletin*. The sign-off, “Your President,” was penned by Capt. Dave Behncke, and the document was sealed inside a time capsule buried in the steps of ALPA’s first wholly owned headquarters in Chicago in 1951.

As the successor, several times removed, to Capt. Behncke’s title, I read his challenge today with great humility and profound respect. None of us can truly appreciate how daunting the challenges were for those first ALPA members; we can only hold ourselves to the standards they set as we deal—together—with the challenges of our time.

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As you will read and see in this issue of *Air Line Pilot*, our history is a living, breathing thing. It has no neat and tidy chapters that begin and end on precise dates. The story of ALPA may have had high points and low points along the way, but it unfolds in one continuum as the names and faces change. I urge every member of this union to examine our history and consider how it affects us now in so many direct ways. Moreover, I urge every member to contribute to this story—our story.

Let Capt. Behncke’s words be your starting point.

• “We should be heard...” Over the last 75 years, the members of our union have campaigned relentlessly to be heard. We have drawn countless lines in the sand on countless battlefields and have refused to cross. The result is that the development of safe and efficient airline service cannot be separated from the initiatives, strength, and will of our members. Without our voice, airline pilots would have no

contracts, no regulations with teeth, no legal protections. None. • “We must think and act collectively.” There is no substitute for working together on common challenges, and the strongest weapon in one pilot group’s fight is the support of fellow pilots across the industry. I shudder to think where we would be



ALPA’s president, Capt. Duane E. Woerth, center, speaks with attendees at the Mesaba Labor Coalition Unity Rally held in Bloomington, Minn., in March.

today without our common bonds and our collective wealth. The last five years have been bitter ones, to be sure; but they would have been unbearably cruel without our unified resolve. • Nothing trumps Capt. Behncke’s last paragraph of the *Bulletin* for direct, clear truth. “You must do some work...” he tells us. If pilots don’t run for office, serve on the hotel committee, attend safety school, edit the newsletter, all the work of seven-plus decades will dry up and float away in the next breeze. Democracy is not a spectator sport.

This issue of your magazine and all the related events leading up to July 27, 2006, have little to do with the past. They have everything to do with our future. “There is no middle of the road...” Capt. Behncke told us. We are either moving forward to support our profession, our livelihood, and our fellow union members, or we are on our own, being dragged down the road by forces one pilot cannot hope to overcome. Some things will never change.

Sincerely,

*Your President*