

SPECIAL NEGOTIATIONS EDITION



WINTER 2016

# unity

The Magazine of TWU Local 556



**WE MISSED  
THE MARK**



The Union of  
Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants  
**TWU LOCAL 556**

8787 N. Stemmons Frwy.  
Suite 600  
Dallas, TX 75247  
Phone: 800-969-7932  
Fax: 214-357-9870  
www.twu556.org

# MARCH 2016

## MEMBERSHIP MEETING SCHEDULE

All Meeting Times Are Posted In Local Time

\*\* denotes new meeting location

### **BALTIMORE**

DATE: Tuesday, March 8, 2016  
TIME: 10:00 A.M.  
\*\*LOCATION: Doubletree by Hilton BWI Airport  
890 Elkridge Landing Rd, Lithicum Heights, MD  
21090 - (410) 859-8400

### **ORLANDO**

DATE: Wednesday, March 9, 2016  
TIME: 10:00 A.M.  
\*\*LOCATION: Hampton Inn-International Airport  
5767 TG Lee Blvd, Orlando, FL 32822  
(407) 888-2995

### **CHICAGO**

DATE: Thursday, March 10, 2016  
TIME: 10:00 A.M.  
LOCATION: Marriott Chicago Midway  
6520 South Cicero Ave, Chicago, IL 60638  
(708) 552-9647

### **DALLAS**

DATE: Monday, March 14, 2016  
TIME: 10:00 A.M.  
\*\*LOCATION: Transport Workers Union Local 556  
8787 North Stemmons Freeway 1st Floor, Dallas,  
TX 75247 - (214) 640-4300

### **OAKLAND**

DATE: Monday, March 21, 2016  
TIME: 12:00 P.M.  
LOCATION: Holiday Inn Oakland Airport  
77 Hegenberger Road Oakland, CA 94621  
(510) 638-7777

### **DENVER**

DATE: Tuesday, March 22, 2016  
TIME: 12:00 P.M.  
LOCATION: Holiday Inn & Suites  
6900 Tower Road, Denver, CO 80249  
(303) 574-1300

### **LAS VEGAS**

DATE: Wednesday, March 23, 2016  
TIME: 12:00 P.M.  
LOCATION: Hampton Inn Tropicana and Event Center  
4975 Dean Martin Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89118  
(702) 948-8119

### **PHOENIX**

DATE: Thursday, March 24, 2016  
TIME: 10:00 A.M.  
LOCATION: Crowne Plaza Phoenix Airport  
4300 East Washington Street, Phoenix, AZ 85034  
(602) 273-7778

### **HOUSTON**

DATE: Tuesday, March 29, 2016  
TIME: 10:00 A.M.  
LOCATION: Houston Marriot South at Hobby Airport  
9100 Gulf Freeway, Houston, TX 770147  
(713) 943-7979

### **ATLANTA**

DATE: Wednesday, March 30, 2016  
TIME: 10:00 A.M.  
LOCATION: Renaissance Concourse Airport Hotel  
One Hartsfield Centre Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30354  
(404) 209-9999

### **MEETING AGENDA**

General Union Business, Union Meeting open to Members only. ID's will be checked.



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**Unity** is the official publication of **Transport Workers Union Local 556**, representing the **Flight Attendants of Southwest Airlines**.

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Letters to the Editor may not be considered if the length of the submission exceeds 200 words and/or depending upon space available in the issue. All letters must contain your name, Base, Employee number, and contact information.

Articles submitted to Unity will not be considered for publication if they are libelous, defamatory, not factual, in bad taste, or are contractually incorrect.

The TWU Local 556 Editorial Team reserves the right to edit any submissions that are received for the purpose of inclusion in Unity. Submissions are due by the first of the month prior to the month of publication, and are considered on a space-available basis only.

The views expressed in Unity do not necessarily represent those of TWU Local 556 or TWU International. This publication is intended only to educate and inform TWU Local 556 Members. It is not intended to officially establish or clarify past practice, Contract language or Grievance/arbitration positions. It is therefore not to be utilized or relied upon by any person or party as evidence of the Union's position on any past practices, Contract language, Grievances/arbitrations or any other disputes or issues between TWU Local 556 and Southwest Airlines.

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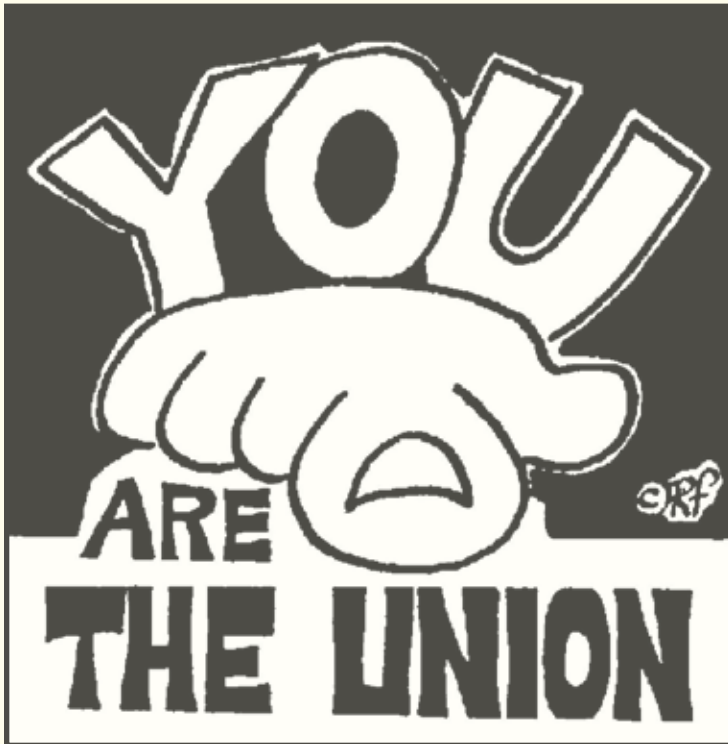
## MEMBERSHIP PLEDGE of the TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO

I solemnly pledge on my honor to abide by the Constitution of the Transport Workers Union of America and the rules and Bylaws of TWU Local 556; to discharge all my duties and obligations faithfully; not to make known any private business of the Union, and to conduct myself at all times as becomes a Member of the Transport Workers Union of America.

# Members of the TWU Local 556 Communication Team!

by Cuyler Thompson

As of this writing, there are 13,889 Members on the TWU Local 556 Communications Team. Yes, **YOU** are a Member of this Team! And ultimately, any team's success depends on the team's members, not the team's leaders. In fact, over-dependence on the team leader can prevent a team from reaching its full potential. While you may not hold an official "title" on the Union's Communication Team, every Flight Attendant at Southwest Airlines bears the responsibility in the ultimate success of our Union's communications.



One of the reasons that our Company is so successful, and why our Customer Service continues to be lauded as the best in the industry, is because of the excellent communication skills of Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants. Whether we are empathizing with a delayed Passenger, politely using "verbal judo" to enforce a Federal Aviation Regulation, discreetly pointing out a

possible threat to a Co-worker, negotiating adjoining seats for a young family, or exercising Crew Resource Management (CRM) to de-escalate a situation with someone on our "No Fly List," the Members of TWU Local 556 are skilled communicators.

We communicate – A LOT – and we're damn good at it! We're always talking to Passengers, Pilots, Provisioning, Customer Service and Operations Agents, van drivers and hotel employees. And we talk to each other: in the lounge, on the jumpseat, in the galley, in the van, at the bar. We're constantly on our phones, talking, texting, messaging, emailing and checking in on social media. It seems we've always got something to say.

The most important thing for our Union and its Members right now, and the sole topic of this entire issue of Unity Magazine, is our ongoing Contract Negotiations with Southwest Airlines Management. In this special issue, you'll read some perspectives from each Member of your Negotiating Team, hear from your Domicile Executive Board Member, and see what some of your Shop Stewards and rank-and-file Union Sisters and Brothers have to say.

In the months ahead, communication "to, from and with" the Members of TWU Local 556 will be different. I challenge each of you, as Members of the Communications Team, to do your part: communicate with your Negotiating Team via email ([nt@twu556.org](mailto:nt@twu556.org)) or the "Negotiations Priorities" tab on the TWU Local 556 Website and follow your Union on social media. Make sure you are signed up to receive and read updates from your Negotiating Team: email [communications@twu556.org](mailto:communications@twu556.org) if you are not. Share news and start conversations with Co-workers about Negotiations: make sure that everyone knows where we are and what's going on.

If we are to be a successful Union, and successful in our campaign to achieve and then ratify the Contract that we have earned and deserve, we must **ALL** put our excellent communication skills to use. Be an active Member of your Unions Communications Team: our success depends upon it: **YOU put the "U" in Union!**



*Cuyler Thompson is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Recording Secretary for TWU Local 556. Cuyler also serves as the Chairperson of the Union's Communication Committee.*

# President's Message

by Audrey Stone



**We Missed  
The Mark!**

I have taken the opportunity to communicate with many of you through phone calls, emails, and most importantly face-to-face conversations since the Tentative Agreement (TA) was rejected. One thing that resonates from various accounts is your personal disappointment in the TA, and how that has translated into your disappointment in me as a leader.

I have said it before and I will say it again: we missed the mark. As a team, we own that. As the Lead Negotiator, I own that. I recognize and take responsibility that there were mistakes made along the way. I am committed to doing it differently as we go forward with Contract Negotiations. You have the right to expect that. You will see a difference, starting with the surveying we have done and the communications you will receive, including this special edition of Unity Magazine.

**I have said it before and I will say it again: we missed the mark. As a team, we own that. As the Lead Negotiator, I own that.**

The track to a successful TA starts with our commitment to one another. We, of course, have the right to our individual opinions. We can agree or disagree with our fellow Flight Attendants. However, in the end we are in this together. We are all Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants working under one Contract. The outcome of these Con-

tract Negotiations affects every single one of us, from the five Flight Attendants on the NT to the almost 14,000 Members we proudly represent.

I also respect and accept your right to challenge me. You don't have to like me, or agree with me, but I believe we all should respect the joint mission we are on to reach a future Contract. I have chosen to stay and fulfill my leadership commitment to go back to the table to get it right; to bring forward a TA that can be ratified by the Membership. As a Flight Attendant, I too, will be working under our future Contract, and it is as important to me as it is to you.

Leadership can be a difficult task, as anyone who has been in a position representing others will tell you. While I don't think anyone who goes into it expects it to be easy, I also think there is very little that can truly prepare you for it. As a leader, you make decisions all day; some of them are good and some of them are not. While you know that you will make mistakes - as I have done - you hope that you learn and grow from them to become a stronger leader who will make better decisions. Strong leaders also passionately believe in the group they lead, and the causes for which they fight. I became involved because I believe in our Flight Attendants and our Union.

