

FALL 2014

# unity

The Magazine of TWU Local 556

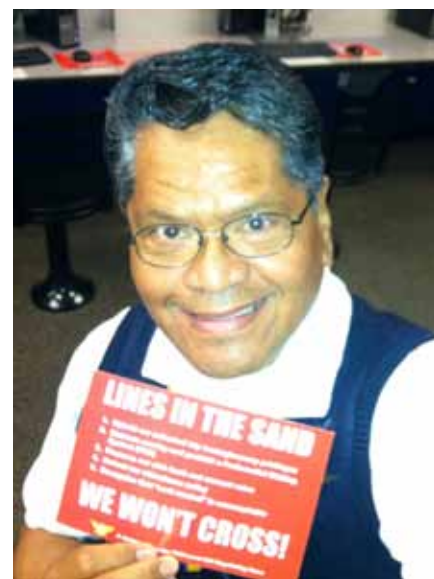


*Membership Has Its Benefits*





Lines in  
the Sand ...  
We Won't  
Cross !



## FRONT COVER

New Hire Madeline Freeman,  
pictured with parents  
Charlie and Laura Heath



**unity**  
THE MAGAZINE OF TWU LOCAL 556

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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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# Letter from the Communications Committee

by Cuyler Thompson

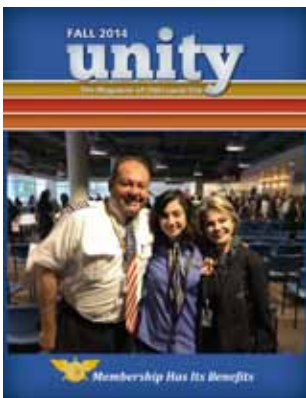
I can't believe that we're already publishing the Fall 2014 edition of Unity Magazine! It seems like sooo very 2013 that we were all looking forward to the repeal of the Wright Amendment, growth in Dallas and flights to international destinations. Now our excitement surrounds the 737-MAX jets, Contract Negotiations, a new Flight Attendant Uniform and Management's announcement that there will be two additional New Hire classes just before the holidays, which are just around the corner. Our integration with AirTran will be complete before we know it and Inflight Management said recently that by summer 2015, there would be 14,000 Flight Attendants at Southwest Airlines. It would seem that there is never a dull moment for TWU Local 556 and the Flight Attendants of Southwest Airlines.

We thought this was a good time to remind us all that our Flight Attendants have been (and continue to be) involved in and have benefitted from all of this excitement through their Membership in TWU Local 556. Some very hard-working and talented Union advocates and well-known Flight Attendants have volunteered to write about the benefits of Union Membership in this issue. We get an update from the Flight Attendants of Allegiant Airlines, now represented by TWU Local 577. Several of our Union's Committees talk about the work they currently do for our own Members and a couple of them do their best to explain why. You'll also get a little historical perspective from some of our more senior advocates.

Increased Union Communications is another benefit that our Membership has recently enjoyed. Contract Action Network (CAN) Leaders and Volunteers have been visible in the Inflight Lounges and airport terminals, keeping our

Membership informed about the status of our ongoing Contract Negotiations with Southwest Airlines Management. The CAN, in conjunction with our Education Committee, has also been educating Members on the Articles of our current Contract to better prepare Flight Attendants to make an informed decision when a Tentative Agreement on a new Contract must be voted upon. The TWU Local 556 Website, Facebook Page and Twitter feed are continuously updated. The electronic Unity Update is currently emailed twice monthly to almost 10,000 Flight Attendants. Unity Magazine is printed quarterly and placed in each Flight Attendant's mailbox. Members may always contact their Union at [communications@twu556.org](mailto:communications@twu556.org).

Our Communications Team, Robin Brewer, Erich Schwenk and I, thank the seventy+ Members of TWU Local 556 who contributed to the fall issue of Unity Magazine. We hope you enjoy it!



**Contract Live**



Cuyler Thompson

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# President's Message

by Audrey Stone

Throughout this issue of Unity Magazine, you will see many examples of how being a Union Member benefits you. You may even have been unaware that some of these benefits are something that the Union negotiated or fought for on your behalf. While you may never use some of these benefits, there is one benefit that governs each of us every single day: our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The CBA, or Contract, is an agreement that is negotiated between Southwest Airlines and TWU Local 556. As the Lead Negotiator for your current Negotiating Team (NT), our Contract is front and center on my mind each day.

Some of you may not remember (or have joined our Union since then) that our Contract became amendable on June 1, 2013. Immediately prior to that, our Union Leadership had been in turmoil and we had just experienced a change in Leadership. I became the President and Lead Negotiator of TWU Local 556 on May 30, 2013. Our first meeting with the Southwest Airlines Inflight Negotiating Team had already been scheduled for June 10, and I believe Management anticipated needing to delay the start of Contract Negotiations. To be fair, I understand why Management might have expected for the Union to delay the start of Negotiations. However, your NT remained focused and because they were prepared, brought me up to speed quickly (over a span of FIVE days!).

When we began this process sixteen months ago, my experience negotiating was on a much smaller scale...language for Baltimore-based Flight Attendants regarding Maryland Flexible Family Leave Act (MFFLA), individual remedies on discipline and Contract cases, and contractual group grievances. I had a good understanding of the process of negotiating a Contract from a broad overview, and was involved in rollouts for Side Letters and the Contract that was ratified in 2009. I thought I knew the way bargaining was typically done, and had the benefit of working with a team of both Flight Attendants and experienced professionals who have negotiated Contracts before. One of the benefits of being a new Leader set upon an unexpected path was an opportunity to choose a fresh way of doing business.

By combining several different types of bargaining styles that I read up on, we took the best pieces of each in order to negotiate more efficiently. Thus far, this strategy has worked well for us and we have maintained productive negotiations throughout all steps in the process. We have had dialogue regarding our more important issues as identified by you, and we have used your voices to guide us in the final drafting of the language in our proposals. Having honest and open talks with Management has allowed us to clearly articulate what is vital to us and why. This is imperative in reaching agreements. We have expressed creativity, candor, passion, concern, and frustration at the table, while remaining respectful to the process and the individuals sitting across from us (and next to us...don't forget that your

NT not only works together, but lives together too!) We have taken breaks when either - or both - sides needed to cool off, and have then returned to the bargaining table to continue pushing forward.

My basic understanding of negotiating styles and strategies, while adequate, could have never fully prepared me for the very real, human, and challenging experience of negotiating a Contract for each of you, the AirTran Flight Attendants still waiting to cross the partition and the Flight Attendants who will join Southwest Airlines in the years to come. And their families. And yours. Because this Contract - when we reach a comprehensive Tentative Agreement (TA) that is then ratified by you, the Membership - will affect you each and every day. Whether you're a high flyer who takes advantage of Voluntary Junior Available (VJA) opportunity, the Flight Attendant who gives everything away to focus on your family, or you're commuting from Spain, our Contract allows you the freedom to do all of these things. It also brings you the paycheck you receive every payday. No matter who you are, know that being a part of this Union brings you the benefits to live the life you want.

I will continue fighting to ensure that our Contract remains industry-leading, that your priorities are addressed, and that Southwest Airlines continues to have a bright future with the best Flight Attendants who will be rewarded for their contributions.



Audrey Stone

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# TWU and Its Benefits

by Todd Gage



We, the Flight Attendants of Southwest Airlines have been part of the Transport Workers Union of America (TWU) since the day we organized back in 1975. Why have we been part of the TWU family for so long? Why haven't we formed our own Union like other Flight Attendant groups have done? The best answers to these questions are that being part of the TWU offers us a strong International Union affiliation as well as some great benefits for our Local Membership.

One big benefit from being part of the TWU is the local autonomy that we are granted. This gives us the ability to operate independently and efficiently so we can better serve our Members. An example of this is found with how the TWU Constitution allows each Local to retain 70% of the dues collected from its Members. This shifts the fiscal responsibility of managing a majority of our dues money and adequately spending it based on the needs of our Local 556 Membership. However, the 30% that goes to TWU International benefits us as well. It pays for things like giving us a voice at the federal, state, and local levels. It pays for the advice of legal counsel for our Local, an economist who has helped us achieve the best Contract in the industry, and the organizing of other work groups across America.

TWU International has a variety of committees, which represent its diverse group of Members that benefit all of us. Many of our own Members sit on, or participate in, these committees. Committees like the Working Women's, Veterans and Civil and Human Rights, are just a few of what is offered to either protect, fight for, empower, or just celebrate our vast Membership.

Being part of TWU brings a whole new definition to the word solidarity. Back during our tough Contract negotiations in 2004, it was our Brothers and Sisters at TWU Local 234 that helped us get our voices heard in the Philadelphia area, Southwest Airlines newest market at that time. TWU Local 100, the largest Local of TWU, has in the

past, loaded busses with its Members to drive hours away so they could march with other smaller Locals when they needed their voices to be heard too. When the Flight Attendants of Eastern Airlines went on strike in the 80's, many TWU Locals, our Local included, donated to their strike fund to help supplement their lost wages. Without the benefits of having over 100,000 Brothers and Sisters from coast to coast, our voices may not have been heard or our causes fought to the highest degree.

Being a Member of TWU also offers the benefit of education to our family members. Every year thousands of dollars of scholarship money is awarded from the Michael Quill Scholarship to dependents of TWU Members. Since TWU is affiliated with the AFL-CIO, we are eligible for many benefits offered by Union Plus, which is offered to Members and retirees participating in Labor Unions. Union Plus offers things like discounts for travel, insurance, mortgage programs and credit cards.

TWU has played such a huge role in our careers here at Southwest Airlines throughout the years. If you look at corporate America, women make seventy cents on the dollar compared to what a man makes. Minorities make even less. However, in our work group, our pay is equal. Our benefits are equal. Whether you're a man or woman; whether you have darker skin or lighter skin, it is the same across the system. This benefit of equality in the work place derives from TWU's long fight for Civil Rights in the work place. I can't think of a better benefit than that.



Todd Gage

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# Why Am I a Shop Steward?

by Dale Wilson



I was huffing and puffing, riding home into a stiff, southerly wind on the bike path along Lake Michigan when my phone rang. The caller ID on my phone displayed Dallas, Texas. That usually means one of two things: either a Co-worker needs representation at a Fact-Finding Meeting or someone at Southwest Airlines Headquarters wants to speak with me about something.

Even now, after being a Shop Steward for seven years, I still pause thinking that every call from Dallas is someone from Headquarters, calling to ask me why I did something on the plane, said something to someone, or didn't do something I was supposed to do.

I thought to myself, "I could just avoid it, not pick up and let voice mail answer." But I knew if it was someone from Headquarters, they would eventually find me and I would have to explain myself. Or, I could just answer. So I answered. Thankfully, it was the Union office. Whew!!! It's not me that needed to answer for my actions, it was someone else.

This scenario plays out every time a Flight Attendant is called in for a Fact-Finding Meeting. Someone answers the phone, not knowing who is calling, but fearing that they made a mistake, or someone somewhere else made a mistake, pointing blame at someone who did nothing wrong, or genuinely knew they made the wrong choice, and the time has come to "face the music."

I think about that a lot when I meet with a Co-worker before a meeting.

Maybe I have gotten ahead of myself a bit here. My name is Dale Wilson. I have been at Southwest Airlines for ten years, and I am a Shop Steward in Chicago. Before I worked for Southwest, I was a proud member of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA), the Union that represents American Airlines Flight Attendants. I worked there for a few years, but ultimately lost my job in the furloughs resulting after 9-11. I grew up in rural Alabama, where Unions rarely existed, and when they did, were not very well liked by the general public.

When my phone rang as I was pedaling along the lake, it was Cuyler, asking me to write an article about why I am a Shop Steward. I can think of

many reasons why I am a Shop Steward. I want to be "in the know," to understand the Contract better, to further the Union movement, and to "defend the defenseless," as one friend puts it. All those things are true, but that's not why I do it.

As I was growing up in that small southern town, it was plain to see that your fate was somewhat chosen for you. You were either a "have" or a "have not" in that society. Everyone knew everyone and if you were a "have not," the work you had to do to get from being a "have not" to a "have" was immense. And it was completely unfair.

That bothered me, and it still does. When TWU Local 556 Members come to work, we have expectations laid out for us, in writing; we have a "rulebook." There is also a rulebook for Southwest Airlines Management. While the Company has the Flight Attendant Manual and Handbook; together, we have the Contract.

Think about that for a minute. The Union might have a small influence on the Flight Attendant Handbook, or the Flight Attendant Manual, which is great, but conversely, Management also has an influence on the Contract. Oh, we all agree to it.



Dale Wilson participates in an informational picket in support of APFA at Chicago O'Hare Airport.

We all say yes, we will do that...or we can choose not to, and find another job. Management can choose not to follow the Contract as well, but thankfully, we have remedies for that in our Contract. It is an amazing system.

But all of that still doesn't answer the question as to why I am a Shop Steward. After Cuyler asked me to write this, I had to give it a lot of thought. Thankfully, I met someone who helped me express it a few days ago. She said, "I love Unions. I have never seen a Contract that stated that women would make less than a man for doing the same job."

I have thought about that statement a lot in the last few days. But I think of it in a different light: I am not a woman. Having someone treat me differently because of my gender is not something about which I should ever have to worry. However, on the surface, you can't look at me and see that I am a minority, but I am. I grew up as a "have."

So why am I a Shop Steward? Simple: equality. I want to be judged by my actions, not on my sex, the color of my skin, the color of my hair, who my parents are or anything else that I can't control.

Everyone always thinks, "Oh, the Company wouldn't do that: judge me because of my gender, race, or sexual orientation." And you know what? They are right, the Company wouldn't do that ... systemically. There are plans for those sorts of actions, there are folks in the Southwest Airlines People Department that do nothing but make sure Management doesn't do that.

The problem is that Management is made up of humans who may judge someone on those characteristics. We are all human, after all. We all have faults and flaws; we all make mistakes.

