**Captain Dennis James – Veteran Airline Pilot**

Captain James has more than 30 years of flying experience starting with the U.S. Marine Corps where he learned to fly on F4 Phantoms. Currently, Captain James flies 737s for American Airlines. In his presentation, Captain James described the 737 Max controversy from a pilot’s perspective being very clear that he was not representing neither American Airlines nor Boeing.

Captain James described several outstanding features of the 737 Max including better fuel efficiency, a longer range, and more capacity than ordinary 737s. The 737 Max offers a common certification procedure so it is easy for 737 pilots to qualify to fly it; however, it also had a system called MCAS that automatically tries to adjust the pitch (i.e., rise or fall of the plane’s nose) that was not described to the pilots. Shortly after the plane’s introduction, two crashes killed nearly 400 passengers and crew, and the FAA and many countries grounded that model of plane. While some have blamed poor pilot training of overseas pilots, Captain James thought that the real problem was that the two planes lost control at an altitude too low for the pilots to recover.

Captain James also gave the Club a peek into the world of pilots. He does not have a set route that he flies because flight assignments are determined by seniority. Captain James typically works about three-day per week. Finally, he shared that pilots working for large airlines have the opportunity to be certified for and to fly a wide variety of planes, while at other airlines, a pilot might fly the same type of plane for their entire career.