I made a commitment when I took office as President and Lead Negotiator, and I remain dedicated to seeing that pledge through to the end. Whether

you were a "No" voter or a "Yes" voter, it is clear as a group that we voted "NO." Your voices were very loud and clear, and I have heard you.

However, I cannot do this without you. I am respectfully and earnestly asking you to support your Union in our Contract fight. Equally important, we cannot fight each other. Unity is our strength. Infighting only emboldens Management to divide us. That is unacceptable.

As we begin our journey to the TA we deserve, it's time to reset our resolve and stay fully informed. Please read this edition with one goal in mind - to collectively secure a TA that respects our work, acknowledges our commitment, and rewards our dedication to Southwest Airlines and our Customers.



Audrey Stone is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant. Audrey is the President and Lead Negotiator of TWU Local 556.

# Our Negotiating Team is Working Well Together

by Trish Krider

Think back to the days when you were a new Flight Attendant. You were always the junior member of the Crew and often flew with “Senior Mamas.” There were even times when you were thrust on a Crew with others who were not only senior, but were long-time buddy bidders. The prospect can be intimidating as you wonder if, even though you are new to the job, will you fit in, will you get along with your fellow Crew Members, and will they respect that you know your job? After all, you may be a junior Reserve, but you are equally trained and equally qualified to do this job.

In most cases, we find that this is only an issue in our head, and we get along well with those with whom we share our unique job. And often it is the senior, more seasoned Flight Attendant who learns from those still “onboarding” as they bring fresh thoughts and ideas and a new perspective. This input can often serve to make the entire team work better.

In order to do our job well, this meshing of seniority and experience is a necessity. We don’t all necessarily get along with every one of our fellow Crew Members, but we still must be able to function as a unit. Personalities may clash, but putting aside personal feelings and dealing with things professionally is the only way to get through a crisis situation.

The same is true of your Negotiating Team. Joining the Team when I did felt, in many ways, like a new Reserve joining a team of buddy bidders. Although I was not the only “newbie” on the Team and felt confident in my abilities, most of the Team had already been working

together for over two years. They not only knew all the details of what had transpired at the Negotiating Table, they had established a strong bond together. I wondered how we would fit in. Would all five work well together? Would our opinions and ideas be respected? Would I, as a new Member of this Team, have an equal say? In the best of circumstances, negotiating is a difficult experience that requires a team effort. We don’t have to like each other, but we do have to be able to work effectively together. To do that, we must all have



*TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team  
Bill Holcomb, Don Shipman, Trish Krider, Brett Nevarez  
and Audrey Stone*

respect for each other’s opinions – and we do.

I have found that coming in mid-game, although challenging, is not an insurmountable obstacle to success. The atmosphere in the Negotiating Team’s office isn’t always positive. But then life isn’t always rosy, is it? However, that doesn’t stop us from working together. We are five different, independent personalities and, as such, there are go-

ing to be times when we disagree. But, we do so professionally and respectfully (even when we are being loud and forceful about it!), and work to find a resolution. There have been many times when opposing points of view have been raised, bantered about, discussed at length, and finally resolved by consensus. We don’t always agree, but we can civilly “agree to disagree” – and we often do.

Your Negotiating Team Members are in a unique situation in that none of us actually lives in Dallas, so we share a common living environment. Not only do we work in the same office all day, we sleep in the same house at night. However, that does not mean that we spend all day, every day, together. For me it is kind of like being on a five-day trip. I check in for work each morning, and each night I go to my own room. Are there times when we spend an evening together and have dinner as a group? Yes. But that is not the norm. We each need and respect our own personal time.

We are your Negotiating Team, but we are Flight Attendants and Union Members first. We understand the importance of our task. This is your livelihood – so personal feelings must be put aside because it’s about something much bigger than “us.” We do have one thing in common – YOU. Our Members are what unite us. We are all centered by our common goal – to obtain a fair Contract for the Members of TWU Local 556. We are working well as a Team and I am certain that, no matter what comes our way, we will handle it professionally together.



*Trish Krider is an Atlanta-based Flight Attendant and serves on the TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team.*

# Southwest Airlines Negotiating Team ...An Inside Job

It is very interesting to ask our Union Members who they think sits across from us at the bargaining table. They usually believe that Southwest Airlines has highly paid outside corporate consultants or professional negotiators assisting them at the table. That couldn't be further from reality. There are no outsiders ...it's completely an "inside job."

The entire Management Negotiating Team is comprised of Employees. They all have regular jobs at Southwest Airlines and have been tasked with an additional duty of bargaining against us. Not one top officer of the carrier sits at the table. Not Gary Kelly, not Randy Babbitt, and not any Board of Director.

Instead, Management basically brings the same number of negotiators as we do to the table. One Team Member serves as their Lead Negotiator. That person, from Labor Relations, is given directions from high up in Management as to what Southwest Airlines wants out of Negotiations. That is the person who voiced Managements' plan to extend our duty day, change vacation pay, modify PIN usage and then pushed the rest of their package - all of which sank the Tentative Agreement (TA). And there were many more negative proposals presented by Management that were stopped by our TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team (NT).

There are a few other Southwest Airlines Employees at the table who assist the Lead Negotiator and who have expertise in Scheduling, Finance, Labor Relations, and of course knowledge of Inflight Operations. These subject matter spokespersons round out the core Management Negotiating Team.

In addition, Management brings an in-house lawyer to the table to assist on legal issues and Contract language. There is also an Employee in attendance to take notes or "scribe" for their side. That is their basic team. Of course, they bring in guest Employees to discuss a special topic from time to time ---like benefits issues, computer models of Scheduling, etc.

Our NT uses the same configuration we did when we achieved our industry-leading Contracts. We have our five Flight Attendant Negotiators. We are unique and have different areas of interest and expertise. While we obviously divide our assignments, we always strive to reach consensus.

We are accompanied at the table by our outside legal counsel and strategic advisor, who was the strategic architect of our incredibly successful 2002 and 2008 negotiations. He is a nationally recognized labor lawyer. Our TWU International Representative is available to assist and sit in with us as needed, and provides continual support. We also utilize an outside aviation economist who was trained at the London School of Economics. He has done analyses for more Flight Attendant Contracts than anyone in the country. And, of course, we bring in Flight Attendant Union Leaders from time to time to assist in the negotiations as needed.

There is no mystery here. While this "all Southwest Airlines" team is coming back to the table, we are prepared to meet them with a smart, achievable plan designed to reach another TA: a TA that will be ratified by our Membership.



# Contract Negotiations 101

*The original version of this article, written by Denver-based Flight Attendant and Shop Steward Allyson Parker-Lauck, appeared in the October 2002 and October 2007 editions of Unity magazine. Current Negotiating Team Member Brett Nevarez has updated the article.*

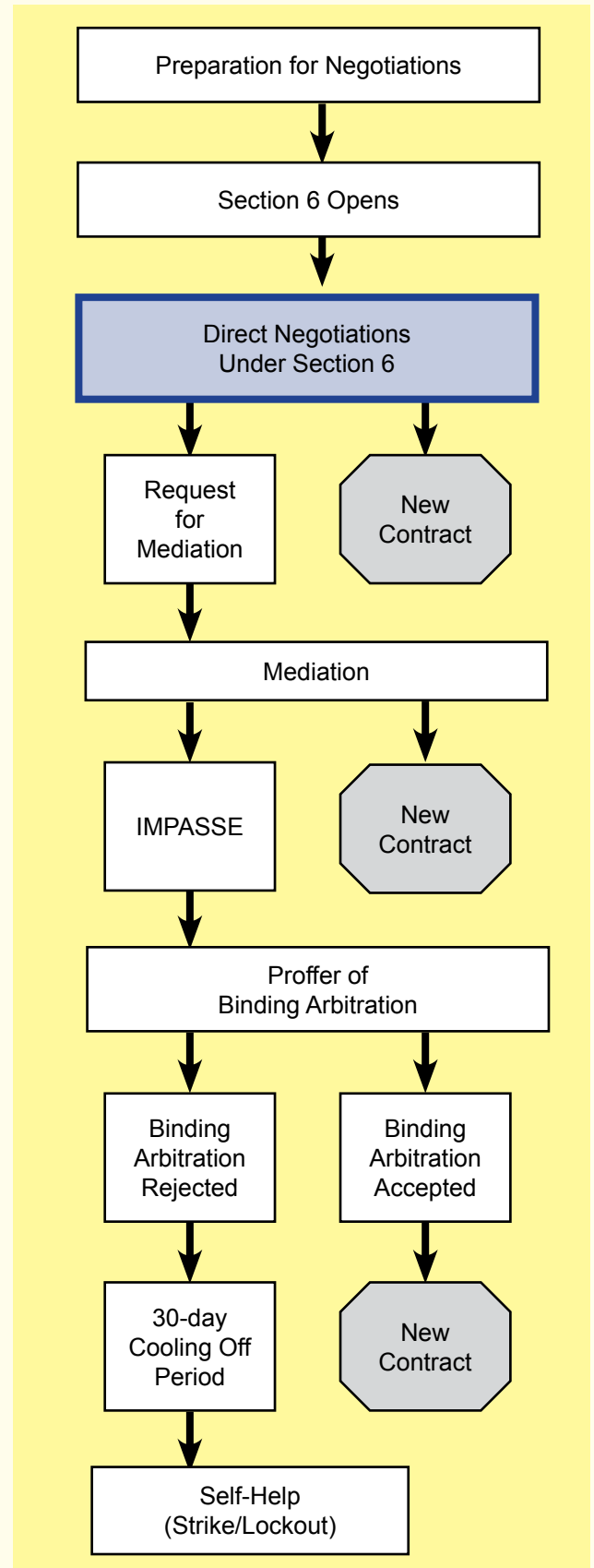
For many of you, this is the first time you have been through Contract Negotiations. You may have heard stories and rumors about the last round of Contract Negotiations. You may have some misconceptions, fears, or uneasiness about what Contract Negotiations are about. Or maybe you've been there, done that, but need a little refresher in the process. Either way, this article is for you.

We first published this article, "Contract Negotiations 101," in our January 2002 issue of UNITY Magazine. We are going to break down the process of Contract Negotiations into some basic terms so that you will know where we are now, where we are going, and how we are going to get there. Additionally, as we progress through the Negotiations process, we will update you on the progress and publish additional educational pieces in our various newsletters. Before we go into the details of the Negotiations process, let us first go over a brief history of the Railway Labor Act. Yeah, we know, this sounds boring. But it's really quite interesting to learn why the Railway Labor Act (RLA) exists, and why it affects us as Flight Attendants.

In 1926, the RLA was passed into law to provide a means of settling Labor disputes in the railroad industry. At the time, there was one looming problem facing the railroad industry: the economic fallout that could occur if the railroads were shut down due to Labor disputes. It was feared that even small Local Unions could interrupt commerce in the event of a work stoppage, which could cause a devastating blow to the economy. On the other hand, Unions feared that legislation preventing them from striking would tear apart their bargaining power.