But equality goes further than that in my mind. It goes to the "have" and "have nots." My family was well known, and most of them were well respected. Inequality in my town was never based on race, or sex, but rather on a family's standing in the community. "Oh, well, that's so-and-so's son/daughter/brother/sister, so it's ok." I never felt that was equality either.

We all make mistakes on the plane (I know I do). Sometimes I forget things, say things better left unsaid, and regularly screw up in general. I'm only human here; it happens. But here is what I NEVER want to happen, and why I will continue to be a TWU Local 556 Shop Steward as long as I can: I never want any Co-worker (or me) to receive any form of discipline that is different from what anyone else would receive for the same violation. No Flight Attendant should be treated differently based upon their race, gender, sexual orientation or their past, or whether they are a "have" or "have not."

Equality is a small word that means so much on so many levels. As a Shop Steward, I fight for equality.



*Dale Wilson is a Chicago-based Flight Attendant.  
Dale serves as a TWU Local 556 Shop Steward.*

## NEGOTIATING TEAM UPDATE

Your Negotiating Team (NT) spent eleven days negotiating with Southwest Airlines Management during October. After sixteen months of negotiations, we have Tentative Agreements (TA) on 23 of the 35 Articles in our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), or Contract.

Of the twelve remaining Articles, some have been open for quite some time, like Article 14 (Vacations), Article 28 (Scheduling Policy), and Article 32 (Attendance Policy). Others Articles we have only recently begun to discuss, such as Article 5 (Definitions) and our new Article 35 (Duration & Termination).

We also began talks on Article 21 (Compensation) during the last month, and exchanged proposals with Management. Our negotiations continued on the Articles in our Contract that relate to compensation, including Article 8 (Hours of Service), Article 9 (Additional Flying), Article 11 (Reserve), and

Article 30 (Profit Sharing & Retirement).

While we have made progress in many areas, as evidenced by our TA's, talks have become more intense as we have delved deeper into issues revolving around economics. Even though both sides remain a good distance apart on some of the major issues, we have seen some movement by Management—but not enough.

Your Negotiating Team has made clear to Management that we will not settle for anything less than fair wages and work rules for the hardest working Flight Attendants in the industry. Our team fully understands the current aviation market, where we rank within the industry, and the future vision of Southwest Airlines. We have spent many days preparing with both our Economist and Strategic Advisor to ensure our requests are reasonable, and that we will bring you an industry-leading TA that rewards your contributions as Southwest



# Treasurer's Report

by John Parrott

October first marks the beginning of the 2014-2015 fiscal year for our Union. I am pleased to report we have seen a significant improvement in our finances over the last year and I am hard at work ensuring that trend continues. During the October 2014 Executive Board Meeting, we evaluated each of our committees as well as the services they provide for you, the Members of TWU Local 556.

As with any service business, we must prioritize how our funds are allocated. Our first priority continues to be to negotiate a Contract that recognizes the contributions each of you bring to Southwest Airlines every day. Next year will also bring Officer Elections, Shop Steward Elections, hopefully a vote on a Tentative Agreement (TA) and the ratification and implementation of a new Contract with Southwest Airlines. These are all "big-ticket" items from a financial perspective and we must budget for them accordingly.

As we wind down our last fiscal year, that ended September 30, I will be working with our independent auditing firm over the next several months preparing the year-end financial statement that will be filed with the Department of Labor (DOL). This financial statement is known as the LM-2. The LM-2 is the yearly report that all Unions with over \$250,000 in revenue are required

to complete, detailing how the Union's funds were spent. The LM-2 identifies all vendors that were paid in excess of \$5,000. It also details monies paid to all Union Officers, regardless of the amount, and all Non-Officers receiving over \$10,000. Once the report is submitted, you can find it on our TWU Local 556 Website or on the Department of Labor's Website.

Based on the New Hire and Special Merger Training (SMT) class schedule estimates, TWU Local 556 will grow our current ranks by approximately 10% to over 13,500 Flight Attendants between now and the end of February 2015. As we approach the completion of the AirTran acquisition, I am very much looking forward to this January as the final AirTran Flight Attendants complete SMT, receive their Southwest Airlines Wings and finally become Members of TWU Local 556. Here's to moving forward as one Union!

John Parrott

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Airlines Flight Attendants while allowing our Company to head towards a prosperous, sustainable future full of growth.

We will continue to bargain in good faith and represent the voice of you, the Membership of Transport Workers Union Local 556. Your NT wants to thank you all for your support and continued commitment during these negotiations. It is important now, more than ever, for us to stand united and strong, and continue to show Management each and every day why we deserve another industry-leading Contract.



Your Negotiating Team Members (l to r): Paul Sweetin, Bill Holcomb, Brandon Hillhouse, TWU Local 556 President Audrey Stone and TWU Local 556 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Brett Nevarez.

# Contract Number NINE!

by David Kirtley

Our Union and Southwest Airlines Management are currently negotiating only our ninth Contract since our Flight Attendants first became part of the Transport Workers Union. While this doesn't seem like very many Contracts, the changes and improvements achieved through each one are profound and have had an immeasurable impact on all of us financially, as well as improving the quality of our lives as Flight Attendants. All of these changes are a direct result of our Membership in TWU Local 556.

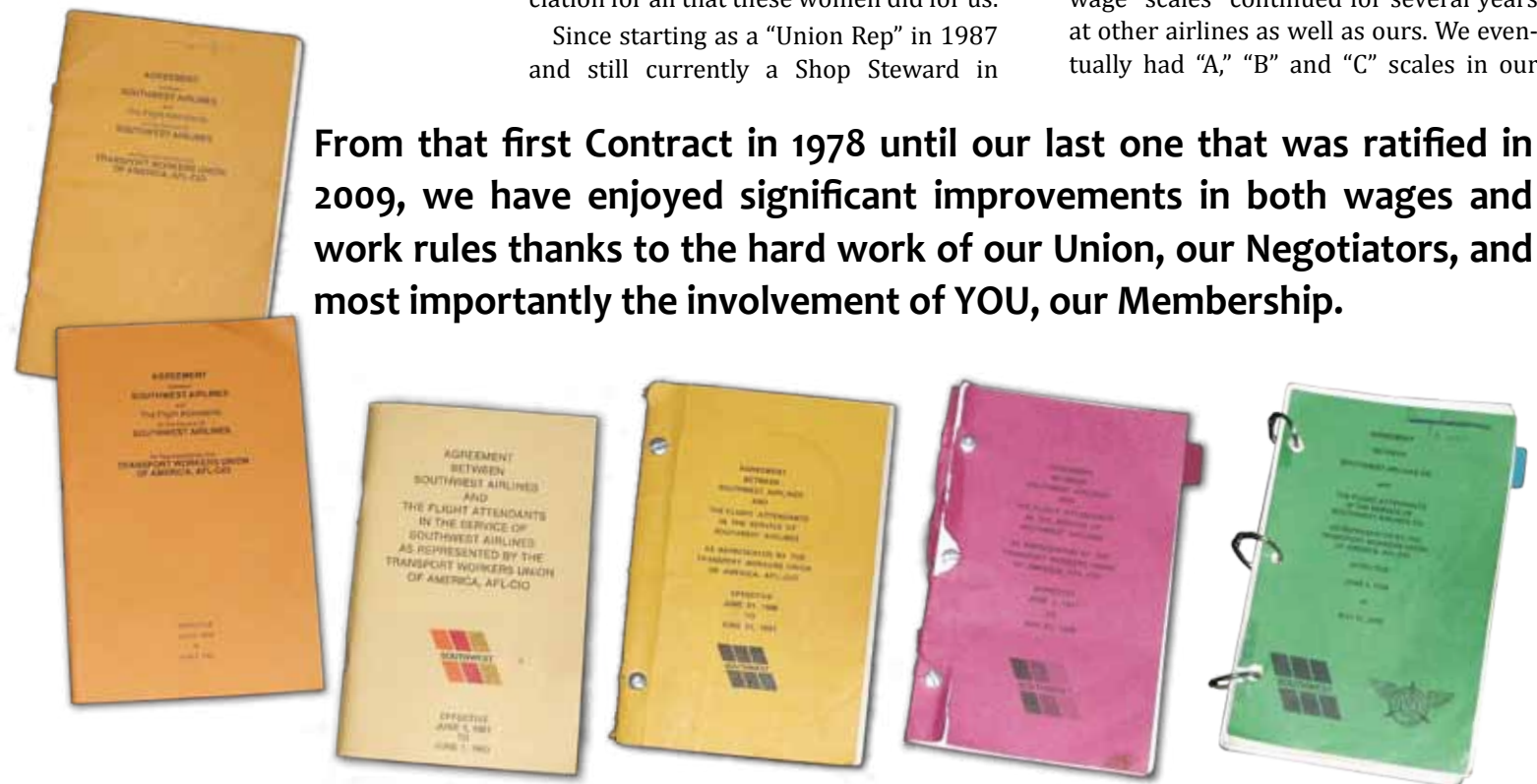
In 1975, a lack of written work rules, low wages, the "B" and "C" Flight Attendants having to share a hotel room, the infamous "hot pants," as well as basic respect were some of the main issues that drove a few dozen courageous women to seek out and establish Union representation for the Flight Attendants of Southwest Airlines. TWU Local 556 finally received our charter on October 13, 1981. There is an excellent article by one of these women, Mary Ravella-Longobardi, on the TWU Local 556 Website under the "About Us" tab. If you haven't read it, it is a great history of our Union and will give you a deep appreciation for all that these women did for us.

Since starting as a "Union Rep" in 1987 and still currently a Shop Steward in

Houston, I have had the privilege of being directly involved in, as well as benefitting from the many improvements to our Contracts over the years. As stated in the last edition of Unity, "Each Contract has been a building block of progress, taking us to the next Contract that brought us better wages, work rules and benefits than the one before it." So I wanted to share some of the major improvements that have occurred since I was hired in 1986, and how vastly different and better it is today.

In the early 1980's, a disturbing and divisive trend began throughout the airlines industry of separate pay "scales." Flight Attendants hired before a certain date would start at a certain rate of pay and top out at a higher rates of pay after many years. Then Flight Attendants who were hired after them started at a lower rate and topped out at the lower rate, and so on. For example, if you were hired before August 1983, you earned \$23.06 in your 3<sup>rd</sup> year. If you were hired after August 1983 and before August 1986, you would earn \$18.93 in your 3<sup>rd</sup> year. If you were hired after September 1986, you would earn \$15.37 in your 3<sup>rd</sup> year. This practice of wage "scales" continued for several years at other airlines as well as ours. We eventually had "A," "B" and "C" scales in our

**From that first Contract in 1978 until our last one that was ratified in 2009, we have enjoyed significant improvements in both wages and work rules thanks to the hard work of our Union, our Negotiators, and most importantly the involvement of YOU, our Membership.**





Contract. These separate and disparate pay scales remained in effect until the 1991 Contract when these separate pay scales were merged into one pay scale. However, big disparities remained within that pay scale based on years of service and date of hire. Finally in 2002, with a unified, informed and determined Membership, we achieved pay rates and pay step reductions that addressed the disparities and laid the groundwork for the industry leading wages we enjoy today.

In just the last three Contracts, we have also seen significant improvements in other areas directly impacting our salary. We used to be compensated at time and one-half for anything flown over twelve and one half hours; now it is double time after twelve hours. Vacation pay increased from 21 TFP to 26.25 TFP per week. We can now pick up from Open Time, and even VJA on vacation, whereas we used to not be able to pick up at all on vacation, and later only from other Flight Attendants. Overfly and RIGs were added to compensate for holding in the air and on the ground, as opposed to \$15/hour holding pay after the first ten minutes, excluding the first 30 minutes (whew!). Occupational Seniority pay for Flight Attendants after 25 years and Longevity Pay for Flight Attendants still required to sit Reserve after twelve years of In-flight Seniority were added. New Hire Flight Attendants were not overlooked

and began receiving training pay after 2002. Prior to the 1996 Contract, you could only trade a trip one time and what you traded for was forever yours (you couldn't trade it again); now we enjoy unlimited trip trade/giveaways. The examples above show how not only wage rates determine our salaries, but also how the work rules impact our wage rates.

Another area of our Contract affecting the majority of our Flight Attendants is Reserve (yikes). The Reserve system of many years ago is nothing like we, dare I say, "enjoy" today. In the past, Flight Attendants sitting Reserve were each assigned a pager to carry around with them 24/7. When paged, whether in bed or driving down the road, you had ten minutes to get up, or pull over and find a pay phone (dating myself!) and return Scheduling's call. Once contacted, you had one hour to report to the airport or receive a No-Show. We had thirteen days off every month with only four-day Reserve blocks and a monthly guarantee of 80 TFP regardless of the number of scheduled Reserve days. A Reserve could be assigned Airport Standby (APSB) an unlimited number of times during the month, scheduled up to a 14-hour duty day, and was only guaranteed a ten-hour domicile break. To top it all off, if you failed to turn in your pager by the last day of

the month, your line was pulled for the next month and you had the pleasure of sitting Reserve all over again. Now, Reserves have twenty minutes to respond to Scheduling and a two-hour report time. In addition, they have a variable number of days off ranging from thirteen to eighteen, depending on a 30 or 31-day month, a monthly guarantee based on 6.0 TFP for the number of scheduled Reserve days, and can only be scheduled up to twelve and one half hours with a guaranteed twelve-hour domicile break. We now have AM/PM Reserve, Reserve self-assignment, pass/fly and a limit to the number of APSB per month.

The Contractual changes discussed above are just a few examples of some of the major areas of our Contract and how they have evolved over the years. From that first Contract in 1978 until our last one that was ratified in 2009, we have enjoyed significant improvements in both wages and work rules thanks to the hard work of our Union, our Negotiators, and most importantly the involvement of YOU, our Membership. So continue to stay informed through your Negotiating Team, Domicile Executive Board Members, Contract Action Network (CAN) Leaders and Volunteers, and Shop Stewards, and...KEEP STRONG and UNION ON!



David Kirtley is a Houston-based Flight Attendant. David has served the Members of TWU Local 556 in many capacities over the years, including the Negotiating Team. David currently serves as a Shop Steward and as a Member of the Board of Adjustment.



