

## IFALPA Intermediate & Advance ALR Course held in Johannesburg

By Tony Laubser, Aerodrome Ground Environment Chairman

After just a few months of preparation the IFALPA Intermediate course finally took place at a fantastic venue, The St Andrews Boutique Hotel.

ACSA's support, particularly from Andre Vermeulen, cannot be overstated. The fact is that were it not for the financial support given to ALPA, this course would never have taken place. I would also like to acknowledge the moral support and encouragement I received from ACSA.

The aim of this course was two-fold: Firstly to educate our pilot volunteer group and other active members of the airport community and, secondly, to build a relationship between all the role players in this industry.

The Intermediate ALR (Airport Liaison Rep) was presented by **Capt. Brian Greeves**. Brian's background is pretty impressive - BSc(Eng.); DMS; FRAeS; FRGS :-

- Brian has been involved in aviation, as a pilot and as a safety and technical expert, for over 40 years. He provides training for IFALPA, the JAA Training Office and other organisations; as well as providing consultancy services to airlines, airports (including ACSA) and aviation organisations.
- He is the former chairman of the IFALPA Aircraft Design and Operations Committee; a member of the IFALPA Aerodrome Ground Environment Committee; an Accident Investigator; RAF Unit Flight Safety Officer and ex-Senior Captain Cathay Pacific.
- He has been involved with HKIA since 1993 and continues to sit on various committees and study groups. He received the CN Sayen and Scroll of Merit from IFALPA, as well as awards from GAPAN and other organisations for his work.

The Advanced ALR, Airport planning and Design Course was presented by **Mr. Rodney Fewings**. Rod has a very extensive background in this field and this includes MSc (Transport Studies; MSc (Eng.); BEng; Ceng; FRIN; MRAeS; MCILT :-

- Rod is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Air Transport, School of Engineering, Cranfield University. He has extensive professional experience as a lecturer and consultant in airport planning, design and operations. He has worked with ICAO, the European Commission, UK Overseas Development Agency, Spanish Airports Authority, European Bank and other major international consultancy organisations.
- He has published extensively in all areas related to Airport Planning, Design and Operations.
- He runs a number of short courses at Cranfield from which this Airport Planning, Design and Operations Course originated.

Thirty two delegates attended the course. Sixteen were ALPA SA members who are part of the pilot volunteer group, eight senior managers/engineers from ACSA, two inspectors from the CAA, two senior managers from Lanseria airport, AirlinK's Chief pilot, SAA's airport technical engineer, a consultant to Wonderboom airport and the Airline Association of SA's technical manager.

The stage was set for an interesting week. With Brian and Rodney at the helm the information presented was outstanding. The standard of lecturing and material was from the highest order and by the end of the week everyone that attended was suitably impressed. Sonia and Anita did an outstanding job ensuring that, from the organisational side, nothing was left to chance.

This level of preparation combined with the excellent support provided by the hotel ensured the success of what I must say was one of the best courses I have ever attended.

On the Wednesday evening a function was held to which a number of senior managers within the aviation industry were invited.

Mr. Bogani Maseko (acting MD ACSA), Capt. Mpho Mamashela (Chairman of the ATNS board), Mr Athol Franz (editor of African Pilot), Alan Moore (Chairman of the Board of Airline Representatives) and Capt. Johan Nell (Chairman of the Commercial Airlines Association of South Africa) all attended and it was great to interact and discuss airport related matters.

I am pleased to report that the aims of the course were exceeded. I must thank my Association, the ALPA staff, ACSA, the airlines that gave the members the time off and my fellow delegates for all they did in making this course the success that it was.



## Aviators on course to communicate better

By Barry Elsip

ALPA-SA, in conjunction with the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA), recently hosted the Airport Liaison Representative (ALR) Training course for members of ALPA-SA, ACSA, SACAA, Lanseria Airport, Wonderboom Airport and other interested parties.

The St Andrews Hotel & Spa in Bedfordview was the perfect venue for this course. This establishment provided five star service, excellent food and comfortable accommodation. The five-day course was jointly presented by Brian Greeves from IFALPA and Rodney Fewings from the Cranfield University of Aeronautics.