To create a solution that would be fair to both Management and Labor, the two sides collaborated to create the framework which Congress used as the basis to enact the RLA, which provides a legal means to resolve these disputes: it reduces the threat of interruptions of commerce and operations, while at the same time it protects employees' rights to Unionize, bargain, and grieve Contract violations.

So why are airlines covered by the RAILWAY Labor Act? In the 1930s, the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) successfully lobbied to have the fledgling airline industry included under the rules developed by and for the powerful railroad industry. Interestingly, many leaders in Management feel that the RLA favors Labor, while many Laborists feel that the RLA favors Management. When there are two sides to a story, the truth usually lies somewhere in the middle. So even though we may sometimes complain about certain aspects of the RLA, and while we would always like disputes to go in OUR favor, the RLA is well balanced and represents both sides in a fair manner.





Now that we understand a little more about the RLA, let's talk about how it governs our Contract Negotiations. First, the RLA has some very specific rules as to how negotiations must take place.

**PREPARATION FOR NEGOTIATIONS:** Your Negotiating Team (NT) used every resource available to educate and prepare ourselves for all aspects of the negotiations process and surveying the Membership on all issues and priorities. Preparing for negotiations isn't all about the NT. Our Local's Membership must become prepared, educated, and mobilized as well.

**SECTION 6 OPENERS:** Section 6 Openers is a fancy term for the Union simply sending a letter to Management to let them know that we are ready to bargain. Under the RLA, Flight Attendant Contracts don't "expire," they become "amendable." RLA Contracts remain in effect until they are modified, so that airlines can continue to operate under the "status quo" during the negotiations process. Additionally, the RLA defines the "amendable date" as the date when the provisions of the Contract are subject to change according to the terms of the existing agreement.

Article 34 of our Contract states: *"This Agreement shall become effective June 1, 2008, and shall continue in full force and effect through May 31, 2012, and thereafter such Agreement shall be effective from year to year unless written notice of termination or intended change is given by either party hereto at least sixty (60) days prior to June 1, 2008, or any June 1 thereafter."* We voted to extend our Contract one year as part of Side Letter 7, which made the amendable date May 31, 2013.

Yeah, we know we promised basic terms, so here's the simpler version: By April 2, 2013, your Negotiating Team had to let Southwest Airlines know that our Local wants to negotiate a new Contract.

**DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS:** Within ten days of the Section 6 notice, both parties must agree to meet, and within 30 days of the notice, the first negotiating meeting takes place. We are currently in this part of the process and these meetings take place until a "Tentative Agreement" (TA) is reached. If both parties come to a TA it is then presented to the Executive Board, in accordance with our Local's Bylaws, which requires two-thirds approval (twelve out of seventeen). Once approved, it is then sent to the Membership for a vote.

If the Membership votes for the TA, then they have a Contract. If the Membership votes against the TA, the parties can either go back to the bargaining table, or request intervention from the National Mediation Board (NMB). The NMB's goal is to get an agreement. They have no connection to either party's issues or interests.

If a TA cannot be reached, the parties can request intervention by the NMB.

**MEDIATION:** The NMB may grant or deny mediation based on its opinion of the progress of negotiations. The NMB does not have the power to force either party to compromise its position or to agree to any proposal.

If, after mediation, the parties STILL cannot reach an agreement, the NMB will offer binding arbitration to both parties.

**BINDING ARBITRATION:** Both parties may agree to place the Contract in the hands of a neutral party, or Arbitrator. If both parties agree to this, the fate of the Contract is left completely up to the Arbitrator, who does not have any interest in either party's issues. If either party rejects the offer of arbitration, a "30-Day Cooling Off Period" begins.

**30-DAY COOLING OFF PERIOD:** The 30-Day Cooling Off Period is designed to give both parties a few days to step away from negotiations process and refocus. If the parties agree, they can continue to try to negotiate. But if an agreement is not reached after the 30-Day Cooling Off Period, it is then time for "Self Help."

**SELF HELP:** Self Help is when it starts to get ugly. This is when the Union can declare a strike, or Management can impose work rules or lockout Employees. Additionally, either party may request that the President of the United States create a "Presidential Emergency Board" (PEB). The President also has the power to create a PEB on his/her own initiative without either party's request or consent.

**CONCLUSION:** We will go into more detail on Mediation, Arbitration, and the PEB in future articles, but we hope we were able to explain the basics of the negotiations process in easy terms. Reading the text of the RLA can be confusing and REALLY dry, so we hope that we were able to make it interesting and informative.

We all want to be able to make a decent living and have fair work rules doing a job we love at a Company we LUV. We CAN have it all! Please contact us directly with any questions about the process at [nt@twu556.org](mailto:nt@twu556.org) and continue to stay informed by reading every word of every Union publication that you receive. Knowledge is Power! Don't be left unarmed.





# That Was Then, This Is Now



by Brett Nevarez. Brett a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant. Brett serves as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of TWU Local 556 and is a Member of the Negotiating Team.

I started out helping my Union as a brash naive “outsider” appointed by the Executive Board as a Negotiator in 2001. I gained a great deal of experience over the years. I am now referred to (among other things) as that Union “insider” since being elected by the Membership in 2012. Am I the same guy? Yes, and no. I am still married to the same wonderful woman but we now have an eight-year-old son. I have matured from a “junior” seven-year Flight Attendant based in Phoenix to a “senior” twenty-one-year Flight Attendant based in Las Vegas. During those years, I have transformed from literally living paycheck to paycheck to enjoying a nice standard of living to provide for my family ---directly as a result of my Union’s success and our industry-leading Contract.

Now I am part of the NT that led us to a failed TA. I must now help lead us to a successful negotiation. How? I firmly believe that the experience and lessons I learned during our incredibly successful strategic bargaining campaign from 2002-2004, that resulted in our first industry-leading Contract, will help guide me to overcome the failure of last year’s TA. I helped coordinate our national public fight against Management’s misguided attacks on the workforce. We were unbelievably unified and we had each other’s back. I am once again fully committed to demonstrate our ability to stick together and bring the Contract that we deserve back for your consideration and your approval.

Is Southwest Airlines the same place as when I was hired in 1994? Unfortunately, no. It is still a great place to work and I believe it can remain so, as long as Management remembers that Labor is their business partner and that the Company only succeeds when we all share in the rewards of our record setting profits. Is it all about the money? Of course not. There simply is no possible way to monetize or quantify the flexibility and quality of life afforded by our Contract. It is a delicate balance of both that works best for our diverse Membership, but we have earned the right to improve upon our Contract, both in terms of pay/benefits and quality of work life.

If I am still that person who long ago helped get us an industry-leading Contract in 2004, then I surely can be that experienced Union Leader who can learn from our failed TA and use my skills and lessons to get the Contract right. Times have definitely changed ...but not my passion.

# Treasurer’s Report



by John Parrott

As of Thursday, January 21, there are 13,889 Flight Attendants at Southwest Airlines. Each one of us as individuals has a story, a family, hopes and dreams. We come from not only all over the United States but also from countries all over the world. While our backgrounds vary, by being Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants, we at least share in one thing: Each one of us IS the Union. Our power as a Union comes from us standing together. In these Contract Negotiations, everything from our paycheck to our quality of life is being negotiated on our behalf. While the Negotiating Team has reset and returned to the bargaining table, each of us has an important role to play in the success of these negotiations. As a Member, I ask you to please do the following two things:

### Wear your Union Pin Proudly

– It’s a visual symbol to Southwest Airlines Management and to each other that we stand together. If you don’t have one, please log into the TWU Website and click the “Union Pins” button to request one.



**Get the Facts** – The fact that you are reading this article means you are doing your part to be an informed Member. (THANK YOU!) Please encourage your Co-workers to do the same by coming to the source. If you can make the time, please attend a Union Membership Meeting (they are coming up in March). Also, if you have a question, please reach out. Your elected leaders are a phone call or e-mail away.

Lastly, I want you to know that our Union is financially prepared to continue these Contract Negotiations for as long as it takes. The \$5.00 monthly Assessment Fee has played an important role in this process. This fee will continue to be collected while we remain in negotiations and will cease thirty days after the ratification of our Contract.

In closing, thanks to each of you for being the absolute best safety professionals in the industry!



John Parrott is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant. John serves as the Treasurer of TWU Local 556.



## Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO

**Harry Lombardo**  
International President

**John Samuelson**  
International Executive Vice President

**Alex Garcia**  
International Secretary-Treasurer

**John Bland**  
Administrative Vice President

**Gary E. Maslanka**  
Administrative Vice President

“United Invincible”

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Michael Conigliaro  
Dale Danker  
Sean Doyle  
Jerome Lafragola  
Tom Lenane  
Carl Martin  
Thom McDaniel  
Curtis Tate  
Tony Utano  
James Whalen

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John Chiarello  
LaTonya Crisp-Sauray  
John Feltz  
Horace Marves  
Gary Shults  
Kevin Smith  
Audrey Stone

**Executive Board**

Matthew Ahern  
Bedennia Barnes  
Richard Boehm  
Jon Bradford  
Willie Brown  
Richard Davis  
Derick Echevarria  
Fred Fink  
Todd Gage  
Angel Giboyeaux  
Amy Griffin  
Debra Hagan  
Kevin Harrington  
Maurice Jenkins  
Don May  
Mike Mayes  
John Menshon  
Benyoel Morgan  
Thomas Murray  
J.P. Pataño  
Daniel Rivera  
Richard Rocco  
Dane Stricoff  
Robert Taylor  
Clarence Washington  
Eric Williams

TWU Local 556 Brothers and Sisters:

As many of you know, I’ve placed an extremely high priority on getting out into the field and talking to the members of this great union. Part of that effort involved a union-wide survey of membership, where I asked each of you to share directly with me your goals and priorities, and to tell me exactly what it was you wanted from your International. I’m happy to report that you responded, and we heard you.

You told us that you wanted the hard work and sacrifices you’d made for Southwest Airlines to be recognized. You wanted your International to stand with you and to lend resources to your fight for a contract that gets you the benefits you deserve. I’m here to tell you that I am 100% committed to ensuring that you get that contract, and that we make sure your voices are heard.

Let’s be clear: that process has not always been easy. In the last year, you overwhelmingly voted down a tentative agreement with Southwest Airlines. Your leadership and I heard the message from that vote loud and clear: it was time to check in again, and see what you, the members, really wanted out of your negotiations with the company. So our newly formed International Campaign Unit (ICU) took this on as a key project: working with Local 555 and Local 556’s leadership to discuss key ways we can support your efforts to secure industry-leading contracts for our members at Southwest.