# TWU Local 556 the Union of Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants Contract History

	1978	1981	1983	1986	1991	1996	2002	2008
<b>Compensation</b>								
<u>Years to Top Out</u>	10 years	12 years	12 years	12 years	16 years in 1991; 17 years in 1992 onward	17 years	13 years	13 years + Occupational Pay after 25 years \$1.50 per TFP
<u>Delay / Holding Pay</u>	no language	More than 10 min \$5/hour (excluding first 30 min)	More than 10 min \$5/hour (excluding first 30 min)	More than 10 min \$5/hour (excluding first 30 min)	More than 10 min \$15/hour (excluding first 30 min)	replaced by Overschedule/Overfly	replaced by Overschedule/Overfly	replaced by Overschedule/Overfly
<u>Overschedule / Overfly</u>	no language	no language	no language	no language	no language	0.1 TFP/5 min over 55 min for Overschedule; 0.1 TFP/5 min in excess of 7 min for Overfly	0.1 TFP/5 min over 55 min for Overschedule; 0.1 TFP/5 min for Overfly	0.1 TFP/5 min over 55 min for Overschedule; 0.1 TFP/5 min for Overfly
<u>Per Diem</u>	\$0.90 per hour	\$1.20 per hour in 1981; \$1.35 per hour in 1982	\$1.35 per hour in 1983; \$1.40 in 1984; \$1.45 in 1985	started at \$1.50 per hour, increased each year to \$1.80 per hour in 1990	\$1.85 per hour in 1991; \$2.00 per hour in 1992	\$2.00 per hour	\$2.15 per hour	\$2.15 per hour
<u>Vacation Pay</u>	base pay plus trip pay for pulled trips	base pay plus trip pay for pulled trips	All TFP pulled	greater of TFP pulled or 3.0 TFP per day	greater of TFP pulled or 3.0 TFP per day	greater of TFP pulled or 3.75 TFP per day	greater of TFP pulled or 3.75 TFP per day	greater of TFP pulled or 3.75 TFP per day
<u>RIGs</u>	no language	no language	no language	no language	no language	Duty Period Minimum (DPM) 4 TFP for each day excluding a day with single deadhead or second day of shortback	Duty Period Minimum (DPM) – 4 TFP for each duty day; Duty Hour Ratio (DHR) – 0.7 TFP for each hour on duty; Average Daily Guarantee (ADG) – 6.5 TFP times number of days in pairing; Trip Hour Ratio (THR) – 1 TFP for each 4 hours away from domicile; *Side Letter 10 (THR) 1 TFP for each 3 hours away from domicile	Duty Period Minimum (DPM) – 4 TFP for each duty day; Duty Hour Ratio (DHR) – 0.74 TFP for each hour on duty; Average Daily Guarantee (ADG) – 6.5 TFP times number of days in pairing; Trip Hour Ratio (THR) – 1 TFP for each 4 hours away from domicile; *Side Letter 10 (THR) 1 TFP for each 3 hours away from domicile
<u>Holiday Pay</u>	no language	no language	no language	no language	no language	no language	Double (2.0) time for all trips flown and/or credited Reserve including all RIG's (FAR illegality pulls will be compensated as if flown) on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve Day	Double (2.0) time for all trips flown and/or credited Reserve including all RIG's (FAR illegality pulls will be compensated as if flown) on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve Day
<u>Training Pay</u>	2 TFP	greater of pulled TFP or 4 TFP	greater of pulled TFP or 4 TFP	greater of pulled TFP or 4 TFP	greater of pulled TFP or 4 TFP	greater of pulled TFP or 4 TFP	greater of pulled TFP or 5.5 TFP minimum plus 0.5 TFP for Home Study	greater of pulled TFP or 5.5 TFP minimum plus 2.0 TFP for Home Study

This message is brought to you by TWU Local 556 the Union of Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants  
**Crew Connection 7**



	1978	1981	1983	1986	1991	1996	2002	2008
<b>Reserve</b>								
<u>Guaranteed Days Off</u>	10 days off	12 days off	12 days off	12 days off	13 days off	13 days off in a 30-day month; 14 days off in a 31-day month	RR, AM and PM; Minimum days off range from 13 to 18 days off depending on 30 or 31 days in month	RR, AM and PM; Minimum days off range from 13 to 18 days off depending on 30 or 31 days in month
<u>Monthly Guarantee</u>	Base pay + 50 TFP	Base pay + 65 TFP	71 TFP	80 TFP	85 TFP	93.5 TFP	Ranges from min 78 TFP to max 102 TFP calculated at 6.0 TFP times number of days scheduled to work on bid line (based on only 4-day Reserve Blocks)	Ranges from min 72 TFP to max 102 TFP calculated at 6.0 TFP times number of days scheduled to work on bid line
<u>Maximum Duty Day</u>	no language	10.5 hours scheduled	10.5 hours scheduled; 14.5 including APSB	10.5 hours scheduled; 14.5 including APSB	12.5 hours scheduled; 14.5 including APSB; reduced to 14.0 by FARs	12.5 hours scheduled including APSB	12.5 hours scheduled including APSB	12.5 hours scheduled including APSB
<u>Airport Standby (APSB)</u>	no language	no language	limited to 3 people at a time; 6.0 hour maximum shift; 1.0 TFP for every 2 hours sat on APSB	limited to 3 people at a time; 6.0 hour maximum shift; 1.0 TFP for every 2 hours sat on APSB	limited to 3 people at a time; 4.0 hour maximum shift; 1.0 TFP for every 2 hours sat on APSB	no limit on # of people; 5 hour maximum shift; 0.1 TFP for every 6 minutes sat on APSB, up to a maximum of 5.0 TFP	Ready Reserves only; no limit on # of people; 5 hour max APSB shift in a day; 0.1 TFP for every 6 minutes sat on APSB, up to maximum of 5.0 TFP	Ready Reserves only; no limit on # of people; Max scheduled 5 times in Reserve month; 5 hour max APSB shift in a day; 0.1 TFP for every 6 minutes sat on APSB, up to max of 5.0 TFP
<u>Ability to break 4-day Reserve Blocks</u>	no language	no language	1 time per month	1 time per month	1 time per month	1 time per month	1 time per month	None; may "drop" up to 4 days of a single 4-day block of Reserve per month if 4-day block is built on Reserve line
<u>Longevity Pay</u>	no language	no language	no language	no language	no language	no language	\$1.00 per TFP for Reserves with 12 or more years of service in rotation (not when bidding down)	\$1.00 per TFP for Reserves with 12 or more years of service in rotation (not when bidding down)
<u>Type of Reserve Status</u>	24 hour Ready Reserve in Senior (A) and Junior (B and C)	24 hour Ready Reserve in Senior (A) and Junior (B and C)	24 hour Ready Reserve in Senior (A) and Junior (B and C) and Call Out Reserve available 0700-1100 and 1900-2300	24 hour Ready Reserve in Senior (A) and Junior (B and C) and Call Out Reserve available 0700-1100 and 1900-2300	24 hour Ready Reserve in Senior (A) and Junior (B and C) and Call Out Reserve available 0700-1100 and 1900-2300	24 hour Ready Reserve and Call Out Reserve in Senior (A) and Junior (B and C) available 0700-1100 and 1900-2300	24 hour Ready Reserve; AM Reserve 0300-1100 and PM Reserve 1000-1800; Self Assignment based on certain criteria	24 hour Ready Reserve; AM Reserve 0300-1100 and PM Reserve 1000-1800; Self Assignment based on certain criteria
<b>Retirement</b>								
<u>Profit sharing</u>	no language	no language	same as all SWA Employees	same as all SWA Employees	same as all SWA Employees	same as all SWA Employees	same as all SWA Employees	same as all SWA Employees
<u>401 (k) – SWA Contractual Match as % of Employee's earnings and \$ amount matched</u>	no language	no language	no language	no language	6% of earnings; SWA matches 50¢ for each Employee \$1 (1/92-12/93); SWA matches \$1 for each Employee \$1 (1/94 onward)	6.0% (6/96-12/97), 6.3% (1/98-12/01) and 7.3% (1/02 onward); SWA matches \$1 for each Employee \$1	8.5% (1/09-12/10); 9.3% (1/11-onward); SWA matches \$1 for each Employee \$1; addition of Roth 401K (1/1/11)	8.5% (1/09-12/10); 9.3% (1/11-onward); SWA matches \$1 for each Employee \$1; addition of Roth 401K (1/1/11)
<u>401 (k) Maximum Contribution</u>	no language	no language	no language	no language	\$2,500 1/92-12/93; \$5,000 1/94	\$5,000 (6/96-12/01); no contractual limit (1/02)	no contractual limit	no contractual limit; if it exceeds federal limit for any reason, the excess is paid to Flight Attendant in cash
<u>Medical Insurance at Retirement</u>	no language	no language	no language	no language	Trade sick bank based on age and years of service at ages 62-65	Trade sick bank based on age and years of service at ages 62-65	Trade sick bank based on age and years of service at ages 55- 65	Trade sick bank based on age and years of service at ages 55- 65

# Holding the Line

by Jeff Bott

TWU Local 556 Contract Negotiations-what is at stake and why we are holding the line to protect our profession in an era of airline bankruptcies and concessionary Contracts.

## It's no secret that currently Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants' Contract is arguably the industry's best.

It's no secret that currently Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants' Contract is arguably the industry's best. Having worked with your Negotiating Team (NT) extensively, each of the Team Members can tell you they have witnessed a moment where I discover a benefit in your Contract that I am amazed at. It's not that I've never seen these types of benefits in a Contract before (because I am an American Airlines Flight Attendant and have worked for 26 years under a Labor Contract, including an industry leading one in 2001). It's that these benefits still exist in someone's Contract at all that catches my attention.

The Employees of the legacy carriers and I have lived through some of the most miserable years of our work lives over the last ten years or so. We have watched benefits we negotiated over many, many years wiped away with the stroke of a bankruptcy plan pen. Most of the traditional benefits like wages, pensions, and other associated benefits have taken a drastic hit, but so have the not so apparent ones. For example, work flexibility. Most Flight Attendant Contracts for many years offered truly flexible work schedules. Not only did the rules provide for the trading of trips between Flight Attendants, but it was one of the only jobs where a Flight Attendant could drop all of her/his trips in any given month to take care of children, parents, personal issues, or just go on vacation somewhere at a time when she/he didn't have actual vacation available for whatever reason. Upon return from whatever particular amount of time needed off, she/he could make up the time or not make it up at all, and simply treat the time as unpaid. There were no requirements or very minimal requirements that a Flight Attendant work a certain number of hours every month to maintain employment, or health benefits, or vacation time, or be restricted from dropping (which is the functional equivalent of an employment threshold), etc. Fortunately, for you, your Contract still provides for this expansive work flexibility.

During the concessionary bankruptcy period I reference, Unions have been forced to make many negative work rule changes-including some that impact this flexibility. Arguably, Company-offered leaves provide a similar type of work flexibility; however generally Management has control over when, and more importantly if, they are offered. The work flexibility I am referencing is opposite. The control and decision to exercise it or not rests or rested exclusively with the Flight Attendant. In my case, I had that for most of my twenty-six years at American Airlines. Our flexibility started changing drastically after bankruptcy.

Taken to a far extreme, a broad expansion of limitations on work flexibility has a hard number of hours to be flown each month in order to maintain not only all benefits, but also your employment as a Flight

Attendant. Obviously, this type of scenario is a serious impediment to real work schedule flexibility. I do not say this to be critical of what has already been changed during the bankruptcy period. After all, the employer would have likely used the bankruptcy court as a vehicle to implement something similar, regardless. But times are different now. That threat to the legacy carriers and their unionized employees has already been realized and now the industry and labor are seemingly poised to ride an upswing in term of profitability and ability to recover some pay and benefits lost. Yet, as evidenced in the recently negotiated Tentative Agreement (TA) between American Airlines and the APFA, this threat to work life flexibility and quality is at stake even post-bankruptcy. Any way you look at it, the wide flexibility scheduling we once had has gotten much more restrictive. In fact, this is perhaps the most restrictive it has ever been in my 26 years at the carrier, despite recently having made the largest quarterly profit in the Company's history.

Following American Airline's bankruptcy, the agreement between Management and the Union required an average of 35 hours per month to be flown over a calendar year look back period of time versus a month by month look back. At the time, it was a big change (because we had not had any type of employment threshold before). Yet it still allowed us a limited amount of work leeway by letting us average the time over the year. Thus, theoretically one could still take that month or most of the month off work for personal reasons without Company permission and make up the time by doubling up in another month within the year-or averaging higher numbers in multiple months in the year.

How does this relate to Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants and why should you care? As you probably know, your employer has never used a bankruptcy to shave off labor costs. By not doing so, it has made bargaining for a new Contract all the more difficult. Once you are at the top, maintaining that position is a challenge in and of itself. Your Negotiating Team and advisors have spent much time and thought strategizing on how to take the feedback you provided in your surveys, and make this work comprehensively to maintain your Contract position and improve on the areas the group collectively said needed to be improved. Thresholds were one of Southwest Airlines' proposals. Based on your feedback, current flexibility Contract rules are important to maintain. Thus, TWU



Local 556 took the position that requiring any type of employment threshold is not acceptable for Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants. We held that line throughout this process up to this point. Obviously, American Airlines' Contract will likely make this fight all the harder as we get closer to the finish line for a new Contract. You can now begin to understand what your Negotiating Team has to be cognizant of every day at the table-changes that may seem fairly benign on paper have a huge impact on the day to day lives of Flight Attendants in actual day to day operations.