Both Brian and Rodney are highly experienced in their field and they had lots to offer their eager students. Brian is a training consultant with IFALPA, and a retired Cathay Pacific Captain, currently living in Australia. Rodney is a Chartered Engineer, a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Navigation, and a Member of the Royal Aeronautical Society and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. He is currently a training consultant for the Cranfield University.

The ALR Training Course consisted of three modules: Local Runway Team, Representatives, Intermediate Airport Liaison Representative, and Advanced Airport Liaison Representative.

Brian presented the first two modules and Rodney the final module. The primary purpose of the Airport Liaison Representative Program is to establish and/or improve lines of communication between pilots and airport management in order to develop a positive working relationship. By working together, we can gain an understanding of each other's problems and concerns, and bridge any gap that may exist. This is not an inspection program, rather it is a means to learn about the concerns of airport management and what can be done to help them in achieving a Pilot Friendly Airport.

In short: "build a rapport and provide a resource"

A great opportunity for relationship building was created. The delegates could apply what they learned to the unique South African aviation environment, and specifically the major airports. Ad-hoc banter between the different members provided some light-hearted moments..

In summary, a great learning environment was created for some major role players in the aviation industry, who in turn gave a lot back to the members present and are all now in a better position to get involved in making local airports more 'pilot-friendly'. The networking opportunity was invaluable.



## Pilot Wellbeing and the Albatross accidents

By Wendy Santilhano

The tragedy of the recent devastating Albatross accidents continues to permeate the South African aviation industry. It touches deeply at the hearts of so many sectors of our community - from airline crew, aerobatics pilots, aviation magazine journalists and contributors, aviation enthusiasts, to the mountain search and rescue teams, SAPS and even into the farming community.

At the time that this horrendous situation was unfolding in Mpumalanga, I was attending a conference in Washington DC, where US-ALPA was hosting their national conference on Aviation Safety and Pilot Assistance. In Johannesburg, the Peer-2-Peer pilot assistants under ALPA's Pilot Wellbeing portfolio galvanized into action alongside the ALPA staff to find out where and how best to support their colleagues. As helpless as I felt at the time, being so far away, it occurred to me that I was surrounded by the world's experts in the field of dealing with aviation related trauma and pilot wellbeing.

As news of these accidents became known, delegates from Canada, Germany and the US generously shared their wisdom and direction and provided resounding support.

Within the aviation community the questions will run deep for many and remain with us for a long while. While we seek answers, we need to be aware of other terrain that also needs to be navigated. For some it will be a first encounter, for many they will find themselves thrown again into confronting the changing faces of the cycle of grief, namely shock and denial, pain and guilt, anger and bargaining, isolation and loneliness (depression) until finally reaching place of acceptance. These are not hard and fast stages, but rather spirals, which will remain for some through the months ahead. For others, especially those intimately involved with the search and rescue, it is about becoming aware of the impact of such potentially traumatising experiences, and our capacity to cope.

I use the phrase 'potentially traumatising' because each person has their own level of resilience and ambit of coping mechanisms which enables them to integrate what has been encountered and remain emotionally healthy, personally and professionally. It is vital to understand and recognise the physical, emotional, behavioral, intellectual shifts and changes we, or those around us, may undergo when impacted by this, or any other, crisis. In most cases these shifts are the normal reactions of normal human beings exposed to an abnormal situation. The danger for each of us is that occasionally our coping mechanisms fail.

In these instances, if we do not pay attention, and when necessary, reach out, these symptoms can escalate into post traumatic stress (PTS), substance abuse and/or depression. The best ways for us to make sense of what we have encountered is tell our story - what we experienced and what we feel about it. It is necessary to eat and rest well while we surround ourselves with our support systems and build our understanding of our capacity to cope.

The Peer-2-Peer pilot assistants are trained to provide exactly such support within a confidential and safe environment. Get hold of a pilot assistant if you find you need to speak:

- Contact ALPA and speak with Anita, she will refer you (011-3945310)
- Look on the ALPA-SA Pilot Wellbeing page where you will find the contact details of the Pilot Assistants ([www.alpa.co.za](http://www.alpa.co.za))
- Contact myself or use the 'contact us' button on the webpage

On the webpage, under Traumatic Incident Response, is educational reading material on handling trauma and grief. This useful information is given to us by international experts who have been wholeheartedly generous in their support of us as we find healing in the time ahead. The Pilot Wellbeing Portfolio was established to support you on your journey regardless of what you are experiencing and at any stage. To all whose hearts and lives have been changed forever, my deepest condolences.