In the last several months, the ICU has begun partnering with you in several ways, including hiring a professional polling firm at the International’s expense to conduct formal research, polling, and strategic focus groups to get a clearer sense of what Local 556’s membership truly wants. These efforts will have critical influence on our tactics moving forward, and will help inform the next steps of our strategic campaign to take on Southwest Airlines.

We all must work together to hold Southwest Airlines accountable to you, the workforce that’s keeping the company’s profits at record highs. And the only way we do that is by harnessing all of this data, momentum, and enthusiasm and using it to speak collectively as one union, whose International always has the backs of its locals.

I hope you’ll continue to remain engaged with this effort, and that you’ll utilize the opportunities your International and local leaders offer you to gather and share information, interact with us, and make your voices are heard. We’re committed to using the best resources at our disposal to help you win this fight, from communications to on-the-ground organizing to one-on-one member conversations. We are here for you every step of the way: united invincible.

In Solidarity,

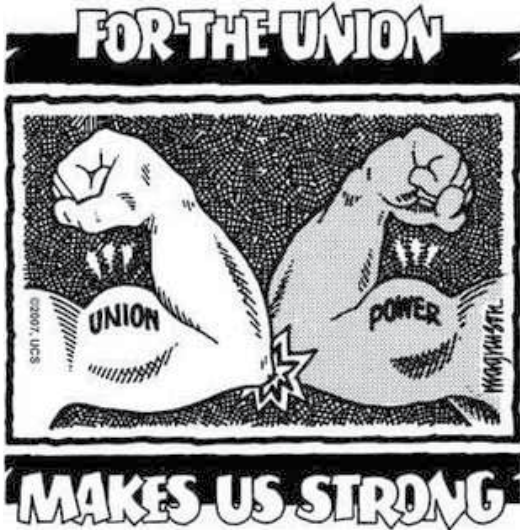
**Harry Lombardo**  
International President

*HL:sg*  
*opeiu-153*



# Importance of MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

by Sam Wilkins



*There is a time to stand up for what you believe.*

*There is a time to commit to your fellow Union Sisters and Brothers that you will not allow division to invade our Union.*

*There is a time to use your voice.*

*There is a time to take responsibility for your part in our Unions' success.*

*There is a time when your Union needs you and that time is NOW.*

**YOUR UNION NEEDS YOU!**

## ***Mission Impossible? or Mission Possible!***

Union POWER is impossible without the full participation of an educated, informed and organized Membership. We cannot make gains at the bargaining table without the involvement of every Member. Yes, that includes YOU. Being an active, involved Member can be as simple as wearing your Union Pin, reading publications and participating in surveys. A few leaders cannot do it alone. It also cannot work if we only do it during Contract Negotiations. We must make it a priority to build sustainable Unity between Contract Negotiations so that we don't find ourselves apathetic or complacent. Disputes arise between Contract Negotiations that require Membership involvement to seek a resolution. It must be the way we function as a Union at all times. The Heart of our Union is YOU.

## ***Key elements to being a mobilized Union:***

1. **Organization** ~ an organized structure that touches every Member. All Members must feel that they are represented and connected to their Union. We cannot become a transactional Union where a Member pays dues and receives services. There has to be a sense of pride belonging to an organization that is in place to advocate and protect its Members' interests.
2. **Education** ~ an understanding of our Company, our industry, our Labor allies and our collective power as a Union. Understanding and being able to apply Contract language to situations is important and knowing your rights is invaluable.
3. **A plan of action** ~ actions or tasks that involve every Member of our Union, ranging from displaying a bag tag to an action toward our Employer to effect change. This cannot just be idle chat; we have to walk the walk not just talk the talk.
4. **Connectivity** ~ we have to always remember the importance of one-on-one communication. The best way to inspire others to get involved or to feel connected is by sharing information.
5. **Respect** ~ we each have a voice and vastly differing opinions. We must remember the golden rule and respect each other even when we disagree.

This Mission of UNION POWER, if you so choose to accept it, is possible! We must recognize the fight ahead of us to remain industry leading and do our part in making sure we are all successful.

If you are interested in getting involved, please email the Mobilization Organizing Committee at [moborg@twu556.org](mailto:moborg@twu556.org).

*Sam Wilkins is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant. Sam serves as a TWU Local 556 Board Member at Large and is the Co-Chairperson of the Mobilization/Organizing Committee.*



# A Brief History of Surveys & Why Every Survey Counts, Every Time

by Bill Holcomb

In January, we finished our second comprehensive survey for the TWU Local 556 Contract and we had a GREAT response, thank you! You may be wondering if what you want is really being heard. With nearly 14,000 Members with 14,000 diverse opinions, we have our work cut out for us. Your Negotiating Team's mission is to derive from this incredibly diverse voice the most effective way to positively impact the lives and careers of the Membership. We have explored several different paths to achieve this goal over the years, but in every case, a survey was the driving force. Let's take a quick walk down history lane:

An annual General Membership Survey is required in our Bylaws. Though helpful, it doesn't get into contractual specifics. When we first began surveying our Membership in the late seventies, we were less than five hundred Flight Attendants, largely young professional women who were within recent memory of fighting their way into a uniform without hot pants and still a few years from banning smoking on board. The first -300 was still in the planning stages and western expansion had barely begun. Other than more aircraft and relatively predictable growth over the next twenty years, nothing much changed. 9/11 brought extensive revisions due to security and safety on board and on the ramp. Our ground times began to lengthen with more regulation and safety standards, yet we still remained a stable profitable domestic carrier. Our historic surveys were reflected by improvements in pay, RIG improvements and gains in flexibilities due largely to computerization.

In each case, there were mutual Union and Company gains. The ability to trade within three legs swapped for trading within 6.5 TFP. Entire pairing VJA was maintained while move up language for premium pay was not achieved. The PIN was gained - a Personal Day off was not. B and C pay scales introduced. A scale that grew to seventeen years then reduced to thirteen. The list is long. These gains were historic and successful because greater survey participation provided accurate Membership needs.

Today, over 45% of us are at the top of the pay scale, a record. We have gone from an airline where very few planes left before seven in the morning and even fewer were flying after ten at night to one that normally has planes arriving after two a.m. and departing at three thirty in the morning. We have airplanes operating nearly 24-hours a day. This has had impacts on everything from Ready Reserve to an increase in plane swaps and ground time. We are flying to International destinations with larger planes and longer legs than ever dreamed of. We will be taking delivery of a completely new 737 MAX that will take us even farther. Longer flights, International layovers and destinations, transcontinental service with big city airports, long van rides and Customs lines. These can cut into rest periods. Some of us want to fly the most possible, "I'm here, use me." Others care more about rest and recuperation after a long day. Where is that happy medium and how do we achieve it?

We are not alone in this industry. Though our Culture and work practices are distinct from other carriers, we are in the airline industry. We have studied

the comparative Contract language of our competitors to vastly improve our work rules and pay. However, your voice remains the driving force of our proposals. Don't let a snapshot of the needs and ideas of twenty percent of us be your voice.

Our campaign will be different. You are encouraged to speak your ideas, suggestions and support on line, in galleys and person to person. After the failed TA last summer, we heard repeatedly from Members that they felt the process had bypassed them since the original 2013 Negotiations Survey. We are determined to get this right and to bring your voice to the bargaining table through the survey results at the right time, under the right circumstances.

In the meantime, if you have ideas about our Contract and what our priorities should be, please submit feedback to your Negotiating Team directly via the "Negotiations Priorities" tab, which remains open on the main page of the TWU Local 556 Website (<https://twu556.org/>).

- What do you see as the most important issues we now face?
- Where in our Contract is the most effective place to deal with these issues?
- How do you want to take advantage of the positive and lessen the negative impact of these issues?

Take your surveys. Read your emails. Discuss the facts. Tell us your stories. We look forward to hearing from you.

***We are going forward. Together. With a diverse and powerful voice.***

*Bill Holcomb is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and a Member of the TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team.*



Cesar Chavez once said, "The people united will never be defeated." As our Membership moves forward to defend and improve our industry-leading pay and work rules we must not forget this important truth. When we are a divided Workgroup we are weak. When we are an active, united Workgroup we are strong. In the coming months, let's put our differing opinions aside, support each other and our Union, to get the Contract we know we deserve. Our best strength is our solidarity!

Jenette Lanning - Oakland

Infighting does nothing but benefit Management. We must ban together as one, put aside our differences, and use all of our collective strength to push towards one singular cause that is long over due; a respectable Contract worthy of our hard working Flight Attendants. Only together will we succeed.

Alison Carver - Orlando

We all need to be a part of the process in reaching another Tentative Agreement. This isn't about sitting on the jumpseat or behind a computer and complaining. It's about staying informed, attending meetings, voting, and letting the Negotiating Team know what you want. Let your voice be heard in a positive way. This is too important to let our differences divide us.

Tina Skura - Las Vegas

I have worked under many different Executive Boards/ NT teams, but at the end of the day what matters is that WE the MEMBERSHIP have to stand strong! The amount of Flight Attendants's who voted showed the Company we can be unified. I don't have to like who is in office but I have to stand strong with the Membership of TWU Local 556.

Gisela Alvarez - Orlando

We have faced adversity in our Union's history but I believe that if we stand together we will see success. We are stronger together.

Cyndi Bickel - Phoenix

We all may have different opinions about our Negotiating Team but we all should have one common goal to get the best Contract. To accomplish that goal it will take teamwork. We need to voice our ideas in a constructive and respectful manner. It's also important to show Management that we are a strong Membership and Union.

Melissa Grube - Baltimore

Unity among our Workgroup is paramount—especially at a this crucial point in the negotiating process. Collective Bargaining is about give and take. What are YOU willing to do to help the process? The Union isn't sitting at the negotiating table. We ARE the Union. Our Union. And we are the strongest when we are United.

Eric McCulley - Atlanta

It is very important for Flight Attendants to command our value at the negotiating table. For me personally, the TA did not seem to be a good "value", especially in light of the enormous success that Southwest Airlines has experienced in the last few years. It is more important now than ever before to present a united front to the Company, regardless of our differences, in order to obtain a Contract that is fair and equitable at every stage of our Members' career.

Paula Taub - Denver

Progress is not possible when clear thinking is muddled with emotions or confused by false information. Unity comes when you commit yourself conscientiously, to fleshing out the facts.

Stacey Labauve - Houston

**"Years ago, the business school professors posed it as a conundrum. They would ask, 'Who comes first? Your Employees, your Shareholders, or your Customers?' It was not a conundrum. Your Employees come first. And if you treat your Employees right, your Customers come next. Your Shareholders come last. It's not what makes your Shareholders happy. It's what makes your Employees and the rest follow."**

If it's an amazing job it won't be easy. If it's an easy job it won't be amazing. Stay the course because anything worth having is worth working really hard to get. There will be valleys and some peaks but to know the outcome you must stay until the end.