The American Airlines' TA will aid us in our mission to secure wage increases on the one hand- i.e., wage scales are going up at Southwest Airlines competitor airlines American Airlines and Delta, which makes it easier for us to seek wage increases in general. However, that same premise also cuts against us, as Southwest Airlines will seek to do a complete comparison of the total economic Contract package (instead of limiting the comparison to only the subject of wages). This means that the value of certain benefits that we are striving to preserve, like no monthly required number of minimum hours may come into play as well now, leaving us new important challenges to overcome. This happens in this competitive industry when a relevant competitor settles a Contract. Unlike us (seeking to hold the line on what appeared earlier to be a race to the bottom through bankruptcy), other airline Unions like APFA are on a path that can really only go upward. This is because they have already lost some core benefits through the bankruptcy process that still exist in the Southwest Airlines-TWU Local 556 Contract. So if you think the large wage increases at American Airlines are skill of the Negotiating Team alone, think again. You have been among those to hold the line that gave APFA the ammunition to achieve what they did. This is how and why holding the line in this industry matters. Historically, one airline Union has leapfrogged over the other in our profession to turn what once was a short-term job (e.g., reaching age 32 meant the termination of your employment), into a professional career.

Priorities will therefore be key. Your NT gets those priorities ("marching orders") directly from you in the form of survey responses and Membership input (hence the value of taking the time to talk to Negotiators at base visits). This is why it is all the more critical that you do your part in the coming days and weeks to keep informed on critical issues through Union communications and realize that your Negotiating Team has added pressure to preserve certain existing benefits that others have already lost and not been able to regain. Many existing Contractual benefits still have a future cost even though they already live in the current Contract. As can be seen from our TA'd Contract Articles, we are in the final stretch of our journey to maintain an industry-leading Contract. We now have the benefit of

seeing where other comparable major competitors have gone and the burden of holding the line on what we already have at the same time. It is critical to understand this global picture to be able to make informed decision on any future tentative agreement reached with Southwest Airlines Management. It is always tempting to "cherry pick" one particular Contract issue and compare it in isolation with other groups' Contracts, especially those that are more favorable in other Contracts. Management will often attempt the same. This is why in the end both individual items and the total economic package are vital measuring sticks to any Tentative Agreement.

Total economic package is relevant for a number of reasons including that each individual TA is contingent upon reaching a complete comprehensive TA. In the end, a comprehensive TA reflects an aggregate value of Contract provisions negotiated based upon Member priorities. More specifically, as discussed, certain benefits we strive to maintain as priorities are benefits American Airlines Flight Attendants or other comparators have already given up in bankruptcy. No matter how we mask those items, they likely will be factored into that cost individually, in the aggregate, or both. Bottom line is the current Contract landscape has changed significantly, and we have to factor in this change in our mission and expectations. At the same time it means we should double down the focus on our priorities and realize exactly what is at stake in this fight and where we compare with the others overall, then factor in those priorities. Only then can the true value of a TA reached between Southwest Airlines and TWU Local 556 be accurately compared to make an informed vote. Most important, being informed helps keep you at pace with your team, so there is no disconnect or information deficit on the progress at the table between the team and you.

Holding the line on the core benefits of the Flight Attendant job is a complex matter. But unity of the team and unity of the Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants is a prerequisite to keeping your way of life in terms of job flexibility preserved, as an example. It's something you absolutely cannot take for granted given the current state of negotiations at other airlines. Most of all, support your NT as they endeavor to complete the difficult task they have been assigned. Stay tuned and stay strong.

## Once you are at the top, maintaining that position is a challenge in and of itself.

*Jeff Bott is an American Airlines Flight Attendant and also serves as TWU Local 556 Legal Counsel.*





## Men's Health

by Michael Arthur

I remember a conversation that happened over forty years ago between my Mom and her friend, Trudy. They were discussing a sick friend when Trudy's voice dropped to a throaty whisper that only a two-pack a day smoker can manage and said, "It's cancer. Female cancer." I asked my Mom about what I had overheard. I was terrified, because I knew my sister's zodiac sign was Cancer. Fortunately, my Mom believed if I was old enough to ask the question, then I was old enough for the answer. She explained about "cancer" as a disease and how it was something that people just didn't discuss.

Women have been doing a spectacular job demystifying cancers of their reproductive organs over the years. I have seen advertisements advising women to "touch their breasts often," and I rarely hear the phrase "female trouble" anymore, unless I'm discussing a John Water's movie. Pap smears are routine; mammograms are encouraged; and breast, ovarian, uterine, and cervical cancers are openly discussed. While more can be done to educate and inform women, they continue to make progress.

**Since 2004, the Movember Foundation has been running events to raise awareness of prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health problems. This is a strong first step.**

Men, however, are lagging behind. Since 2004, the Movember Foundation has been running events to raise awareness of "prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health problems." This is a strong first step, but it's important to stop treating male cancers with the online equivalent of a whisper, and address these diseases head on. Movember does a great job addressing prostate and testicular cancer, but it's very important to understand that men can also suffer from breast, penile, anal, and bowel cancers.

Before I move forward, here's a disclaimer – I am no longer a health-care professional. I used to be an acupuncturist, but I have not practiced since 2012. I am sharing information from my life and my experiences, but please don't expect that your experiences will

mirror mine. All medical decisions that you make must be made between you and your chosen healthcare professional. I am an intensely private person. The only reason I am sharing my story with you is because no one – NO ONE – should have to go through this if they don't have to. And it is possible that if I had paid closer attention to my symptoms and sought help sooner, I may have had a different experience.

I honestly don't know exactly when I noticed my initial symptoms, but they didn't seem major, and I just assumed I had hemorrhoids. I self-treated and didn't feel the situation warranted a discussion with the doctor. I wasn't having any real problems, and the symptoms resolved quickly with the hemorrhoid treatment. Sometime during the summer, I noticed that arming and disarming my doors was getting more difficult. I experienced severe pain whenever I engaged my core, and standing up made me openly wince. The bleeding and itching I had associated with hemorrhoids were breaking through the treatments, and it got to the point that it was difficult to manage the symptoms on a daily basis. At this point, my quality of life was so impacted I went to my physician. It is a sobering moment when your doctor examines you and recommends an oncologist visit before you've even had any tests.

I made an appointment with the recommended oncologist and was brought in within a week. My oncologist sent me for Magnetic Resonance Rectal Imaging. Did you know they used ultrasound gel as a contrast? I sure didn't! Did you know they used 300ml of it contained in two huge syringes? Me NEITHER! And do you know how the gel is delivered? I learned that lesson quickly and painfully. But that MRI was necessary to move me to the next step. My oncologist received the results from my scan, and then scheduled me for further testing and pain management by admitting me to the hospital in mid-October. The biopsy they performed there confirmed what my oncologist suspected.

On October 14, 2013, I received a diagnosis of squamous cell carcinoma of the anus or simply, "anal cancer." While it was a diagnosis I expected, receiving the "official" diagnosis of cancer is a terrifying experience. Up until September of that year, I had only known of one person with anal cancer – Farrah Fawcett. Anal cancer is rare, but it is easy to treat if caught early. Unfortunately, mine was not caught early. I had stage IIIb anal cancer. The immediate area of my anus and lymph nodes were affected, and the cancer spread to the lymph nodes in my groin and upper thighs. Treatment was going to be aggressive, and it started within two weeks of my diagnosis. They installed a port in my chest to make delivery of my drugs easier and then they tattooed my pelvis to use as guides while I was getting irradiated.





On October 28, I was admitted into the hospital again and began chemotherapy and radiation therapy to eliminate this disease from my body. I had radiation every weekday for six and a half weeks. I received two rounds of chemotherapy, delivered 24 hours a day over four days at a time. The side effects from this treatment are brutal. The chemotherapy side effects are bad, but the radiation side effects, starting at about week three, are horrendous. I did not realize that flesh could literally melt until I was fully ensconced in cancer treatment! Now remember that everything around my pelvis was receiving radiation.

My treatment for cancer entailed four hospitalizations, eight days of chemotherapy, thirty-three days of radiation, and several months of pain and recovery that are continuing to this day. It was the most awful thing I have ever experienced, but I had great results. My oncologist used the word “cured” when discussing my status. They removed the port in my chest last month, and I continue to improve health-wise as I work on re-building my life. The cancer impacted every area of my life – health, finance, relationships, and family. And while I have more scans to endure before I am officially declared “cancer-free,” I am confident that my oncologist knows what the hell he is talking about and that I am indeed “cured.”

So why is this guy, who is intensely personal, sharing so much intimate information? Is this TMI? Possibly. Hell, probably! But during the course of my treatment, I had to let go of any residual shame I had surrounding my genitals and my anus. Everything that was happening to me was happening to the most private area of my body, and I needed to discuss it and acknowledge it.

I want people to pay attention to their bodies; no one knows your body like you do! Don’t be afraid of your ass, your genitals, or your “moobs.” When you are showering, roll your testicles in your fingers. If something doesn’t feel right, mention it to your doctor. When you are washing your chest, feel around the entire area. If something doesn’t feel right, mention it to your doctor. If you are unsure how to check your breasts, and you have a female partner or spouse, ask them for help. Make learning fun! If you’re gay, well – ask a female friend for help, it can still be fun, just a different end

game! If you have unusual itching, discharge, pain, or bleeding around your anus, mention it to your doctor. If your bowel habits change unexpectedly or you have blood or excessive mucous in your stool, mention it to your doctor. It might be nothing, but it sure as hell doesn’t hurt to find out.

Pay attention to your risk factors – smoking is a risk factor for nearly all cancers. With cancers of the genitals and anus, past exposure to HPV, multiple sexual partners, reduced immunity (including HIV disease and immunosuppressant medications), age, gender, and race can be risk factors. These risk factors can be found on the American Cancer Society’s website ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)), but just because you don’t “fit” into one of these categories doesn’t mean you can’t develop these cancers.

I can’t stress this enough - All men need to be thoroughly checked by their physicians. You need a disinterested third party to eyeball your junk regularly. All men (even straight guys) need a doctor to examine your anus and do the finger check of your prostate (also called a “Digital Rectal Exam,” but I’m not one to stand on ceremony.) You can find the American Cancer Society’s recommendations for screening on [cancer.org](http://cancer.org), but check your insurance policy. I suggest doing everything possible to reduce your risk factors and diagnose these cancers as early as possible.

## I want people to pay attention to their bodies; no one knows your body like you do!

Catching these cancers in Stage 0 or Stage 1 is the best place to stop them. Take the shame out of your body. Talking about your genitals, anus, and breasts freely helps lessen the shame that we often assign to our private areas. Use whatever words feel comfortable to you (in the appropriate setting), but just start the dialogue with your medical professionals and important people in your life. If your doctor is not comfortable talking about your private areas, find another doctor! You deserve quality care and quality cancer screening. And seriously – even if I can’t stand you, I do not want you to go through what I went through. It was traumatic. It was depressing. It was devastating. I didn’t think anything like this could ever happen to me. I was wrong.

If you have any questions for me, feel free to find me on Facebook. You can also shoot me an e-mail at [michael.arthur@me.com](mailto:michael.arthur@me.com). I may not know the answer to your question, but maybe I can “pay forward” the kindness and generosity the people in our workgroup showed me as I went through this battle and find out the answer for you. Thank you for your time. Stay healthy, and fly safely!



*Michael Arthur is a Baltimore-based Flight Attendant and serves as a Contract Action Network (CAN) Leader. Michael Arthur is an incredibly brave man.*

# Reciprocal Cabin Seat Agreements (RCSAs) *brought to you by: Union Membership!*

by Michael Massoni

November 15, 2005 is a day that will live in infamy for all Flight Attendants in the United States that ever sought to travel on another carrier, whether for commuting purposes or personal travel. For this was the date the very first large-scale Flight Attendant Reciprocal Cabin Seat Agreement in the U.S. Airline industry was implemented via agreements between TWU Local 556, the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA), Southwest Airlines and American Airlines/American Eagle. While this was a momentous occasion – the back-story to this historic work life changing advent is illuminating in its own right and a testament to the power of your Union Membership.

Sometime in the year 2002, while we were all still trying to navigate the new reality of working on airplanes after the horror of 9/11 – an idea was talked about in the TWU Local 556 Board Room that at first sounded like pure fantasy – could Flight Attendants ever be afforded the freedom of riding on other carriers in a similar fashion that Pilots had been enjoying for decades in the form of the JUMPSEAT AUTHORIZED PASSENGER SEAT ONLY PROGRAM or “Jumpseat Agreements”? That idea was the subject of many meetings and negotiations sessions at Southwest Airlines that was not met with a whole lot of enthusiasm and ultimately always seemed to die at the table.

Later in the year 2004, the subject came up at a Coalition of Flight Attendants meeting that Thom McDaniel and I (then TWU Local 556 President and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President respectively) attended. At that meeting, the then President of the Association of Professional Flight Attendant (APFA), representing the Flight Attendants of American Airlines, floated the notion of us working together to bring this idea to fruition. We subsequently agreed to meet outside the Coalition and explore the premise of “cabin jumpseat agreements.” Our thought and strategy at the time was to bring a benefit forward to Flight Attendants that did not necessarily cost the carriers a lot of money but offered superior bang-for-the-buck in morale boosting. Remember – this was the period after 9/11 when most carriers (Southwest Airlines being the exception) were filing for bankruptcy or making draconian cuts to pay and benefits. At a later strategy meeting in Dallas, TWU Local 556 and APFA agreed that we would individually lobby our Airlines’ Management Teams at the highest levels in order to push this crusade of securing what we were now terming, “Reciprocal Cabin Seat Agreements (RCSAs).”

APFA and American were quick to come to an agreement in principal for all the morale building/cost neutral reasoning previously mentioned. However, we had a few more challeng-

es here at Southwest Airlines. Many of these challenges were rooted in what was now our industry leading Contract, the Pass Bureau’s (may be a foreign term to some of you newer folks) feelings that this program would neuter their department and the cultural issues surrounding our 4<sup>th</sup> Jumpseats being available to all Southwest Airlines Employees who might misconstrue the RCSA program as taking that away from them. After several weeks of meetings with other departments, culminating in a lunch meeting between myself, Herb and Colleen...yes I said myself, Herb and Colleen...(remember, “highest levels of Management”) ultimately an agreement was reached that opened the door to our ground breaking first RCSA.

