



Each of Us, Leading By Example

By Capt. Paul Rice, ALPA Vice-President–Administration/Secretary

As I reflect upon ALPA—the organization and its accomplishments of the past 75 years—what comes to my mind is what the organization will be like on its 100th anniversary. Will we, in fact, have a 100th anniversary?



We'd better; because if we don't, it will mean that the strongest union looking after the interests of professional airline pilots will have failed and our beloved profession will no longer exist. So what must we do to ensure we are here in 25 years—as professionals, as trade unionists?

Paraphrasing President Kennedy, we should be saying to ourselves, "Ask not what your union has done for you, ask what can you do for your union." Each of us needs to become part of the solution for guaranteeing our future.

We need to pull together and identify the real culprits, the real causes of the situation we find ourselves in. The culprits are not those of us who wear a different uniform, are of a different seniority, or have different ideas. But rather, the culprits are the terrorists of 9/11, the failures of the antilabor Bush administration, and the maneuverings of Congress that have again and again diluted the results of our valiant fights.

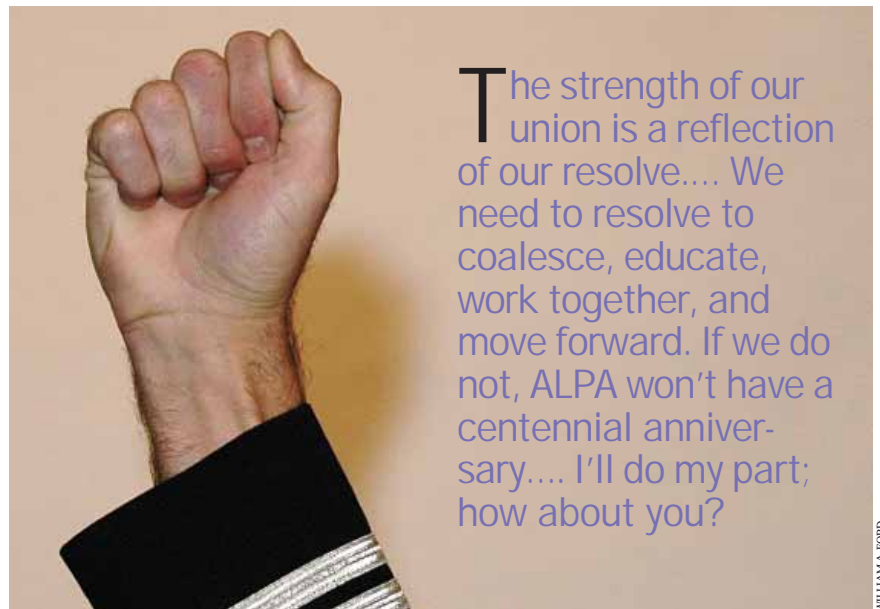
The only way to overcome these forces is to band together and present a united front. For a divided union is a weak union—one that airline managements have hoped and prayed for during the last 75 years. They hoped that the longer hours, less money, fewer benefits, furloughs, and bankruptcies foisted on us would make us give up the fight. But we are still here; our union still stands.

Our focus must be on grooming the next generation of airline pilots to be capable, knowledgeable, and re-

sourceful leaders. That generation—pilots who are just starting out, or have just a few years in the profession—are looking to those of us who have been here longer for guidance, for us to make the right decisions, for us to influence lawmakers to favor line pilots, for a reason to believe they were right in their choice of professions.

a better life for the next generation.

In the late 1800s, American labor leader Eugene V. Debs said, "Ten thousand times has the labor movement stumbled and bruised itself. We have been enjoined by the courts, assaulted by thugs, charged by the militia, traduced by the press, frowned upon in public opinion, and deceived



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We must remember to take the time to mentor our newer brothers and sisters, help them realize the importance of their union, and train them to be the leaders who will take this organization into the next quarter-century and beyond.

We must lead by example and show this generation that unity is the only way pilots have a strong, significant voice that managements, industry officials, and lawmakers will hear.

As we direct our attention to the next generation, ALPA must never forget its past and the pilots who built this union's foundation—those who have been through tough times, and who have remained professional airline pilots because of their love for the profession and their hope to pass along

by politicians. But notwithstanding all this and all these, labor is today the most vital and potential power this planet has ever known, and its historic mission is as certain of ultimate realization as is the setting of the sun."

More than a century later, those words are just as crucial and just as appropriate.

The strength of our union is a reflection of our resolve. If we spend time placing blame and fighting among ourselves, we lose. We need to resolve to coalesce, educate, work together, and move forward. If we do not, ALPA won't have a centennial anniversary. It's up to each of us to ensure that we lead by example. I'll do my part; how about you? 🌐