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## October 2007 MEC Meetings

### Part 3, The MEC Officer Elections

The Votes totals for MEC Chairman were, Dave Stevens-7, Ray Miller-4. Vice Chairman votes were Monty Montgomery-9, Pat Harney-2. The election for the MEC Secretary Treasure was postponed until the next meeting. So there you have it. End of story right?

Not really. The vote count was not a surprise or the important story. The story is about the politics leading up to the vote count. The two broad groups that our leadership is divided into each have their favorite candidate. For days, weeks and probably months leading up to these elections, the LEC Reps. (the voting body that elects the MEC Officers) are talking among themselves and trying to get votes for their candidates. In this case, I don't know exactly how long that process had been taking place, but I do know that from the time I got there until just before the vote, each camp, and the candidates were talking to the LEC Reps trying to get votes. By the time the actual vote is taken, the outcome was pretty much assured for the Chairman, somewhat assured for the Vice Chairman and not assured at all for the Secretary Treasure. I believe the lack of assurance for who would win Sec/Tres. is why that election was postponed.

Now I would caution you not to read too much of a negative impression into this process. I know it sounds like a lot of backroom politics. I did not see it that way. All this is done pretty much in the open. No one discourage me from listening in of any of the huddled conversations about who was going to vote for whom. To some degree, the process must take this form. Who the candidates are is not known until just before the elections. Nominations are made by LEC members just before they are

voted on. An LEC rep can nominate any pilot in good standing that has indicated a willingness to serve. With such a nomination process in place, it is only natural that who is going to run and who is likely to be elected is all decided before the actual vote. This was very true for the Chairman election, to a lesser extent for the Vice Chairman and not at all true for Sec/Tres.

It is possible and does happen that last minute candidates come forth. They are not out-of-the-blue candidates, but rather compromise candidate that one side of the other thinks has a better of chance of being elected than their first choice. There was talk about a “compromise” candidate running in place of Ray Miller. I did not hear of any similar possibilities for Dave Stevens. I don’t know who that compromise candidate was, but I believe they dropped out early or were never seriously considered.

Just before the vote, each candidate is offered a chance to speak on their own behalf. Dave Stevens declined the offer. Ray Miller made this short speech.

**“Gentlemen:**

- **You have a choice of candidates.**
  
- **Choose wisely.**
  
- **Take responsibility for your vote.**

**Thank You. “**

The Vote itself is by secret ballot, which just means the paper ballots do not indicate who cast them. The paper ballots are handed out to each voting LEC Rep. The Reps vote and the ballots are collected. Then 4 pilots count them, The MEC Secretary Treasure, and three others from committees. I’m assuming that the Secretary Treasure would be replaced when counting the votes for that office, but no such vote took place at this meeting so I don’t know how that works for sure. In the case of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the other 3 were Ron Barnett, Lane Krantz and Carl Lendberge. The whole process is overseen by Mr. Robert Salveson, a Parliamentarian Attorney. He makes certain that all the proper procedures and ALPA By-Laws are followed.

The actual vote is a clean, above board process. The events leading up to the vote are where the politics of these groups show themselves. The pilot group needs to understand those politics. To understand the politics you must first understand the voting structure. So here is a little MEC voting structure 101.

There are 11 voting LEC Reps. We have 5 bases (councils). Two reps from each base vote, a Captain and FO rep. That's 10, plus the SO Rep in ANC votes because that base has SO's. (The SO Rep is known as the LEC, Secretary/Treasurer in all bases except ANC, and does not vote) That's 11 voters. The MEC Officers, Chairman, Vice Chairman and Sec/Tres. don't vote on anything. Counterintuitive isn't it?

The 11 LEC votes are known as Senatorial Votes, one man, one vote. MEC Officers are elected by Senatorial Votes. On the other had, resolutions for example, are passed by a roll call vote. Roll call means the LEC rep is voting the number of pilots he/she represents. Roll call votes currently breakdown like this.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AS OF OCTOBER 6, 2007 (Roll Call Votes)

Council	Captain	First Officer	Second Officer	Total
MSP 001	846	705	0	1,551
DTW 020	1,071	1,021	0	2,092
SEA 054	117	128	0	245
ANC 055	104	99	121	324
MEM 074	150	118	0	268
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,288</b>	<b>2,071</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>4,480</b>

In this case the MEC Chairman was elected by 7 to 4 Senatorial votes and Vice Chairman by 9 to 2. Now even in the case of Senatorial votes, the reps are supposed to be voting the will of the pilots they represent. I believe that is what occurred in this election, with one possible exception, which would not have changed the outcome. So what's the problem?

The rules are set and the process worked. But if you examine who cast the 7 to 4 Senatorial votes you find that those 4 represent a majority of the pilots. Although the ballots are secret when taken, some of the LEC reps have made their votes public. According to Jon Lewis's (FO Rep, MSP) [Council 1 Update October 20, 2007](#), the 4 that voted for Ray Miller are on record as being Len Willey, Bill Bartels (DTW CA and FO reps), Jon Lewis, (MSP FO rep), and Joe Damiani, (ANC FO rep). Those 4 represent 2896 pilots.

All though not all on the record, those 7 voting for Dave Stevens would have to be Mark Shanahan (MSP CA rep), Curt Kruse, Mark Young (SEA CA and FO reps), Drew Grimes, Jeff Panioto (ANC CA and SO reps), and Harry Miller, Russ Picus (MEM CA and FO reps). Those 7 represent 1584

So those voting for Dave Stevens represent 37% of NWA Pilots and those voting for Ray Miller represent 63% of NWA Pilots. But, Senatorial votes, not roll call votes elect MEC Officers. Both camps have reason to believe that their representation should carry the day. Captain Stevens won decisively and can claim that 7 to 4 is a mandate for his agenda and style of leadership. The group voting for Captain Miller could claim that the majority of the pilots favor his agenda and style of leadership.

The divide between these two political groups is widening and becoming deeper because of all the issues that manifest themselves in this vote. This vote represents a consolidation of power. It was going to go one way or the other. Before this vote, we had Dave Steven as Chairman and Ray Miller as Vice Chairman. To say that they have differing views of how this union should posture itself is an understatement. Some might say that we had a balance of power, except of course the two offices are not equal in power. Sources tell me that because they did not see eye-to-eye, they did not work well together. So this was an all or nothing vote for both sides.

Shortly after the vote, Ray Miller resigned his remaining term as MEC Vice Chairman ([Resignation Letter](#)).

The next Newsletter in this series, Part 4 will further define where these two groups stand politically. I will give you examples of how they clash. I will give you a broad explanation of the two different approaches they seem to be taking to restoring our contract. I will give you my impression of where it looks like we are going with all this.

It is important that you understand not just the processes of this union but the political climate our union leaders are operating in. All this is important because they are our leaders. The decisions they make greatly affect your life. No matter who our leaders are, it is completely reasonable to say that repairing the damage done to our contract is an uncertain process. However, one thing is for certain. NWA ALPA is bound by its own rules. Those rules mandate that it must follow the will of the membership. The membership is its source of strength. The determination to regain our fair compensation, our quality of life, our future, and our dignity originates within the membership. One way or the other, the will of this pilot group will be carried out by those leaders in a fair and equitable manner. That is ALPAWatch's comment to you.

**ALPAWatch**  
**NWA Pilots working to regain our fair compensation, our quality of life, our  
future, and our dignity.**