The Southwest/American RCSA was implemented on a six-month trial bases that was made permanent at the six-month review due to its overwhelming popularity and the professionalism exhibited by the more the 27,000 Southwest, American/American Eagle Flight Attendants of the day. The Southwest/American RCSA subsequently became the model by which all other RCSAs at every other carrier were negotiated and implemented. Today this one trial RCSA between American and Southwest has now mushroomed to more than 38 agreements covering almost the entire U.S. Air Travel System.



Michael Massoni is a Phoenix-based Flight Attendant and serves as the TWU Local 556 Operational Safety Chairperson.

## Atlanta

I hope everybody had a wonderful summer. It seems as though the Atlanta Base just opened, and here we are preparing for the Holiday Season. I would like to thank all of the volunteers that participated in Union events over the summer. I hope this continues. The **readbox** was a successful campaign for all of the Southwest Airlines Bases. We met our goal in Atlanta, with donations of 326 books. The books will be delivered to Children's Health Care of Atlanta. Thank you to everybody who donated books.

Our Atlanta Contract Action Network (CAN) Leaders, Alison Head and Josie McKeeman Rose, are still working hard to educate the Membership. The CAN Leaders and Volunteers are available in the lounge the 10<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of every month to answer questions about the Contract and Negotiations. If you have time, stop by and say hello. Negotiations are ongoing, so wear your Union pins loud and proud; to receive updates go to [twu556.org](http://twu556.org) or "like" our Facebook page.

We are getting close to completing the transition of AirTran Crews. The classes are larger and there will be many new people on line. If you see your Co-workers struggling, please reach out and help them. If you have a problem with a Co-worker please contact Professional Standards at [professionalstandards@twu556.org](mailto:professionalstandards@twu556.org) or call 888-322-3735.

Just a few reminders; EVERYTHING posted by Southwest Airlines is in Herb Time, including Recurrent Training. It is up to you to convert it to Local time. It also seems Class 1, Section 17 continues to be a point of contention. You MUST be within two hours driving distance from your Domicile during your contact hours. If you are ill, make sure you call out as soon as possible. You can call out up to 48 hours prior to your trip or

Reserve obligation.

The Atlanta Base has two new Coordinators: Tiffany Simon-Sledge and Tania Holton. When you have extra time, stop by and introduce yourselves.

Lastly, we lost one of our own, Keith Wicks. Keith had over sixteen years as a Flight Attendant. He was a senior Crew Member of AirTran and transitioned to Southwest in May 2012. After the transition, Keith became a Baltimore-based Flight Attendant, and flew his remaining years there. Please keep his family in your thoughts.

I hope you all have a safe and prosperous Holiday Season.

### Pamila Forte

ATL Flight Attendant  
and ATL DEBM  
[pforte@twu556.org](mailto:pforte@twu556.org)  
214-640-4320



## Chicago

Hello to all of Chicago and Happy Fall!

It has been busy for the last few months with the opening of all our new destinations, and now with the latest news being the complete repeal of the Wright Amendment on October 13. For those of you who attended the Spirit Party in Dallas, I am sure you will share with me the feeling of excitement that was in the crowd. It was also such a pleasure to see Herb and Colleen as they spoke to the Employees about the journey that ended with the repeal. Herb and Colleen also spoke about how pleased they both were to see and be a part of the success granting non-stops out of Dallas Love Field. It was so nice to see and feel the LUV flowing from the stage, as with their words they embraced all of the Employees recognizing their efforts and hard work.

Another change is the size of our Chicago Base. It has grown substantially making it the largest base in the system and soon to be topping 2,000 Flight Attendants. With that I encourage each of you to welcome our newest Flight Attendants to Chicago and help them transition into their new jobs. The SMT transition will be complete in January of 2015, which means we will truly be ONE LUV as a Southwest family, which I am sure will be bitter sweet for our Brothers and Sisters who have joined our family from AirTran. This also means our new Flight Attendants will be internal transfers or New Hires, both of which will need some tender loving care from their new Brothers and Sisters here at Southwest Airlines.

The Negotiating Team (NT) is continuing to work hard for all of us in the quest to obtain a great Tentative Agreement for us to vote on. I encourage you all to communicate with them at: [nt@twu556.org](mailto:nt@twu556.org). A great Contract is one of the advantages we all have as Members of a Union. Among many

other benefits, our Union helps protect its Members against unfair treatment, enforce the Contract, and provide an avenue to dispute things with Management, that otherwise may have no voice without organized representation. It is important to remember our Membership in the Transport Workers Union Local 556 provides us what is so very important – strength in numbers.

One final reminder before I sign off. In just a short time, we will be kicking off our annual Toys for Tots drive, so keep your eyes open for the toy box in your Lounge. It is my honor and pleasure to be allowed to represent you all.

Take care and fly safely.

### Donna Keith

MDW Flight Attendant  
and MDW DEBM  
[dkeith@twu556.org](mailto:dkeith@twu556.org)  
214-640-4335





## Baltimore

Hello Baltimore! Happy Fall! Well, let's start with "As the Base Turns". Tonya Lockett has returned to the line. Kelly Abbott and Karen Rayokovich will be returning to the line as of November 1, 2014. We gained three new Supervisors to our base. Please welcome, Gidget Balagot, John Roiy, and Howie Baker.

The Culture Center is now up and running, as well as the restrooms. I hope everyone has had a chance to check out our new space. I know we all hate change and we were hesitant about moving into the basement. It is a shared space and I have personally spent time with the other work groups in the Culture Center. I am hoping everyone else is enjoying this and getting to know some of the guys and gals that help us get our planes out. There are still more changes to come to the lounge. We are waiting on the quiet rooms to be finished, more plugs, more TV's, and a better area for the ladies to get ready. Please be patient and enjoy our new space.

I just want to take a moment to remind everyone that the holidays are approaching and with that comes some troubling times for our work group. It cannot be said enough that when we have a Flight Attendant struggling with life or personal struggles, please reach out. The road can be a lonely place and we need to be there for our extended family. The

Union has several avenues that are 100% confidential; please let's help each other. CISM is not only for on the clock issues, they are here for all struggles. They have been trained to help our Flight Attendants through such struggles, CISM 1-800-408-3220. Another avenue to use is FADAP, the Flight Attendant Drug and Alcohol Program. You may call 1-855-333-2327 or email [DandACommittee@twu556.org](mailto:DandACommittee@twu556.org).

### Stacey Vavakas

BWI Flight Attendant  
and BWI DEBM  
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214-640-4308



## Denver

All things in life come with pluses and minuses. Luckily as a Member of TWU Local 556, the Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants have a Contract that protects us from many of those minuses. The best way to ensure that we continue to enjoy the strong benefits and Contract we have is to remain informed. Contract Action Network (CAN) Leaders and Volunteers are in the lounge on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of each month to provide current Contract Negotiation information and answer your questions. The Denver CAN Leaders are Ian Johnson and Kristen Byrd. Check your mailbox, Union Glass Case and [www.twu556.org](http://www.twu556.org) for all the latest updates.

The Denver Inflight Office is now fully staffed. The new base hours are now 0500-1800 daily. Please welcome new Inflight Supervisors Chad Vandenberg, Irene King and Scott Beller to Denver, the best base in the Southwest system.

We are continuing to grow the number of Members in Denver and it's in our best interest to support our newest Brothers and Sisters. Currently, Southwest plans to add nearly 500 new Flight Attendants in the next four months. If you are currently on probation, please remember that you are still entitled to Union representation in meetings with Management. The protections in our Contract apply to all Flight Attendants. Please contact me or call the Union office if you have any questions. Also, you have 30 days after the end of your probationary period to add supplemental insurance products. You can get more information on these benefits by calling 877-885-9191.

November means it's time to bring awareness to men's health issues. Celebrate "Movember" by participating in a fundraising or awareness event. I encourage all the men to get a check-up and make

healthy choices. You may also show your support by growing a "Movember" mustache. You can find plenty of information by visiting <http://us.movember.com>.

Soon we'll be starting our annual Toys for Tots drive. It's never too early to think of less fortunate children in the Denver area. Please take a moment to grab a new, unwrapped toy the next time you're out running errands. It only costs a few bucks, and your small effort will put a big smile on a child's face. Whether you have the privilege of living in Colorado or are a commuter from another great place it's always helpful to spread a little LUV in our communities.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at [csullivan@twu556.org](mailto:csullivan@twu556.org) or (800) 969-7932 Ext. 4356. You can also use the old school method by dropping a note in my Southwest Airlines mailbox.

### Chris Sullivan

DEN Flight Attendant  
and DEN DEBM  
[csullivan@twu556.org](mailto:csullivan@twu556.org)  
214-640-4356



## Dallas

Hello Dallas Base! I am Andrea Garnett your new Dallas Domicile Executive Board Member and I would like to introduce myself to all of you. I started my career at Southwest Airlines back in June of 1994 and have been proudly based in Dallas for the last 7 1/2 years. I am married to Dallas Lance Capt. J Garnett and we have four children. In 2012, I was elected to serve as a Dallas Shop Steward and most currently I have been serving the Dallas Membership as Co-Leader for the Negotiating Team's Contract Action Network (CAN). As a Shop Steward and CAN Leader, I have had the opportunity to represent Dallas Members in Fact-Finding Meetings and help educate our workgroup (and myself) on our Contract and work rules.

There have been so many recent changes in our Base, some exciting and some not. Our growth to over 1200 Flight Attendants because of the Wright Amendment going away (EXCITING), new parking (definitely not exciting, actually it's been quite painful), and believe it or not we have NEW HIRES and Probationaries in Dallas!! All of which is new territory for Dallas.

Like you, I would like to thank Karen Amos for the many years she devoted to our Membership as the Dallas Domicile Executive Board Member as well a big thank you to all of the Dallas Shop Stewards. Both Karen and the Shop Stewards of Dallas have worked so hard for all of us and I hope to continue to expound on the great work they've

done! We have an awesome team and I feel very fortunate to be surrounded by a great group. I am ready to go to work for YOU and be YOUR advocate and YOUR voice! Dallas is where it all started and with all of us working together we can make our base the best it's ever been.

With Dallas undergoing a number of changes, I am honored to be your new Domicile Executive Board Member. Together we will maneuver through the unknown.

### Andrea Garnett

DAL Flight Attendant  
and DAL DEBM  
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214-640-4309



## Phoenix

By the time you read this article, I will hopefully have some good news about monthly parking at Blue Sky, Sky Harbor Parking, and/or the Parking Spot for a monthly rate. If this doesn't work out, I am going to make a last ditch effort to procure covered parking by speaking to the Phoenix City Council either in January or February. Starting in November, Board Member at Large Rob Riddell and I will be collecting signatures to present to the City Council. One thing I do want to mention is that it is very important that you see either Rob or myself to physically sign the petition and provide the City Council with your zip code so they know you actually live in the Phoenix/East & West Valley area.

Many of you are aware that I have asked for input on your experience with Sedgwick. It seems that there is a misperception that by gathering this information I will be able to convince Management to get rid of Sedgwick. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but that task is insurmountable especially with the amount of money the Company saves by using them. In spite of this, I plan to look at various ways to inform you of On-the-Job Injuries and some FYI's when you are hurt at work and have to use Sedgwick.

The focus of this issue of Unity is "Membership has its Benefits" and as Flight Attendants of TWU Local 556, we are afforded many contractual benefits. Some of them are VJA for overlap, unlimited trip trade/give away, industry leading compensation and per diem, a Commuter Policy, and a generous Attendance Policy, all protected by our Union. Some of you might say that every airline has a Union that offers these protections in one form or fashion, but unfortunately that

is not true. Two of our major competitors, one in Atlanta and a major low-fare carrier based in New York don't have a Union to provide them with these protections. So, as you can see if you work for Delta or jetBlue, "Membership doesn't have any benefits" because there is no Union to provide them.

Finally, as you probably are aware, Toys for Tots is right around the corner, so please make a less fortunate child's Holiday extra special by donating a new and unwrapped toy in the boxes in the lounge. Be on the lookout for further information about when the drive begins and ends. I want to thank former Phoenix Flight Attendant Mark Savage for being the Toys for Tots liaison for the base for many years.

As always, representing you is an honor and privilege that is near and dear to my heart.

### John DiPippa

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and PHX DEBM  
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214-640-4314



## Houston

Hello, Houston,

You've likely noticed more recent changes around Hobby Airport. Phase II of the construction plan for the international terminal kicked off the second week of October. Known Crew Member, for now, is in the same location, but access to it has changed and may change again as Phase II is implemented. Stay tuned to Houston E-Connections for information as it becomes available. Additionally, we welcome Sherri Griffith as the newest Supervisor in the Inflight Office. Sherri was a Flight Attendant at AirTran before crossing the partition into a Supervisory Position in Houston. Theresa Smith has joined us back on line.

The theme of this edition of Unity Magazine is "Membership has its benefits" and indeed it does. In addition to enforcing safe working conditions and fair wages, even non-union employees benefit when Unions set the bar. Non-Union employers, to offer competitive jobs, often mirror Union standards. With each new Contract since affiliating in 1975, we've seen changes negotiated to protect us while Southwest Airlines has grown exponentially. Your Contract Action Network (CAN) has been in lounges across the system pointing out some of those changes in an effort to prepare us for a Tentative Agreement. Negotiators are working hard to keep our "holy grail" (the Contract) one of the very best in the industry. I challenge you to support your Union, your Negotiators and to educate yourselves on where we, and other Locals on property, stand in negotiations. Support each other, even when frustrations mount. There is strength in numbers and together we can be effective and successful.

At our Local and within our industry, conferences made up of rank and file Members and Officers spend time lobbying politicians at the Federal, State and District levels to support, or not support, legislation that affects us on line. At its core, each base has Flight Attendants that

address Representatives explaining how policies affect us in our "office" at 40,000 feet. The Texas State Conference encourages your participation. Other Committees falling under the umbrella of TWU Local 556 are the Working Women's Committee, the Flight Attendant Drug and Alcohol Program, Human and Civil Rights, Professional Standards, the Veterans Committee, etc. There's simply not enough room here to explain how much these committees contribute to our Membership and the communities we live in, but consider being a part of their good efforts. There is a list of Committees and their contact information on the Union Website.