Stacey Wiley - Dallas

Going forward in the Negotiations, our Flight Attendants have a choice to make. We can band together in a show of strength and solidarity by giving our support to our Negotiating Team, thereby showing the Company that we are one entity bound by a common cause, or we can continue to exhibit divisive behavior, demonstrating that we are a fractured workgroup, interested only in our own, self-serving interests. We are a group of Flight Attendants with many different backgrounds and opinions, but we are also a team of professionals united by respect and our right to a fair Contract. Let's do this!

Mark Hoewisch - Chicago

An industry-leading Contract is a top priority for me, as ALL of my immediate family are Flight Attendants for Southwest Airlines. It is my belief that we now have a solid Negotiating Team in place, and this team has the ability to negotiate a Tentative Agreement that will benefit our Workgroup. But as a Workgroup we must be a unified one to take a stand ensuring that we solidify another industry-leading Contract.

Xander Ricker - Denver

"The Labor Movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress" is a quote by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that forever reminds us why we are Union, and why we organize. It is our families and our own lives that are affected positively because of our solidarity!

Mario-Galileo Cendejas - Oakland

Tools used to pose  
could say, 'Well,  
employees, your  
members?' But it's  
employees come first.  
employees right, guess  
back, and that  
happy. Start with  
tools from that."

**Herb Kelleher**

I didn't view the votes on the 1<sup>st</sup> TA as a failure. I personally looked at the voter turnout as progress. We had more Members show up to vote than ever before. As we move forward I am confident that we can work together, be educated and stay involved for our future TA.

Shelby Pierce -Denver

As Flight Attendants, we all have more things in common than differences. By being involved in our Contract negotiation process, we will accomplish great things we all desire, and have in common."

David Kirtley - Houston

Stay engaged. Stay informed. Stay united. Together we will get an industry-leading Contract.

Makeesha Collins - Orlando

Our challenges may seem daunting, however with this round of negotiations, we have the opportunity to highlight that quality Employees like ourselves bring continuous profits, therefore we deserve a quality Contract. Unity reminds us that what binds us together is more important than what separates us.

Steve Johnson - Oakland

If our Negotiating Team is to make any real progress at the bargaining table, they need the strength of the Membership behind them. Please join me in supporting them by wearing your Union pins and staying informed on ways you can get involved. Please attend the upcoming Membership Meetings in March. We have seen success when we band together. Our strength and power at the table comes from being united.

Valerie Boy - Houston

I take this real personal because this is my chosen career, it's how I make my living and its in danger not just from Southwest Airlines but labor itself is fighting to survive. This is our opportunity to have a say over our livelihood and to speak with one clear voice. It's only when our voices are united that we become too loud to be ignored.

Damion West - Baltimore

This past July we, the Members of TWU Local 556, voted in record numbers and sent a very clear message to the NT and Southwest Airlines. We proved ourselves to have power. To show tenacity. Mostly, that we possess the resolve to wait and go back and fight for something better. We deserve it. Whether you voted yes or you voted no, whether you are angry or disappointed, hesitant or fearful, it's time to harness all of that. Now is the time to use that power. A large no vote was a gift. A powerful tool that can now be used for bargaining. However, it is only when we are able to stand in Unity, with our fellow Crew Members, our fellow Membership, our fellow Union Leadership, that will make this gift successful. We are all TWU Local 556 and the time to stand together is now.

Zach Berry - Chicago

# Put Up or Shut Up

by Brett Nevarez

*This article originally appeared in the January 2007 Unity Magazine. It details the timeline and fights our Union faced while negotiating Contract 2002.*

More than 20% of our Membership was hired after our current Contract was ratified in July, 2004. The theme this quarter is “Negotiations,” and since I was involved in our 2002 Negotiations, I feel this would be a good time to tell the story for those of you who weren’t here. Contract 2002 taught me to “Put Up or Shut Up” – I talked a lot of smack before actually getting involved, but I realized it was time to stop blaming others for what I considered to be a bad Contract, and take part in molding my own future. We don’t know what will happen this time around, but we learned a lot during those negotiations, and I’d like you all to see how we arrived at the Contract we now have. For those of you who were here at that time and witnessed it, take a walk with me down memory lane.

Contract 2002 was many years in the making. After three consecutive “bad” Contracts (1986, 1991 and 1996), many Flight Attendants were sick and tired of being taken for granted by Southwest Airlines Management. While most of our work rules were good, our wages were far below industry standard – even compared to many concessionary Contracts so prevalent in our industry. No doubt, Southwest Airlines is a great Company, but remember that they don’t “give” us raises, improved work rules, etc. Your Union negotiates these items on your behalf. The work rules and wages you receive today were the result of some long hard battles.

## **The story begins...**

In April 2001, the TWU Local 556 Executive Board appointed Denny Sebesta and Allyson Parker-Lauck to join Thom McDaniel on the Negotiating Team. The three attended Negotiations training and assembled and met with a new Contract Committee, a group of Volunteer Flight Attendants who helped research other airline Contracts and brought new ideas to the Team. Thom, Denny, and Allyson then prepared the first Contract 2002 Membership Survey. In August 2001, Kevin Onstead and Cindy Ritner were elected to join the Team. The fully assembled Negotiating Team (NT) began preparing for the June 1, 2002 amendable date by further researching past TWU Local 556 Contracts, studying other Union Contracts, and surveying the Local’s Membership.

I was working closely with Chicago-based Flight Attendant James Gordon on Membership Mobilization through the Precinct Captain Program. James came up with a brilliant program that centered on the idea of one-on-one, face-to-face, Member-to-Member communication. James knew early on that the only way to achieve the great gains that we needed was through an informed and empowered Membership. Who better to explain and answer questions about the negotiations process than another Flight Attendant who you personally know, trust, and have flown with in the past? James asked me to join him as a Senior Precinct Captain to help further develop and lead the program.

Things were starting to come together, the Team was in place working hard, and I was doing some of my own homework on the side. I had been closely following the Association of Professional Flight Attendants’ (APFA) Contract battle over at American Airlines, and I

was impressed with their organization and their public campaign. I did a little research, and learned that APFA had been working with Mark Richard, a Labor Attorney from Florida whose roots in the Labor movement go back to the days when he worked alongside Cesar Chavez. Mark’s specialty was strategy, something I felt our Union could use. So I contacted Mark, asked him to talk to Thom McDaniel, and soon thereafter, the NT met with him and learned about Strategic Bargaining. Strategic Bargaining basically means that the battle isn’t won at the bargaining table; it’s won by the Membership. This was a way to incorporate the creativity of our Workgroup into a grassroots organizing tool as the basis of what became our Membership-driven Contract Negotiations. This method went hand-in-hand with James Gordon’s Precinct Captain Program, so we were already on the right track even though we didn’t know it. The NT was so impressed with the idea of Strategic Bargaining that they asked Mark to go through the same exercise with the Executive Board (EB).

Mark met jointly with the EB, NT, James, and myself September 10-12, 2001. Our meeting September 10 went great, progress was being made and a Strategic Plan was beginning to unfold. Unfortunately, all of our worlds turned upside-down the following day. On the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, we were to meet at 0900 Central Time to continue our Strategic Plan, but as many of us were drinking our first cup of coffee or jumping in the shower, tragedy struck our Nation. We met at 0900, and everyone agreed that we needed to get back to the Union Office and be there for our Members. The Staff in the Union Office was working hard to answer all of the calls that came in,



but they needed help. Many of the Officers and Staff Members stayed at the Union Office all night to continue to help those who were stranded. On Wednesday, the call volume subsided some, so we continued our meeting with Mark, and finished developing our Strategic plan. But we were all feeling uncertain since we didn't know where the previous day's tragedy would take our country, our industry, and even our airline.

In the following weeks, the NT prepared a new, more scientific Membership survey, and selected Members through their Union involvement and participation in the PC program to become the "Coordinating Council." The Council directed the campaign and came up with ideas for activities, events, and other things such as postcards, stickers, flyers, buttons, t-shirts, etc. Participation in these activities and statements of support from our Members was one of the keys to our success.

In November 2001, Allyson Parker-Lauck resigned from the Negotiating Team, so the Executive Board interviewed candidates to fill her vacancy. They appointed me to fill her shoes, and Allyson took on a role on the Coordinating Council as "Communications Coordinator." "The Contract Connection" newsletter was born, and soon after, UNITY Magazine was overhauled. It became a regular quarterly publication, and UNITY Update was created to continue the flow of information between UNITY Magazine issues. It was evident that communicating with the Membership was the most important component of Contract 2002. In addition to our commitment to increase the information flow through our magazine and newsletters, we also created a website and used broadcast phone calls as a way to get vital information out immediately.

January 2002 saw a month of "UNITY DAYS" held in the Flight Attendant lounges across the system. Flight Attendants were given Valentine's Day cards addressed to Jim Parker (former Southwest Airlines CEO) and Colleen



*TWU Local 556 Members shown picketing for a fair Contract.*

that said, "Be My Valentine at Contract Time." More than 3,000 cards were signed and presented to Jim and Colleen on Valentine's Day. Most Flight Attendants signed only their names, many wished Jim and Colleen well, and some went into detail about what they would like to see negotiated into our upcoming Contract. This was our Union's first internal demonstration, and while light hearted, it made a big statement.

January 2002 also marked the release of the first issue of the revamped UNITY Magazine. It included educational pieces on the Railway Labor Act, updates on the current issues facing our Union and Negotiations, and some humorous pieces as well. In this issue of UNITY, you'll see the updated article "Contract Negotiations 101" that was printed in that January 2002 issue.

On May 23, 2002, the Company and Union exchanged their opening statements. The Union's opening statement was clear that nothing less than an industry-leading Contract in compen-

sation and work rules would be accepted – "Industry Best for the Industry's Best," we said. The NT also made it clear that the Local 556 Membership would be kept informed on the process and that their participation would be vital to achieving the Contract we deserved. It was also made clear that the Union expected Southwest Management to respect the legal right for workers to bargain for higher wages and improved working conditions. In other words, we wouldn't accept Union Busting, and would call them out on it.

After the May 23 meeting, new bargaining dates were set and the ball started rolling. "The Contract Connection" newsletter informed Members each month of the progress that was being made (and sometimes the lack of progress). It answered common questions, responded to rumors, and provided educational pieces for an informed Membership.

By February 2003, almost half of the Articles in the Contract had been opened, discussed, and tentatively agreed to by both parties. But many of the difficult Articles were still open with little resolution in sight. February also marked the Union's first major public demonstration. On Valentine's Day at Love Field, Flight Attendants leafleted Love Field Passengers to ask them for their support during our Negotiations. The demonstration had a very light-hearted feel to it with a "Love Will Keep Us Together" theme. Flight Attendants sang "Love Will Keep Us Together" with a karaoke machine in the terminal entrance, and carried "Love Will Keep Us Together" signs at the airport entrance at Mockingbird Lane and Cedar Springs Boulevard. Other signs read "Discount Fares, not Discounted Employees," and "Southwest Keep that Luvin' Feeling." Our demonstration created a few waves, but the high Member participation showed that we were serious about negotiating our new Contract.