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## SUSPENSION pending disciplinary enquiries

By Jacques Lemmer

Over the years suspensions have been firmly embedded as an associate of internal discipline, either as a “holding operation” pending a disciplinary enquiry or as a form of a disciplinary penalty. For the purpose of this article, I will focus exclusively on the type of suspension preceding the disciplinary enquiry.

By now all of us have heard or know of a colleague or fellow employee who has been suspended pending a disciplinary hearing for misconduct.

Unfortunately it is true that misconduct does occur in the day-to-day running of any business and, as such, that employers have the right to discipline or even dismiss employees who make themselves guilty of misconduct.

A suspension is not intended to be punitive in itself. The Labour Court accepts such action, provided the employer bona fide believes it is necessary for good administration and the employer continues to pay the employee.

In terms of section 186(2)(b) of the Labour Relations Act, 1995, the unfair suspension of an employee is regarded as an unfair labour practice that may be referred to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

For long it has been the common practice and understanding that employees accused of serious misconduct should be suspended to show that the trust relationship between the employer and employee had been broken down by the actions of the employee and as such that it would be easier for the company to justify the dismissal should the dismissal be disputed at a later stage.

However, recently courts have taken a different approach to suspensions preceding disciplinary enquiries. It would now seem as if the only rationale for suspension is the reasonable apprehension that the employee will interfere with investigation or repeat the misconduct.

It follows that it is only in exceptional circumstances that an employee should be suspended pending a disciplinary enquiry. Suspensions have a detrimental impact on the affected employee and may prejudice his or her reputation, advancement, job security and fulfilment.

It is therefore necessary that suspensions are based on substantive reasons and fair procedures are followed prior to suspending an employee.

This is supported by the following extract from the SA Post Office Ltd v Jansen Van Vuuren case which was heard by the Labour Court during 2008, and which is often referred to by both Commissioners and Judges when adjudicating Suspension related matters:

“Turning to the issue of suspension the Commissioner found that the suspension constituted a separate unfair labour practice in that it was unwarranted and inherently unfair from both a procedural and substantive point of view. The commissioner found that the employee was left in the dark as to the nature of the offence and was not offered an opportunity to say why he should not be suspended or to state his case.

[26] In arriving at the decision that the suspension was unfair the commissioner reasoned that the suspension usually prejudices an alleged offender, psychologically and in terms of future job prospects. In support of his view the Commissioner correctly relied on the decision in Muller and Other v Chairman of the Ministers' Council House of Representative and Others (1991) 12 ILJ 761 at 775 to 776 where the court held:

“The implications of being barred from going to work and pursuing one's chosen calling, and of being seen by the community round one to be so barred, are not so immediately realized by the outside observer and appear, with respect, perhaps to have been underestimated in the Swart and Jacobs cases. There are indeed substantial social and personal implications inherent in that aspect of suspension. These considerations weigh as heavily in South Africa as they do in other countries.

[27] The commissioner was also influenced by the comment made by Prof Halton Cheadle in his article 'Regulated Flexibility Revisiting the LRA and the Bcea' (2006) 27 ILJ 663 at 683 to 684 where the learned author says:

“It is suspension pending disciplinary action that requires considered review. There are two abuses: arbitrary decisions and the inordinate periods of suspension. Suspension is the employment equivalent of arrest.

The only rationale for suspension is the reasonable apprehension that the employees will interfere with investigation or repeat the misconduct. It follows that it is only in exceptional circumstances that an employee should be suspended pending a disciplinary enquiry.

The employee suffers palpable prejudice to reputation, advancement and fulfilment. These limited reasons for suspension and this prejudice make a compelling case for regulation.”

It is very important to take cognizance of the fact that the above does not render any and all suspensions unfair.

ALPA-SA has successfully dealt with a number of unfair suspension matters, yet these matters were surpassed by the number of fair suspensions and where no action could be taken.