As always, it is a privilege to serve as your Base Rep. Your thoughts and concerns are always welcome. Fly safe, and I will see you on line.

Valerie Boy

HOU Flight Attendant  
and HOU DEBM  
vboy@twu556.org  
214-640-4310



## Las Vegas

Membership has its benefits, including job security, representation, and education. The benefit I want to focus on in this article is our ability to resolve conflict with the help of Professional Standards. This service is not provided to all of our Co-workers at Southwest Airlines. As Flight Attendants, we have the ability to confidentially solve problems without immediately involving Inflight Management. Contacting a member of Professional Standards could not be easier. Simply log onto [twu556.org](http://twu556.org), then click on the Committees tab, click Professional Standards and fill out the form. Or you may call 888-322-3735 and leave a message. Please consider taking advantage of this wonderful benefit before writing an Irregularity Report to Management regarding crew conflict. This benefits our Sisters and Brothers by allowing us to talk it out before writing it up.

Please remember that you have the right to Union Representation when attending a Fact-Finding Meeting. Always call our Union at 1-800-969-7932 to schedule a Shop Steward.

Please make plans to attend a Lounge Mobilization or speak to a Contract Action Network (CAN) Leader or Volunteer to stay informed about our Contract Negotiations and be sure to grab a new orange bag tag to spread the word about keeping strong and union on.

Rachel Brownfield

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and LAS DEBM  
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## Oakland

Hello Oakland Members! In this edition of Unity Magazine we are discussing the benefits of Union Membership. At the base level, having Union representation in our work place has tremendous value. Your Union works diligently in each domicile to advocate for TWU Local 556 Members. The Domicile Executive Board Member, along with our dedicated team of Shop Stewards, works tirelessly to ensure Members are represented across many different fronts. On the grievance side of the house, your Union representatives work to provide you representation in the event you are requested to attend a mandatory meeting with Inflight Management. The Domicile Executive Board Member and Shop Stewards communicate frequently to track discipline trends and identify common strategies to best represent our Members. Our Union team meets with the Oakland Inflight Management team regularly to discuss individual Member issues, seeking resolution on a wide range of topics directly affecting our Members.

Legislatively, your Union works in each base to track changes to state laws having direct impact on our Membership. In California we have laws that provide workers with paid time off to care for sick or injured dependents, care for seriously ill family members, and even time off work to attend your children's school activities (visit [www.TWU556.org](http://www.TWU556.org) for additional information). In some cases state law can be followed incorrectly and have a negative impact on our Members or the Union and Management disagree on how the law is being applied. Nevertheless, your Union works to identify these differences and ensure compliance.

Our Union works in the base to educate our Membership on issues

affecting them. Currently the Contract Action Network (CAN) is in the lounge twice monthly explaining the current state of Contract negotiations and educating our Members on various aspects of our current Contract. Once our Negotiating Team reaches a Tentative Agreement (TA) with Management on a new Contract, and once your TWU Local 556 Executive Board approves the TA for Membership ratification, your Union will have Lounge Educators in each domicile to help explain changes to the Contract and encourage voter participation.

Your Union works in numerous ways to advocate and advance the station of TWU Local 556 Members. Member involvement and Member support is the key component in the overall success of your Union. There are plenty of opportunities for involvement in your Union, now is the time to get involved!

**Matt Hettich**

OAK Flight Attendant  
and OAK DEBM  
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214-640-4336



## Orlando

Are you a member of a rewards program? This could be anything from a car rental company or a hotel/motel program such as Motel 6, or even Juanita's Wig World in downtown Orlando- Yes, there really is such a place! Just as with any reward program, memberships have their benefits. As a Member of TWU Local 556, we enjoy multiple benefits from our negotiated Contract on a daily basis.

Throughout the years, we have gone from rags to riches in terms of our pay scale. Another great benefit we currently enjoy is protection for extended duty days, delays, unscheduled overnights and reschedules. When thinking of Crew Scheduling and some of the unnecessary re-routes that take place, Crew Scheduling will tell you "we, as Flight Attendants, don't see the big picture" which means we only have a view of the wallet size photo.

Calling all Flight Attendants, that's if you can get the check-in phone to work. The Orlando check-in phone has been experiencing issues and has not been working properly. As always, make sure to give yourself plenty of time to make your check-in; otherwise, you have another benefit- a free MBL.

Recently, I received several phone calls regarding the perception that Crew Scheduling is hiding trips. Since they have moved into the new Network Operations Control (NOC) Building, I imagine there are even more places they can hide trips. On a serious note, if you see a pairing with an uncovered position and that trip is not in Open Time, please make sure you write down the pairing number, the date and the position so it can be researched. Without this information, it's

just another game of hide and go seek-the trip.

My sincerest Thank You's to each Orlando-based Flight Attendant who donated a children's book to the TWU Local 556 **readbox** book drive. I made the decision to extend the deadline by a week because there were only a few books donated. The extension proved to be a success ending with a total of 97 books donated to the Central Florida Children's Home. The Home is a non-profit shelter for troubled and abused children. They receive no state funding and sincerely appreciated for the donation.

The holidays are here already (in some local stores, they were here in July). Whether you are going to enjoy the time off due to having vacation, scheduled time off because you can hold it or working for the premium pay, enjoy the benefits of our negotiated Contract, you've earned them!

**Jimmy West**

MCO Flight Attendant  
and MCO DEBM  
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# Dinner with the Union

by Cha'Ron Clark

On September 10, 2014, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Union Presentation Dinner held at the Union Office in Dallas. While there, I had an opportunity to speak with many Members of the current Executive Board, along with other representatives from Transportation Workers Union Local 556. Going into the meeting, I didn't know what to expect. What I did know, was that this "meeting" was mandatory and that we would be served dinner. Walking in, I took my seat and waited on everyone to be seated so that it could officially begin.

Union President Audrey Stone welcomed us and introduced everyone there. They each gave a little bio about themselves and welcomed us. The welcome was great, and every Member was pleasant. After the welcomes and introductions, we were told to enjoy ourselves and enjoy the great dinner! The dinner portion, which consisted of a buffet style chicken and steak fajita set up, was really good. Following an all-day training, a great meal is needed and appreciated. It was exciting to learn that Southwest Airlines Cabin Services Department led by Vice President Mike Hafner, was responsible for providing all the drink selections.

Every bit of information given at the Presentation Dinner was very important. Also, being able to place a name with a face from Unity Magazine was great. Each Member was warm and welcoming and there were representatives from all ten bases, which was great. I was able to see them not just as Union Representatives, but also as my Co-workers. This was a great idea and opportunity to be able to meet representatives at the beginning of my career at Southwest.

Many people never get the good fortune to be part of a Union. They have many questions, and some are never answered. This dinner is a great place to get that one-on-one time to ask pretty much anything. We were able to talk about Contract Negotiations, different committees, getting tips on the different bases, as well as the famous Southwest Airlines Culture. I was encouraged by so many Union Representatives to experience the culture and protect the culture. My class and I thought that meeting everyone was a great step in building many new and positive relationships. All of the information was well received.

Moving forward, I hope that this event continues. It gets the work group excited and encourages them to do more. I want to learn as much as I can from the Education Committee and to help others. This is a great Company and we have a great Union! I am very excited for the future of Southwest Airlines. Fly safe, and take care.



Cha' Ron Clark with Shop Steward Damion West.



Cha'Ron Clark is a Houston-based Flight Attendant.



# What Happens When I Call Professional Standards?

by Kurt Beggs

It's Tuesday afternoon and you are enjoying your steak salad in your hotel room in Kansas City. Your phone rings, but you don't recognize the number so you let it go to voicemail. Curiosity takes over and you listen to the message. "Hi, this is Kurtis Beggs from the Southwest Airlines Flight Attendant Professional Standards program. I am currently working on a case and would like your input. Please call me at..." Your mind races as you try to figure out what the call is regarding. "Did I set up the snack basket incorrectly?" "Did I use the last of the limes and leave the "C" nothing?" "What did I do?" "Am I in trouble?" **ABSOLUTELY NOT.**

Members of the Professional Standards Committee play out this scenario twenty to thirty times each month. Our eighteen Committee Members work hard to resolve duty-related issues regarding Company Policies, Crew Resource Management (CRM), Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs), unprofessional behavior, social media and Pilot issues. Most of you have probably never used, let alone been contacted by Professional Standards. If you do, remember you are speaking with a fellow Flight Attendant. Our conversations are confidential and will not be reported to Southwest Airlines or TWU Local 556. We strive to work through the issues ourselves, outside of Company or Union involvement. You may contact us at 888.457.3032.

***If I call Professional Standards, what should I expect and what is the process?***

The phone line is monitored every 24 to 48 hours, by one of our Committee Members, and you will receive a call back as promptly as possible. Please leave the following information when leaving a message.

- Name
- Employee number
- Contact number
- Brief explanation for the call such as, "I had an issue with a Crew Member regarding cell phone use on the plane."

A Committee Member will be assigned the case and will contact you. Please provide us with as much information as you can, regarding the situation. After obtaining the information and parties involved, we always ask, "What type of resolution are you seeking?" This assists us in working with all the parties and collectively resolving the issue.

Next, we contact all parties involved. We may speak with your Crew Members to obtain all perspectives, even if the issue did not involve them. Depending on the nature of the case, the Committee Member may refer to the Southwest Airlines Flight Attendant Manual or the Flight Attendant



Work Rules and Expectations. These are valuable reference tools for supplying correct information, if applicable to the case. We will continue the dialogue between all the parties until everyone feels the matter has been resolved. This may involve one phone call or several. Though we work hard for a positive resolution, we realize that some parties will not see situations the same way.

Finally, we will call you and let you know the results of our communications. Please keep in mind that this process may take several days to make contact with all parties.

We are not enforcers, rather we serve to advise, inform and clarify policies and procedures. We will stay neutral in all cases and try to bring the parties together to a common understanding.

As always, if you feel the situation is an emergency, please call the Union or Inflight.



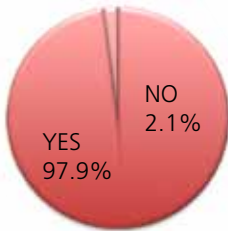
Kurt Beggs is a Houston-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Chairperson of the Professional Standards Committee.



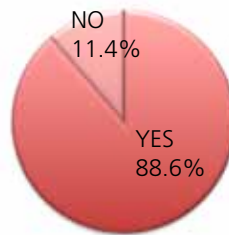
# 2014 Membership Survey Results

## CISM

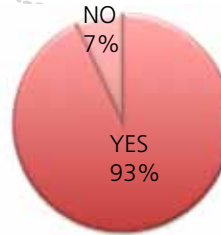
Are you familiar with the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program, funded jointly by TWU Local 556 and Southwest Airlines, and the role that this team plays?



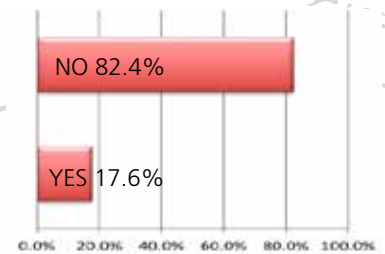
Do you feel CISM is a vital committee?



Do you know how to contact the CISM Team?



Have you ever contacted the CISM Team?

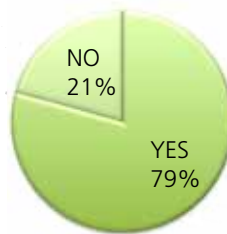


Was the process of contacting CISM "user-friendly" and easy to use?

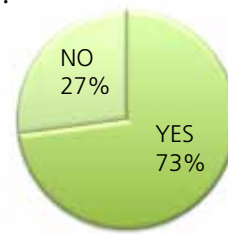


## Shop Steward

Do you know any of your Domicile's Shop Stewards?

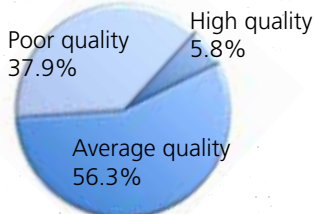


Do you know what services that your Domicile Shop Stewards provide to Members?

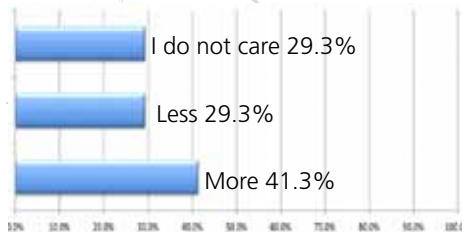


## Uniform

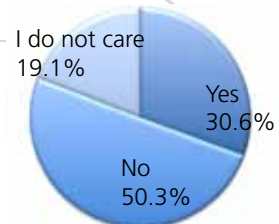
Please rate the quality (durability) of the current Lands End uniform pieces:



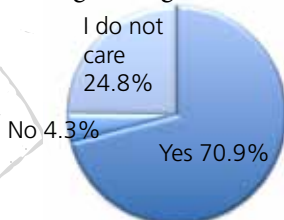
Do you think SWA should offer more or less uniform piece options?



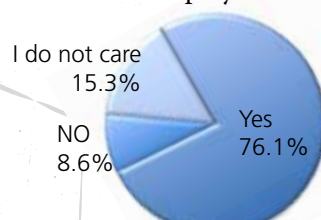
Would you like the option to wear an untucked shirt?



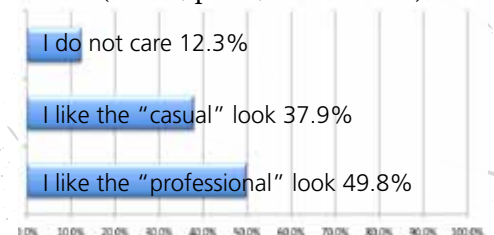
Would you like to have the ability to change into "service shoes" during the flight?



Do you think the Flight Attendant uniform should be recognizably different from other Customer contact Employee workgroups?