In March 2003, more demonstrations were held. Over the previous weeks, the Union NT and the Southwest Airlines Negotiating Team had been

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**The Union expected Southwest Management to respect the legal right for workers to bargain for higher wages and improved working conditions.**

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discussing Hours of Service, and Management's Team was holding firm on extending our Duty Day to thirteen hours. In response, the NT conducted public demonstrations in BWI, MDW, and OAK. The theme to the public demonstrations was "It's no picnic in these skies without LUV". A card was handed to our Customers to let them know that we currently work ten and one half hours with no scheduled breaks, and Management wanted to increase that. Internally, cards that said, "Management thinks you want a 13-hour Duty Day. Tell them what you think," were distributed and Flight Attendants across the system did just that, and did Management ever get an ear full. Shortly thereafter, Management

took the thirteen-hour Duty Day off the table.

On May 14, 2003, the NT held a different kind of demonstration. We continued our strategic public message at the Southwest Airlines Annual

Shareholders meeting held in Dallas at Southwest Airlines Headquarters. The Coordinating Council, along with Executive Board Members, Precinct Captains, and fellow Flight Attendants attended the meeting to remind Management that Flight Attendants are also shareholders. As part of our Strategic Campaign, a double-sided mobile billboard sign was created that said, "Spread the Luv" and "Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants say LUV Will Keep Us Together". This mobile billboard was placed in clear view for all people driving into or in front of Southwest Headquarters for the Shareholders meeting. In conjunction with the billboard, Flight Attendants passed out stickers at the event to shareholders that read, "Spread the Luv".

By this point, the NT and Southwest's Negotiating Committee had agreed to most non-economic issues. So in June 2003, the NT began what most felt was

the most critical stage of Negotiations and began discussions on Compensation and other Economic issues. The Union and Company proposals were VERY far apart, and it was obvious that a resolution would be a long way off.

In July 2003, demonstrations in Hartford, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles took place with the theme "It's About Time". This theme hit on multiple aspects of our Negotiations. First, the obvious – we had been at the table for more than a year, and still weren't even close on economic issues. Second, it made a statement that our time was valuable. It's about TIME. These demonstrations were very well attended and served as the precursor to perhaps our most controversial set of demonstrations – the "Summer of Tough Love" Tour held in August 2003. Demonstrations were held across the country in nine different cities: Manchester, Providence, Islip, San Antonio, Austin, Dallas, San Diego, Ontario, and Burbank. These demonstrations had a 1969 Woodstock feel to them, but with a twist... the dove on the Woodstock poster wasn't wearing an eye patch. Ours was. It was time to stop being nice and to start getting serious.

Back to the Negotiating Table... in late June 2003, the Union NT presented the Company with our initial Compensation proposal. During the month of July 2003, the Union and Management went back and forth with several counter proposals. Management presented the NT with what they called their "best" offer and refused to schedule any further bargaining sessions. Jim Parker insisted that the offer was a good one and that the Union NT should send it out to the Membership for a vote. What Parker didn't understand is that we knew that this was an old tactic that was an effort to wear down the Membership. They knew a vote would take time, and they also thought that the results from a vote would tell them what percentage of the Membership to cater to in order to get the lowest cost deal if it failed.

Evidently, Parker got the message, and on September 10, 2003, he contacted the National Mediation Board (NMB) and asked for them to intervene on our Negotiations. I'm already WAY over my word count at this point, so rather than

explain the National Mediation Board's role in Contract Negotiations, please read the "Contract Negotiations 101" article in this issue which explains it well. But, in a nutshell, Under the Railway Labor Act, the NMB is responsible for providing mediation services to help the parties reach a settlement should the parties fail to reach an agreement during direct negotiations.

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## Nobody wanted to go on strike, but the Membership was willing to do whatever it took to secure our futures.

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Once we were in mediation, all bargaining sessions were conducted with the NMB, and Negotiations resumed in November. Little progress was made during this period of time and Membership activities and demonstrations continued. Since Southwest is the official airline of the NFL, demonstrations were held at NFL football games across the country, and our Union gained the support of thousands of rowdy fans.

In addition, we began preparing Members for the worst. Negotiations were going nowhere under the NMB, and under the Railway Labor act, once impasse is declared by the NMB, the Union goes into a cooling off period, followed by a possible strike if the U.S. President doesn't intervene. Flight Attendants were starting to become concerned about the outcome of these Negotiations. Nobody wanted to go on strike, but the Membership was willing to do whatever it took to secure our futures. We believe Southwest Management didn't think our Members would authorize a strike, but we had the survey results, and knew that the VAST majority of our Local's Membership was ready to take that step if it became necessary.

On January 13, 2004, the EB and NT called an emergency meeting of all Precinct Captains. It was time to start getting ready for the worst since Negotiations had all but come to a halt. It was time to discuss the next step. TWU





Your Contract 2002 Negotiating Team with Herb at the Contract Signing held in August, 2004. Front row, L to R: Brett Nevarez, Denny Sebesta, Thom McDaniel, Cindy Ritner, and Kevin Onstead. Back row, L to R: Mark Richard, Herb Kelleher, Jim Little, Garry Drummond, and Dan Akins.

International Vice President Garry Drummond presented the group a letter from then TWU International President Sonny Hall saying TWU would do “whatever it takes” to support our Local. TWU Local 555 pledged their support as well. After a day of discussion and planning, the group was ready to go to battle.

In February 2004, the Mediator called a recess in bargaining sessions. While impasse was not declared, we were in limbo as no further bargaining dates were set. Jim Parker began writing letters directly to Members trying to persuade them that his offer was a good one and that the Union didn’t have their best interest in mind. He also held an emergency meeting of all Inflight Supervisors revealing portions of the Company’s proposal, as well as misinformation regarding strikes and insurance benefits. Supervisors began holding extra “file reviews” with Flight Attendants, and Members of the Southwest Airlines Management Negotiating Committee were attending Recurrent Training Classes to urge Flight Attendants to demand a vote on Mr. Parker’s proposal. Our response to that was that Parker’s proposal was just that, a proposal. We had a proposal as well. We said that we would bring his proposal to a vote as long as it was multiple choice – ours or theirs, may the best man win. The Membership stood strong and very,

very few fell for the old tactic.

It was again time to hit the streets. On February 13, 2004, new sets of demonstrations were held in each domicile with the theme, “An Early Valentine for a Late Contract.” Flight Attendants carried signs that said, “Has the love airline lost its heart? They’re breaking ours.”

In March and April 2004, Flight Attendants in mass numbers attended the Message to the Field events with red t-shirts that said, “My Team Speaks for Me!” These Flight Attendants didn’t make a scene, were respectful and remained silent during the speeches. While most Southwest Employees were respectful of our plight, in some cities the Flight Attendants who attended these events were heckled and booed.

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## Herb and Colleen stepped in and took over the Company’s side of Negotiations at that point.

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May 2004 marked the opening of Southwest’s newest city at that time, Philadelphia. Philly is a Union town through and through, and we knew we would get support there. The City of Brotherly Love didn’t let us down. Beginning in March 2004, Susan Kern and I went to Philadelphia to talk to other Unions and ask them for their support. Unions all over the city supported us in our plight, and Congressman Bob Brady stepped up to the plate for us as well. He wrote a letter to Jim Parker expressing that he takes the treatment of our workforce very seriously and that the people of Philadelphia will be watching Southwest’s treatment of its Employees for indications of corporate respect for their local culture. Congressman Brady called upon Southwest Airlines to return to the bargaining table, negotiate in good faith, and agree to a fair Contract.

It’s my belief that Philly was the final straw for Southwest Management. On

April 19, 2004, Jim Parker announced at the Dallas Message to the Field that he would be stepping aside as the Chief Negotiator for the Company with regard to the Flight Attendant Contract. Herb and Colleen stepped in and took over the Company’s side of Negotiations at that point, and both sides met for the first time on April 22.

Less than two months later, we had a deal, and the Union and Company came to a “Tentative Agreement” (TA) that would be presented to the TWU Local 556 Executive Board. The Executive Board voted to take the TA to the Membership for a vote. On July 30, 2004, the votes were counted and by approximately 85% approval, the 2002 Contract was ratified. Within a few months of the ratification, Jim Parker resigned from the Company.

None of this would have been possible without the support of Sonny Hall, Jim Little and Garry Drummond of TWU International, those who served on our Executive Board, Negotiating Team, Coordinating Council, and Precinct Captain Program, but most importantly, it wouldn’t have been possible without a STRONG, INFORMED, and UNITED Membership. When we stand up for ourselves and beside each other, we’re invincible. I’m hoping that this time isn’t as long and difficult, but there’s no way to know what will happen in the future. When we started preparing back in mid-2001, we didn’t know that the tragedies of September 11, 2001 would happen. We didn’t know there would be a war in Afghanistan and Iraq. We didn’t know the toll it would take on our industry. But we had to be ready for the unexpected. We had to stand together. The Membership was ready and committed to “Put Up or Shut Up”, and this is why we were successful.



Brett Nevarez is a Las Vegas Flight Attendant. Brett serves as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of TWU Local 556 and is a Member of the Negotiating Team.

# Domicile Check-in

## Atlanta Base News



Pamila Forte  
Atlanta Domicile Executive  
Board Member  
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214-640-4320

I want to start by thanking all Atlanta Flight Attendants for all you do, and a job well done! I appreciate you all and thank you for your continued support.

We have a long difficult battle ahead. I know our Members are frustrated, but we must channel our frustration in a positive way to build strength within our Union. It is imperative that we stay positive and support our Negotiating Team. I believe it's time to stop the infighting and come together. Right now our Union is divided and we must overcome the past and strive to make our future better, and become the team we need to be. Although Atlanta is new to TWU Local 556 Contract Negotiations, we are no strangers to organizing, mobilizing, and Unity. In my past experience with Contract Negotiations, we created an environment of mutual commitment to maximize our strengths, and rally together for the good of the Membership. We don't have to all agree, but we need to stand together.

I'm very excited about the additions of Chicago-based Don Shipman and Atlanta-based Trish Krider to our Negotiating Team. Both Don and Trish bring experience, passion, and a wealth of information to the table. The key to success is Membership participation and staying informed. Make sure you're receiving accurate information. Try to attend the Membership Meetings, ask questions, and visit our Union Website as often as possible. If you can't attend a meeting, contact an Atlanta Shop Steward or myself. I personally have learned a lot in the past year, and appreciate those of you that have come to me with the tough questions. It has helped me grow as a Leader and I will continue to be committed to the Atlanta Base and communicate your concerns to the Negotiating Team. If you have questions or ideas, that will assist our Negotiating Team in their fight to secure a Contract, please contact them via email at [nt@twu556.org](mailto:nt@twu556.org). You can also contact me at [pforte@twu556.org](mailto:pforte@twu556.org).