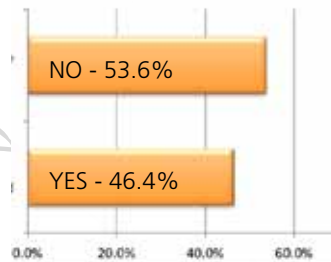


Do you think our workgroup should have a more professional uniform look (slacks/blazers/dresses) or do you like the casual pieces of our uniform (shorts, polos, tennis shoes)?

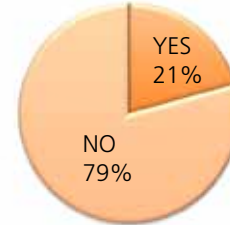


# General Questions

Have the latest "Summer Procedures," implemented in an attempt to keep our aircraft cool while on the ground, resulted in safe and acceptable cabin temperatures for our Passengers and Crew?

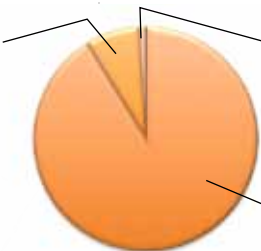


Have you attended a TWU Local 556 Membership Meeting in the last twelve months?



Complete this sentence: If a Co-worker believed that I had violated a Southwest Airlines policy or procedure,

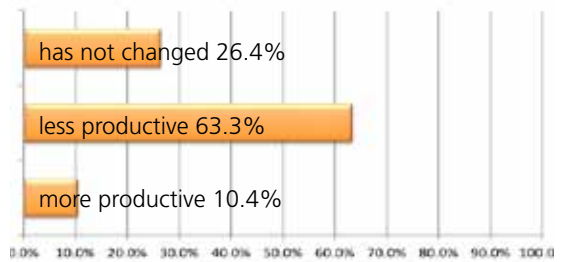
7.8% - I would prefer that my Co-worker notify the Professional Standards Committee, so that a fellow Flight Attendant may discuss the issue with me.



1% - I would prefer that my Co-worker notify Management, so that an Inflight Supervisor may discuss the issue with me.

91.2% - I would prefer that my Co-worker discuss the issue with me in person.

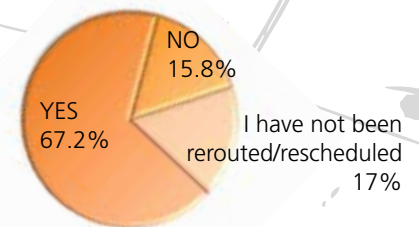
During the last three years, have your pairings become more or less productive?



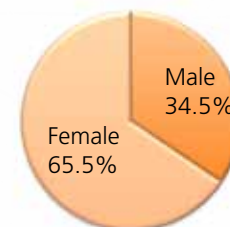
Do you plan to fly Near International pairings?



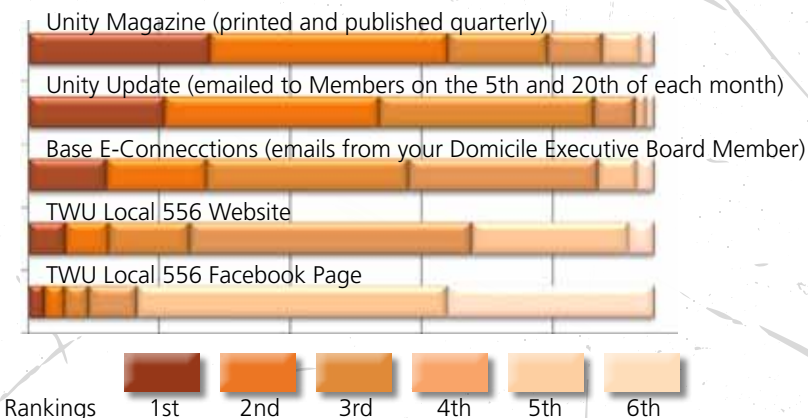
Has the quality of your life been negatively impacted by increased reroutes/reschedules?



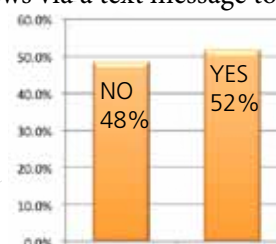
Are you male or female?



Rank these in the order that you prefer to receive your "Union News?"

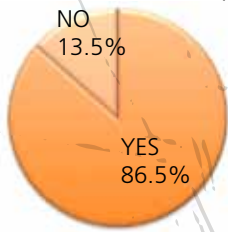


Would you like to receive important Union News via a text message to your mobile device?

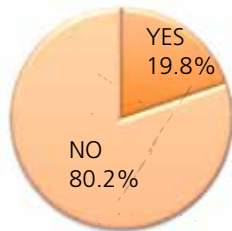


## Political

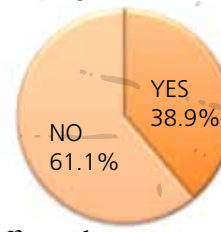
Are you planning to vote in the United States Midterm Elections, held on Tuesday, November 4, 2014?



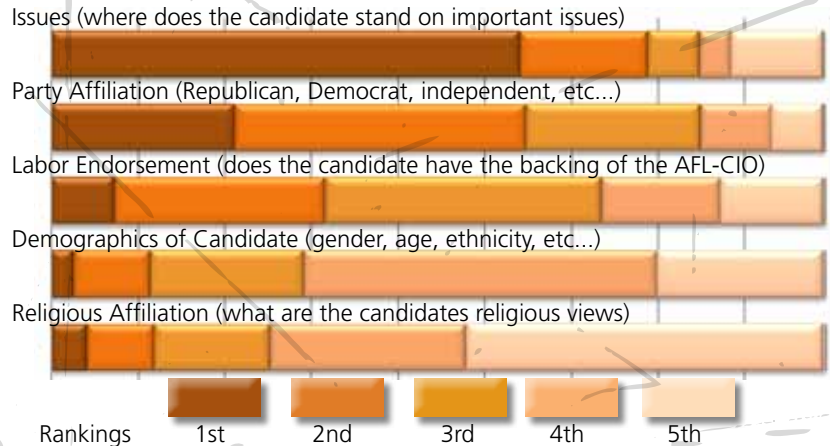
Have you previously volunteered to work on a political campaign (including precinct walks or phone banking for a candidate)?



Have you previously contributed monetarily to a political campaign?



When considering a candidate for public office, what matters most in your decision?



# The Union is Available When You Need Them

by Jennifer Rogers

I'm writing this article about how nice it is to have someone from the Union Office available seven days a week. When I was first contacted about writing this, I was very nervous. I have never written anything before that was to be printed and read by many people. Once it was explained to me why I had been considered to write this article I felt compelled to share my story and give this a try.

In December of 2010, I called the Union Office to confirm my overlap question concerning Article 10.9.I. I had picked up a trip at the end of the month, and after reviewing the Contract, I thought that I still needed twelve hours domicile break between this and the next trip and not just the usual nine hours between trips. A Member of the Grievance Team reaffirmed that I was correct.

When the bids came out on the weekend I called Scheduling and they said that I was not correct; apparently this was a relatively new amendment so not everyone was familiar with it. I immediately called the Union Office back and Audrey Stone, who was then the Baltimore Domicile Executive Board Member, answered the phone on the weekend, during the Union's weekend hours. I first met Audrey when I was based in Baltimore. She was the Union Base Representative and we had a trip together. I immediately felt a connection with her and that she is not only knowledgeable about the Contract but also a very patient and caring person. She confirmed that I was correct and assured me she would contact Scheduling again for me and have it taken care of. She did, and I then got the trip for VJA.

I am thankful to have the Union available every day of the week, for us to get answers for our questions and concerns, since we fly all days of the week and situations can arise at any time, not just Monday thru Friday.

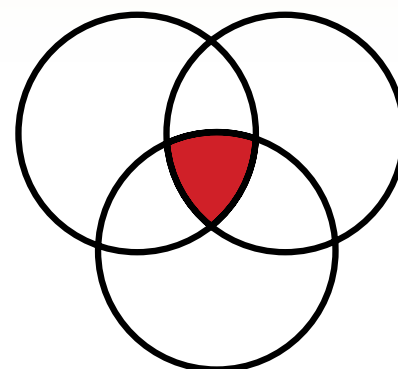


Jennifer Rogers is an Orlando-based Flight Attendant.



# What is CISM and what do they do?

by Eileen Rodriguez



The CISM Team has been a joint committee of TWU Local 556 and Southwest Airlines since 1996, but many Flight Attendants tell us that they really are not sure who we are or what we do until they need us or a Co-worker suggests getting help from the CISM Team.

CISM stands for Critical Incident Stress Management. In a nutshell, CISM Team Members are highly trained Flight Attendants who are there to assist you when you have experienced either a duty-related trauma or a personal traumatic event. Each CISM Team Member attends yearly training on Trauma, Grief, Stress Management, Suicide Prevention and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Each year, we hear guest speakers present specialized training on pertinent topics.

Below is a list of some the types of incidents that CISM handles:

- Aircraft Incident
- Aircraft Mechanical
- Aborted Takeoff
- Anxiety and Depression
- Assault on Employee
- Bird strike
- Confidential Issues
- Death of Flight Attendant
- Death of Flight Attendant's family member
- Passenger Death on Board
- Decompression
- Employee Fatality
- Substance Referral
- Flight Attendant Family Member Death
- Flight Attendant Hospitalization
- Flight Attendant Injury
- Medical Emergency
- Non-Work Related Referral
- Passenger Misconduct
- Sexual Assault
- Smoke in Cabin
- Suicide
- Suicide Attempt
- Severe to moderate Turbulence with or without injury

The CISM Team consists of 57 Flight Attendants and one Chairperson and is represented in all Flight Attendant bases.

We are often asked, "How did you know to call me?"

When an event happens, we may be notified in many different ways;

- Dispatch
- Scheduling
- Inflight Bases
- TWU Local 556
- Flight Attendants themselves

With the opening of the Network Operations Control (NOC) in the summer of 2014, we have been receiving the majority of our notifications from them.

A typical notification looks like this:

The NOC receives notification that there is an event that affects the Flight Attendant(s). The NOC calls the CISM person on-call and gives them the pertinent information (Flight Number, Flight Attendant name, Employee number, cell phone number, and the information about the event).

The CISM person on-call will contact the Flight Attendant(s) involved and offer peer support. We will try to reach the affected Flight Attendants as soon as possible. Typically, we make

ALL contact made with the CISM Team is confidential. The information you share with your CISM peer is not discussed with anyone. We do not take notes or record any names or Employee numbers in our database. Each CISM Team Member signs a Letter of Intent that includes a Confidentiality Statement. Please know that your call is ALWAYS confidential.



two attempts to reach you and leave a message asking you to return our phone call if possible. If we reach your voicemail, we will leave a generic message asking you to call CISM back; we never want to alarm a family Member that you may have been involved in an incident. Once we make contact with you, the ball is in your court. We may have one conversation or many depending on what your needs may be. We also might follow-up with you periodically afterwards to assure that you are progressing well.

The CISM Team will work with you as long as you need assistance. We can refer for additional assistance if needed. We do not have the authority to process any trip pulls, adjust pay, or approve any types of leave of absence. We can however assist you getting to the proper people who can assist you with these needs.

Sometimes a personal event might occur that does not involve the NOC, Dispatch, Scheduling, the Inflight bases or TWU Local 556. If we are made aware that a Flight Attendant needs assistance, we will make an initial contact to help you with the event that occurred. If you are involved in something and you need assistance, and you have not heard from the CISM Team, please reach out and call us!

Your CISM Team is very well prepared to assist in any way possible, whether it's taking the time to listen to a situation in which you were involved that's affecting your work life, or responding to the scene of an aircraft incident/accident. Be proactive and CALL CISM if you've experienced a traumatic event at work, or if a traumatic event is affecting your work/personal life.

We hope this information will give you a better picture of what we do on the CISM Team. Please feel free to ask any CISM Team Member any questions you may have regarding the Team's procedures. Remember, the CISM Hotline is open 24/7.

CISM HOTLINE NUMBER: 1-800-408-3220 or you can email us at [CISM@twu556.org](mailto:CISM@twu556.org)



*Eileen Rodriguez is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and the Chairperson of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Committee.*

## The Benefits of Education

by Matt Hettich

One of the many benefits of having a Union in the workplace is that the Members have access to information about their employment Contract that isn't solely provided to them through their employer. This makes a difference. Think about it, if your employer was the only one telling you what you could or could not do, you would have to trust that your employer's view of every situation is fully aligned with yours. And as we all know, sometimes Crew Scheduling's interpretation of things differs from ours. So, here at Southwest Airlines we have a Union and a group of Flight Attendants in the Union Office who are tasked by their Members with providing accurate information about our Contract.

To assist in the mission of explaining the Contract, the TWU Local 556 Education Committee has, in recent years, sought to explain the Contract in easy to understand language. In 2009, the Education Committee underwent restructuring. The committee was formerly called the Scholarship and Education Committee, but split into two separate committees to fulfill the primary role of educating our Members on our Contract. The committee, under the tutelage of then Baltimore Domicile Executive Board Member Audrey Stone, then sought to focus its finite time and resources on explaining our Contract in a common vernacular that all of us could understand and decipher. To Audrey's credit, she had been doing this prior to being a Member of the TWU Local 556 Executive Board, as she had published the Contract Quickies educational handbook with her own resources since 2008. From 2009 through 2012, the Education Committee, under Audrey's leadership, produced the Contract Live video series and the Contract Live Resource Guidesheets, resources tailored to explaining the Contract succinctly and coherently.

Today, the Education Committee has sought to continue the work begun by Audrey by looking for innovative ways at explaining complex Contract language in easy to understand formats. To boot, the Education Committee has developed the Contract Education Handbook, distributed to Special Merger Training (SMT) classes and New Hire classes alike. And, the Education Committee has been hard at work developing educational resources for the Contract Action Network (CAN) and writing educational articles for Unity Update and Unity Magazine.

Moving forward, the TWU Local 556 Education Committee will continue to look for innovative ways to bring complex Contract language to our Members in easy to understand formats. We are currently looking to incorporate videos that can be easily shared and geared toward teaching Contract information visually. Your Union works for you in many ways and the TWU Local 556 Education Committee is committed to being a resource for the Membership.