"Action is the foundational key to all success" The time is now.

## Baltimore



Stacey Vavakas  
Baltimore Domicile Executive  
Board Member  
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This edition will have a different outlook focused on Negotiations. I am going to speak off the cuff and from the heart. This is a new year full of possibilities, new resolutions and a fresh start at the table for our Negotiators. We have fresh faces creating a new team, new energy and a new vibe on our Negotiating Team with a refined perspective. This revitalized team as a whole will be working together with the help of the entire Membership.

We have the new team in place. Now we need the Membership to come together and stop the infighting. I understand that some of you may not want to hear that, but the truth is this is OUR Contract and without you we will fail. The Membership rallied together with an outstanding voter turnout. Please take that energy moving forward in a positive way. I am not saying you have to agree with the Union on everything. It is healthy to disagree and share ideas and opinions in a productive manner. In the eyes of Management, we are not unified; we are dysfunctional and ready to self-destruct. Let's change our focus and redirect our energy into achieving the Contract we deserve. This Membership is filled with the best and brightest of folks that bring all kinds of ideas, energy, and the heart to move us forward.

I encourage everyone to share your ideas, questions, and concerns with the Negotiating Team at [NT@twu556.org](mailto:NT@twu556.org) or email me personally at [svavakas@twu556.org](mailto:svavakas@twu556.org). I promise to bring your suggestions and ideas directly to the Executive Board and Negotiating Team. I took an oath to represent the Baltimore Membership to the best of my ability. I have done a lot of learning and growing not only as a Union Representative but also as a Flight Attendant. I don't know what the future holds for all of us but let's move forward together, unified, united, and 14,000 strong. I'm honored to represent the Baltimore Base with the best Flight Attendants in the system.

## Chicago



Donna Keith  
Chicago Domicile Executive  
Board Member  
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Happy New Year everyone! It is hard to believe another year has flown by, but here we are in the first month of 2016 with all the weather delays and challenges that accompany January in Chicago.

Parking in Chicago has become a bit challenging over the last few months. Lately I have had the opportunity to speak with many of you who park in the offsite parking lots and the recurring theme is the difficulty of renewing parking badges. Please know that I have been in contact with our local Leadership and hopefully, we will be able to get this process streamlined and take some of the pain out of what should be a simple procedure. What I have been told is that apparently because a badge is needed for access to the parking area, there is a more intensified process that takes place. Currently I am working to find out exactly what that process is and, how we can prevent Flight Attendants from having to make several trips back and forth from the Airport to the Chicago Parking Authority and the People Department for fingerprinting if needed.

During the conversations I have had with some of you, it has come to light that the whole process beginning to end has unfortunately taken several Flight Attendants a month or longer to get their parking badge renewed. This is an extreme inconvenience and it can be costly to park in the general lot. Take a look at your badge and make sure you do not let it expire because if it does, the approval process has to start from scratch as you are then re-applying and not renewing the badge. I know – all this just to park your car so you can come to work.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for opening your hearts and showing your generosity when I put out the call for Toys for Tots. Each year I am overwhelmed and humbled and this year was no different as I loaded up box after box of toys donated by the Chicago Inflight family. Your generosity impacted many young lives this Holiday. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

There are three important resources available to all of you: CISM, FADAP, and Professional Standards. The Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM) consists of a group of Flight Attendant peers who are there to help you through difficult times, no matter if it is a work related situation or not. CISM (800) 408-3220. The Flight Attendant Drug and Alcohol Program (FADAP) is also a peer based team ready to

help if you or someone you know needs to reach out to them. FADAP (855) 333-2327. The last group of peers I would like to remind you of is the Professional Standards Team who is a phone call away if you have an issue with a Crew Member that needs an objective voice to help mediate. As we all know there are many different personalities we work with which can be a challenge. So please, if you can't talk it out - before you write it up call Professional Standards (888) 322-3735.

Before I sign off, I would like to tell you all again how much I admire and respect each of you for what you do each and every day. Over and over again you all prove you are the best Flight Attendants in the industry.

Take care and fly safely.

## Dallas



Brian "BR" Ricks  
Dallas Domicile Executive Board  
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One of the first principles of Contract Negotiations is don't remind them of what you did in the past - tell them what you're going to do in the future. The history of our Flight Attendants at Southwest Airlines proudly speaks for itself. Let's discuss the future, what we are willing to do, and what we are not.

Our Company has carefully positioned itself to begin phenomenal international growth. There are Flight Attendants reading this who could be working their final retirement flights, after long and rewarding careers, to cities like London and Buenos Aires on Southwest airplanes. The days of us being a small airline only bouncing around the dusty towns of Texas are over. Years of careful planning, including updating our reservations system and growing our fleet with ultra-efficient 737 MAX aircraft, are all coming together. The curtain is about to go up and everybody is holding their breath.

There's one thing left to do. We have to negotiate and agree upon our next Contract with Management to take us into this future. As Flight Attendants, we have worked hard to get to this point and are ready for this exciting future. We are prepared to do our part to take Southwest Airlines global and make it the most loved, flown, and profitable airline the world has ever known. From Anchorage to the Andes, we are ready to provide safe, reliable, and Positively Outrageous Service to the entire Western Hemisphere and beyond.

Management sometimes likes to point out that we are not what we used to be, and that we've become soft and complacent. Like an ill-tempered coach, telling an aging former-

championship boxer that his glory days have come and gone. For the last 40+ years, the Flight Attendants of Southwest Airlines have shed blood, sweat, and tears to keep this airline flying high. Without question, we've done our part to battle our competition and will continue to do what it takes.

Trust me, our Flight Attendants have plenty of fight left inside and we're ready to make Southwest Airlines a global competitor.

But be warned, there is something we are not willing to do. We will not accept a subpar Contract to the detriment of our Membership who is the face, heart, and soul of Southwest Airlines. We will not entertain the idea that the only way to guarantee the success of our Company is at the expense of our Members. It is possible to justly compensate and reward our dedicated and hard-working Flight Attendants and still be a competitive and successful airline. One does not exclude the other.

Management has to stop comparing us to the other airlines. Stop drowning us in efficiency metrics and comparison surveys. We are different. We helped re-write the rules about how America flies. We're proud of that and look forward to spreading LUV across the globe.

Take care of us, so that we can take care of our Customers. A wise man once said that.

Every day that goes by without a Contract puts more money in the Company's pocket and keeps us from moving into the future. As I sit around the Executive Board, I am humbled that even with so many voices and opinions everyone is willing and dedicated to taking up the challenge of our future. Let's be very clear with Management, our Membership is unified and we are willing to do our part to ensure the success of the Company far into the future. This Contract is about us – and our future. Our Members are ready to move forward, ready to ratify a quality Contract, and ready to embrace this exciting future. Is Management?

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## Denver



Jessica Parker  
Denver Domicile Executive Board Member  
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As a brand new Domicile Executive Board Member taking office just this past May, I'll admit I probably wasn't fully prepared for the roll out of what would end up being a failed Tentative Agreement (TA) only two months after taking office. I was a no vote on the Executive Board to present the TA to the Membership, and personally

voted no on the TA as a Flight Attendant. As an Executive Board Member I felt there were too many shortcomings to agree to send the TA out for a vote, and as a Flight Attendant it was not an agreement I wanted to work under for the next four or more years.

All that said, I could spend all of my time dwelling on the negativity and feelings of disappointment in what the Membership was presented, OR I can try to help support my Negotiating Team to bring us a new TA that's worthy of a yes vote. I have chosen to do the latter. This is not about individuals and whether or not you like someone personally, this is about supporting the Negotiating process and doing our part to ensure our workgroup's success.

I can guarantee you that Management is watching and is very aware of the division in our Workgroup. This is what I ask of you: TRY to put your personal feelings for individuals aside and pledge your support to your fellow Flight Attendants and to your fellow Union Members by supporting these Negotiating efforts. Think of it like this, I suspect a good number of Denver Flight Attendants are Denver Broncos fans. When the Broncos' coach makes a call you don't like, do you abandon your support for the Team? No. If a player has a bad game, do you give up on them? No. We need to think of our group, all 14,000 of us, as a Team. We don't have to like all the players, but we need to support the "Team" as a whole.

PLEASE do not misinterpret this that I am a blind follower. I can assure you that is not the case. The next time, hopefully sooner rather than later, I sit at the Boardroom table and am tasked with voting whether or not to present a TA to the Membership, I will vote my conscience. If I can't stand behind the TA, I would never ask the Membership I represent to stand behind it. You have my word that I will stand up for the Denver Membership, but I can't do it alone. Our base is 1,200 strong, and with your support, TOGETHER we will achieve the Contract we deserve.

"There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve alone." ~ Lyndon B. Johnson

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## Houston



David Jackson  
Houston Domicile Executive Board Member  
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Hello Houston! When I started flying for Southwest in May of 1997, our Union had just reached a Tentative Agreement (TA) with Southwest Airlines. Some of you may remember that this TA

was overwhelmingly rejected. I was on probation during this time and was unable to vote on the TA; however, I was able to vote on the second TA that became our Green Contract. You may be surprised to know that this was the first time Flight Attendants at Southwest Airlines rejected a TA. With the addition of the recently rejected TA that brings the sum total to two rejected TAs and one rejected Side Letter.

Whenever I hear a Flight Attendant say they always vote no on the first offer because the second one is always better, I think back to how we not so affectionately called the 1997 Contract, the “Green Monster.” Our Negotiating Team (NT) is back at the table with Management and hard at work to reach another Agreement for you to vote on. I wish I could see the future and tell you exactly when you will see the next Agreement, but of course, I can’t. What I can tell you for sure is now more than ever we need to show a strong, united Membership to Management. Wear your Union Pin, attend a Membership Meeting, send your concerns to the NT, and be an active participant in achieving the Contract we all want and deserve. As always, I would like to thank you for the privilege of serving as your Domicile Executive Board Member.

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## Las Vegas



Rachel Brownfield  
Las Vegas Domicile Executive  
Board Member  
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Since the theme of this Unity Magazine is dedicated to Negotiations, I thought I would share my first experience with TWU Local 556 Negotiations. I was a fairly new Flight Attendant working under the Green Contract and commuting from Seattle to Oakland while sitting four-day blocks of Reserve. Our Commuter Policy was much different than it is today and our pay scale was complicated and far below the rest of the industry. I never belonged to a Union before so I was unfamiliar with what negotiations entailed and I had never even heard of the Railway Labor Act before becoming a Flight Attendant.

The Southwest Airlines Chief Executive Officer Jim Parker mailed a letter to my house regarding his “Last and Best Offer.” I didn’t know much about what our Union was negotiating, but I knew I wasn’t happy with Jim Parker’s letter.

It was then that I decided to attend my first Membership Meeting in Oakland. I was able to meet our Union Leaders and ask questions. I was tired of just sitting on the sidelines and complaining, and I was so inspired by their passion that I signed up to become a Precinct Captain. My duties included

carrying a binder filled with literature to answer other Flight Attendants’ questions while flying and being part of a phone tree to inform Members of future meetings and events surrounding negotiations.

When the Message to the Field was scheduled for Phoenix, I called my list of Members in Phoenix and told them of the time and place to meet before the Message to the Field. My phone plan charged by the minute so I spoke quickly and rattled off all the information like a Chihuahua to save my minutes. I enlisted three friends to go with me, none of whom had ever been to a Union Meeting or a Message to the Field before.

We arrived and were given red shirts with big white letters proclaiming, “My Team Speaks For Me!” I was surprised how many Flight Attendants attended, many of them telling me that they heard my voicemail and they appreciated me reaching out to inform them of the event, even though I was hard to understand because I spoke so fast (I had to save those daytime minutes!) We all sat together in the auditorium so our presence was hard to ignore and our red shirts sent a loud message to Jim Parker. In fact, his speech was mostly about the movie, “Miracle on Ice,” and what a team is all about. I believe that teamwork makes the dream work, but I also felt that I was doing my part on the Southwest Team by providing Positively Outrageous Service while being flexible with reroutes and commuting to Oakland to sit Reserve. I felt that my contributions to the team were not being rewarded appropriately. Eventually, Jim Parker left Southwest Airlines and we soon had a TA to vote on, which eventually became known as the Blue Contract.

This experience taught me how Unions work. I wasn’t an Officer or a Shop Steward, I was simply an upset Flight Attendant who believed in the cause and wanted to help move it forward. Educating and informing my Co-workers was an easy way for me to contribute to the mobilizing efforts we needed at that time to send a message to Management. I ask that all of us find a way to contribute to the negotiating efforts by communicating with the Negotiating Team at [NT@TWU556.org](mailto:NT@TWU556.org). Your voices were heard with the final vote count on that TA. Whether your vote was a “Yes” or a “No,” I hope that you will continue to voice your feelings by following up with an email listing what you liked or didn’t like in the TA so that we can all move forward in the Negotiations process. Another valuable way to take part in the process is to attend a Membership Meeting and meet with our Leaders and Negotiators to discuss what is important to you. Our next meeting is at noon on March 23 at the Hampton Inn Tropicana and Event Center.

## Oakland



**Matt Hettich**  
Oakland Domicile Executive Board  
Member  
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214-640-4336

Recently the New Haven Unified School District in Union City, California, a city just south of the Oakland Airport, changed the name of one of its middle schools. The new name is the Itliong-Vera Cruz Middle School, in tribute to historic labor leaders and Filipino-Americans Larry Itliong and Phillip Vera Cruz. The story of these Labor Leaders is inspiring. Through their Union, they fought for economic and social justice, helping improve the lives of thousands of Filipino-American farm workers and their families. In 1962 the two labor leaders, realizing there is greater strength in numbers, merged their labor union with the union led by Cesar Chavez, helping to form the United Farm Workers. During the school's dedication ceremony, the school choir performed the old labor standard "Solidarity Forever." The children's performance is moving and can be seen on YouTube by searching Itliong-Vera Cruz School. In watching the children sing, I was struck by one of the stanzas in the song:

*They divide us by our color; they divide us by our tongue  
They divide us men and women; they divide us old and young  
But they'll tremble at our voices, when they hear these verses sung  
For the Union makes us strong!*

Historically speaking, American employers have a long history of dividing workers in an effort to weaken them. As the song lyrics suggest, employers have divided workers along ethnicity, gender, age, and skill level, often to weaken workers bargaining power and keep employees working longer hours for lower wages. Within the airline industry, labor laws often divide organized airline employees along class and craft distinctions, keeping Union Members in separate Union affiliations or separate local Unions. However, Unions work toward the elimination of arbitrary divisions, collectively working to create one rate of pay, one set of work rules, and in the process allowing Members to speak with one voice, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, or age.

As Members, we need to do our part too. We need to resist the calls for division within our own ranks and stand shoulder to shoulder to secure the Contract that we deserve. Southwest Airlines Management wants changes in our industry-leading contractual work rules and they are willing to pay

to get it. However, the Members of TWU Local 556 made it clear that changes to our work rules are not acceptable. Moving forward, we will need to resist work rule changes, while simultaneously securing additional levels of compensation. We will get there, this I know: for the Union makes us strong!

## Orlando



**Jimmy West**  
Orlando Domicile Executive Board  
Member  
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214-640-4311

Happy New Year from the Sunshine State! I want to start off by saying THANK YOU to each Flight Attendant who donated a toy for the 2015 annual Toys For Tots drive in Orlando. We had two large donation boxes and I will admit this was a record year for the amount of toys that were donated. So again, thank you for sharing your Christmas!

As you know, international briefings will no longer be taking place prior to a near international departure. However, please remember that you must be at the gate, not 'near' the gate on near international flight 45 minutes prior to the posted departure. If there is an Inflight Supervisor hiding behind the plants in the gate area watching for your arrival, or conducting an unannounced audit on your flight and see you are not on time to the gate, you could be facing discipline for being late to the gate.

Also, there seems to be some confusion regarding domestic flying on the 800 aircraft and your report time. If you are flying on an 800 aircraft on a domestic flight, you are only required to report at the gate 30 minutes prior to posted departure, NOT 45 minutes.

Are you looking for some fun things to do other than the theme parks in Orlando? Log into [www.icFlorida.com](http://www.icFlorida.com) for upcoming events that range from car shows, to comedy shows to community chili cook offs and more.

Your TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team returned to the bargaining table on January 25, 2016. Regardless of your personal feelings of our Negotiating Team, the rejected Tentative Agreement is in the past and we must look to our future to secure the Contract that we deserve. This can be achieved with an informed and unified group supporting each other for all of our futures. If you feel you deserve an industry-leading Contract, stand side by side with your Sisters and Brothers of TWU Local 556 and we can achieve this goal. I wish you all a safe, happy and healthy 2016!



## Phoenix



John DiPippa  
Phoenix Domicile Executive Board  
Member  
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By the time you read this old man winter will be in his final days as spring starts next month. Ah...spring...a time of warmer weather and spring training. Go Diamondbacks!

There are two questions I hear from time to time. One is, "When will the parking system be automated for the East Economy Garage as it is a pain in the &@?! to have to wait for the process to be done manually?" I recently spoke with Assistant Parking Manager Elizabeth Terrazas about this and she said the process couldn't be automated until the computer system is upgraded and that is on hold until all the "bugs" have been worked out. The second question is, "Will we ever get more spots for Terminal 4 Rooftop as there are very many spots up there?" I also emailed Elizabeth about this. At the press time of this article, I don't have an answer, but will include it in the next E-Connection, which should be out around the time this article goes to print.

Don't forget to make plans to attend the next Membership Meeting, which is on Thursday, March 24 at the Crowne Plaza on 44<sup>th</sup> Street and Washington. In case you were curious, we are no longer able to have it at the airport because the airport changed their usage policy about conference rooms/meeting spaces. Their new policy is if you are generating revenue for the airport, you can use the facilities. Some of you might say we are actually generating revenue as we are Southwest Airlines. The problem with that is since we as a Union aren't generating money at the airport, the only way we could use the room is to have Southwest Management involved with setting this up and we'd rather not have to go down that road as our meetings aren't open to Management. With all that being said, I will try to keep it at the Crowne Plaza unlike the last one, which was very much out of the way for most Members.

In closing, like death and taxes, there are two other certainties in life that I know of. They are that we are the BEST Flight Attendants in the industry, no matter what anyone says and that Phoenix is the best base in the system. As far as this last statement about Phoenix being the best base in the system, if we could keep that just between you and me as I am outnumbered 9-1 in the sense that there are 9 other Domicile Executive Board Members who might not agree with this statement.

As always, thanks again for placing your trust in me and feel free to call (214) 640-4314 or email ([jdippa@twu556.org](mailto:jdippa@twu556.org)) me if you have any questions or concerns.

# I Voted No

by Don Shipman

I voted to reject the Tentative Agreement. Even though some aspects of the proposed Agreement would have personally benefited me as a high flyer, I didn't feel it was the right deal for the majority of our Flight Attendants. Without delving into detail, let's just say I was very outspoken during the rollout because I felt many issues were inadequate or overlooked.

Having served on the previous 2008 Contract Negotiating Team, I knew just how difficult it was to serve as a Negotiator. I had mixed emotions whether I was willing to make all of the personal sacrifices that go along with the position. I had serious concerns that it would be too difficult to work so closely with some with whom I'd been so publicly at odds. However, I knew nothing positive would be accomplished unless we overcame our differences and stood together. I felt a deep sense of obligation to step up.

We sent a STRONG message when almost 90% of our Flight Attendants cast a vote. We, as a Union, voted NO. I'm proud of our history and we should honor it - but we cannot live in it. We must let go of our personal differences and know that our internal disagreements only serve to give Management the upper hand. Sure, disagreements will always exist, but we cannot negotiate a Contract worthy of our Flight Attendants if we don't come together and support the process.

While I proudly cast my vote as one of the 9,916 Flight Attendants who rejected the Tentative Agreement, you have my pledge that we as a team are fighting for all 14,000 of you today. Our collective future depends on this Unity and Solidarity. We must learn from our mistakes, not trap ourselves within them.

I know what can be accomplished when we put personal differences aside and fight the good fight. No matter how long it takes, we will be here fighting for you. But in the end, we will all either win together or lose together. Who's with us?

*Don Shipman is a Chicago-based Flight Attendant and a Member of the TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team.*



# TWU

Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO  
Air Transport Division  
Local 555  
Southwest Airlines Ramp, Operations, and Provisioning



January 15, 2016

TWU Local 556  
Attn: Audrey Stone, President  
7929 Brookriver Dr # 750  
Dallas, TX 75247

Dear Brothers and Sisters of TWU Local 556,

On behalf of the TWU Local 555 members in California and Florida who were recently subjected to unjust suspensions during the holiday season, I would like to sincerely thank you for your generous support.

These members faced the holidays with no income, but your kind donation made a difference to members and their families during an extremely difficult time. Donations were used to help suspended Members with basic necessities such as staying current on utility bills and rent. Members were grateful for the assistance and it meant so much to them that our brothers and sisters at Local 556 cared and offered support.

As you have demonstrated, our strength stems from working collectively and supporting one another. Once again, thank you for your generosity and for the unprecedented display of solidarity.

In Solidarity,

Greg Puriski  
President  
TWU Local 555







**WE DON'T HAVE TO  
SEE EYE TO EYE TO STAND  
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER.**