*Matt Hettich is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant. Matt serves as the Oakland Domicile Executive Board Member and the Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Education Committee.*

## TWU Local 556 Uniform Committee Report

Over the last several months, there have been a number of Uniform and Appearance Standard changes and updates promulgated to our workgroup. These updates have come in both Read Before Fly (RBF) forms and Inflight Info On the Go (IIO-TG) communications. I would like to highlight a few of these changes for you so that you may reference these changes to ensure you are in compliance.

- On June 8, 2014 a revision was instituted which applied to General Uniform information and deleted any redundancy within various articles and better defined definitions of approved jewelry, holiday attire, personal hygiene and other accessories.
- On June 30, Management announced the end of payroll deductions for all uniform purchases that exceeded ones allotment balance. \*\* if your uniform purchase is over your allotment balance you must use a credit card to pay for the outstanding balance. Please note that you must create a separate order for credit card transactions as the Lands End Website will not allow you to use both your allotment and a credit card for a single transaction.
- On August 9, a handbook revision was instituted that updated the Uniform luggage section as well as Uniform Regulations, initial purchase and replacement, Flight Attendant responsibilities regarding maintaining the uniform and how it is to be worn.
- On September 12, information was disseminated regarding updated approved shoe styles that can be worn, specifically that wedges can be worn with the dress.
- On October 9, a new navy trench coat was introduced for women on the Lands End Website which boasts 3M Thin-sulate™ quilted zipout liner and 60% combed cotton/40% polyester shell, treated with Dupont Teflon®.

You may have heard that Southwest Airlines has announced that with the new livery, we will also have a new Uniform. I want to reiterate what the initial company statement says: “... *we’re beginning the process of developing a new uniform—an updated, unified look that represents Southwest Employees. Although it will take several years to transition new uniforms system wide, Frontline Employees will be a valuable part of the entire process.*”

In my experience as your Uniform Chairperson, I have been privy to the processes that occur when changing vendors, retiring uniform pieces and adding and/or changing a uniform piece. This process entails many departments, many steps and a lot of time; and that is just for one piece. An entire new uniform will be an event unlike any process neither my predecessors nor myself have experienced.

Because this endeavor is just beginning, we **do not know** what pieces will make up the uniform compliment, what colors they will be or whether they will be department specific. What I do know is what you have communicated to me thus far as to what YOU would like our new Uniform to look like. You may continue to send your Uniform related wants and needs to [uniforms@twu556.org](mailto:uniforms@twu556.org) and [uniforms@wnco.com](mailto:uniforms@wnco.com). You may also reference RBF 2014-120 which outlines Uniform questions that we do have the answers to.

Remember, you can always find the latest and most up to date information on Uniforms on the Uniform Committee page on the TWU Local 556 Website. Please feel free to email or call me anytime and I thank you for allowing me to represent your voice on the Uniform Committee.

*Crystal Reven is a Houston-based Flight Attendant. Crystal serves as the TWU Local 556 Uniform Committee Chairperson and as a Member of the Union's Coordinating Council.*





# Supplemental Insurance Benefits for TWU Local 556 Members

by Lori Whitaker

Whether you are a brand new Member of TWU Local 556 or are transitioning from AirTran/Special Merger Training (SMT) status, you can take comfort in the fact that your Membership in TWU Local 556 is PACKED with RICH voluntary insurance benefits. Being a Member of TWU Local 556 means that you automatically have someone that will work to get your issues resolved. The Union is your voice and advocate at times that you need it most.

## ***How has TWU Local 556 benefited its Members with voluntary benefits over the years?***

- Eight years ago, we partnered with VIP Inc., a voluntary insurance broker, and accomplished a significant goal of securing a payroll slot for voluntary benefits.
- Over \$16 million in claims benefits have been paid out to Union Members through short term disability policies (Lincoln Financial) and the various supplemental policies made available to Union Members through Colonial Life.

Being a Member of TWU Local 556 has more benefits than just “presence” and “representation.” TWU Local 556 has worked to secure annual enrollments to allow Members to meet individually with a benefits counselor to review how the voluntary benefits work, as well as how they coordinate with their Southwest Airlines benefits, such as long term disability and health insurance deductibles. Individuals can meet with benefit counselors either on site at the Flight Attendant Lounge or via dedicated call center. The call center is not only used annually for enrollment purposes, but works to answer your specific voluntary insurance questions, year in and year out. The call center gives Flight Attendants access to a service center that knows your concerns, and that care about getting you the correct information.

Below are the voluntary benefits options available, some of which are even “portable” should you change jobs or retire. This pertains specifically to some of the individual Colonial policies, most importantly, Universal Life insurance:

**Short term disability insurance:** an income replacement policy for off job accidents and sickness. This disability product has multiple elimination periods and benefit durations, allowing it to be a customizable benefit that works for you, at a time and level when you need it most.

**Universal Life Insurance:** helps provide financial security for family members and can be tailored to help meet your individual life insurance needs.

**Accident Insurance:** Helps offset unexpected expenses resulting from a covered accident, such as emergency room fees, deductibles and co-payments. Optional accident and sickness disability riders are also available for your working spouse/domestic partner at an additional cost.

**Cancer Insurance:** Helps offset the out-of-pocket medical and indirect non-medical expenses related to Cancer diagnosis and treatment. This plan also provides a benefit for specific cancer-screening tests/wellness tests.

**Critical Illness Insurance:** Helps offset the out-of-pocket medical and indirect nonmedical expenses related to critical illness that most medical plans may not cover.

**Hospital Confinement Indemnity Insurance:** Helps you with the rising costs associated with a covered hospital confinement or covered outpatient surgery.

**Paycheck Direct** is a member-purchasing program available through payroll deduction. Participants have “purchase power” through payroll deduction. That means there is no “interest” and no “credit check” on products available. Catalog mail outs are quarterly. Maximum purchase amounts do apply (\$500-2500 based on date of hire).

Additionally, as a Member of TWU Local 556 you have access to additional benefits and services through TWU International. UNION PLUS is an organization that uses a collective buying power of Unions to offer valuable, discounted products and services exclusively to TWU Members. Among a few of the benefits and services, there are scholarships, travel discounts, auto insurance, financial services, legal services and hardship assistance.

In conclusion, being a Member of TWU Local 556 will provide a sense of solidarity, savings, and service-the likes of which can only be achieved through Membership in an awesome organization that works for you.



# Grievance Committee Update

by Becky Parker

I am very excited to write this particular Grievance Committee Update for the Fall Unity Magazine. I will touch upon the Grievance process up to Board of Adjustment (BOA) and Arbitration, along with the updates the Union has made to both the BOA and Arbitration Panel.

Grievances arise out of conflict every day because conflict is the source behind every dispute. That's why conflict resolution is a significant part of grievance work. If you are able to fully and effectively communicate, it is very highly likely you will find resolution that is satisfactory to all involved.

Any time a dispute arises between an Employee and their employer it is considered a conflict or disagreement between two parties, the parties being: 1) the Union and 2) Management. It is both the Union's job and Management's job to work together in an effort to establish whether or not there is a problem/conflict, and if so, how it will be resolved. There were 78 new grievances filed over conflict just since my last update three short months ago. These disputes were added to a number of grievances on file already. As most of you know or have been told, the grievance process can be a lengthy process. I am here to tell you; it does not always have to be. Conflict resolution does not have to be a difficult job and is only as lengthy as the parties make it. When the parties involved communicate properly and are open to all points of view, there is usually a solution right around the corner. Having a good relationship enables you to come to agreements much easier. As long as the parties involved participate professionally, listen to all points of view, ask questions, and ensure that all information surrounding the dispute is out on the table, it makes it that much easier to establish the source of the problem. Once the problem is established, then it is easier to work toward a solution. This is called communicating effectively.

More often than not, a dispute is resolved prior to involving a third party. However, there are times when a grievance cannot be resolved and continues to Board of Adjustment or Arbitration. This is something we try to avoid by effectively communicating. I will give you a little more in depth detail about how the grievance process works. The first and lowest step of the grievance process is the filing of the grievance. Grievances are filed for both Contract violations and for disciplinary situations. The Grievance Committee, Executive Board and the Inflight Labor Relations Department handle all grievances. In cases involving discipline, a Step 2 Hearing takes place within ten days of filing the grievance. The Step 2 Hearings for Termination and 30-day suspension grievances are held in Dallas with the Vice President or his designee and the Grievant is represented by a member the Grievance Committee. The Step 2 Hearing for discipline grievances not involving termination or 30-day suspensions, are held at the base level with Base Leadership and the Grievant is represented by either a Domicile Executive Board Member or Shop Steward.

The Step 2 Hearing is the first place to open up the lines of communication and a great place to find resolve. The Grievance Committee, Board Members and Shop Stewards are there to ensure the hearing is conducted fairly and appropriately. Our Grievance Committee, Board Members and Shop Stewards play a big part in the Step 2 Hearing process from taking notes (for purposes of potential evidence later on in the grievance process), to supporting the Member while going through a dispute that is extremely important to the individual. I would like to recognize the Shop Stewards, Board Members and Grievance Committee for their extremely incredible advocacy at the Step 2 Level. Also, I would like to share our appreciation for the Management's willingness to settle disputes at

this lower level of the process. To give you some actual facts regarding settlements obtained just in the last three months, twenty-seven (27) grievances were settled at Step 2 level. This included seven (7) termination grievances and twenty (20) non-termination grievances. I am very pleased to see the number of settlements reached at the lowest level of the grievance process. These settlements were a result of all efforts put forth by our Executive Board, Shop Stewards, Grievance Committee and the Management.

Along with the twenty-seven (27) settlements reached at Step 2, an additional fifteen (15) grievances were settled after Step 2 but prior to Board of Adjustment and Arbitration. This is an incredible forty-two (42) total grievances settled in favor of the Grievant in just a short three-month period, two of which were group grievances. As I said before, conflict is the source behind a dispute, which is why communicating fully and effectively is a significant part of finding resolve satisfactory to all involved. Sometimes, grievances that do not settle are withdrawn without prejudice. This means that Management had just cause to issue the discipline or had proof that a Contract violation did not occur. To give you an example



of this, the Union withdrew thirty-four (34) grievances without prejudice and two (2) grievances expired. This means that in the last three months, the Union removed seventy-eight (78) grievances from the books through settlements, withdrawals and expirations. The funny thing about this is, if you recall from my mention above, the Union filed seventy-eight grievances in this same time period. Grievances are always in motion, which is why we currently are sitting at 105 Grievances on file, even after all this movement and there are times when grievances are not resolved.

When Management and the Union are unable to resolve a grievance, a third party must resolve the conflict for us, which is why the Union and Management negotiated a conflict resolution mechanism that gives us the ability to designate someone else to resolve the conflict for us. This happens through the Board of Adjustment Process or Arbitration. The Board of Adjustment serves as a precursor to Arbitration and is cost effective for both the Union and Management. This process allows for a group of individuals within our Company to resolve conflict within our own Culture. These individuals serve as judges working together to find resolve to the dispute. The individuals are selected by Management and the Union to serve as the BOA Panel.

Since the last Unity Publication, the Union updated its BOA Panel and provided training to those individuals. The BOA training took place on September 9 at the TWU Local 556 Office in Dallas. This training provided each Panel Member guidelines to assist in their efforts to have a good working knowledge of the Board of Adjustment process. The training was a success and TWU Local 556 enjoyed the time and effort each Member put into the training. The Union Panelists bring great value and experience to the table and we are confident the individuals selected will serve well on our Panel.

We have also been working with Management to compete our Arbitration Panel. Southwest Airlines and TWU Local 556 jointly select Arbitration Panelists who serve on our Arbitration

Panel. The Parties rotate through eight (8) mutually agreed upon Arbitrators to resolve disputes when a grievance proceeds all the way to Arbitration. Arbitration does occur from time to time so it is very important to have a full and complete arbitration panel. Since the last update, the Union and Management mutually agreed on two (2) new Arbitrators that have been added to our Panel, now filling all vacancies. Both parties thoroughly researched these new additions and are confident they will also serve well on our Panel.

Since I talked about conflict resolution, effective communication and the importance of finding resolve prior to a costly Board of Adjustment or Arbitration hearing, I would like to point out that the number of cases resolved in just a three-month period not only shows that your Union is working for you, but it also shows that TWU Local 556 and Southwest Airlines Management are working effectively together.

I am reminded year after year through Texas Labor Management Conferences, National Academy of Arbitrators Conferences, Grievance Meetings with Inflight Labor Management and working Members on a daily basis, that Labor Management should not be Labor vs. Management. We are ONE Team working TOGETHER! We are not divided, nor do we have to be. The only way to find resolve is to come together and unite as one team of individuals. It takes Southwest Airlines Management and the Union working together to find resolve for the betterment of everyone involved. The Union cannot obtain a settlement without Management's agreement to settle. It takes both sides to do this! I must say, it is an absolute honor and privilege to write this Article to all you, and I am most thankful for the opportunity to represent all Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants alongside every amazing TWU Local 556 Advocate and Southwest Airlines Leaders. What an amazing experience.



*Becky Parker is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and the TWU Local 556 Grievance Committee Chairperson. [bparker@twu556.org](mailto:bparker@twu556.org) 214-640-4321*

## Airline Angels

Your Union would love to brag on you – Southwest Flight Attendants – in regard to your community service, including any and all volunteer projects.

Naturally, as a volunteer, you do not expect recognition, but we ask all you humble volunteers to share your story and pictures with us. Your personal story may inspire others to step out and get involved.

To share your experience, or if you know of an Airline Angel, please email name, Employee number, contact information and a brief description of the service.

Please attach pictures (if available)

[AirlineAngels@twu556.org](mailto:AirlineAngels@twu556.org)



# ClearSkies for the Holidays

by Michele Nickleberry

Depression is a very real condition and one that affects most of the human population at any given time. There is situational depression that can be triggered by one or more circumstances...this affects us all at some point in our lives. There is clinical depression, which is usually brought on by a chemical imbalance in the body. Both men and women suffer from depression. In fact, depression is often undiagnosed by our primary care physicians because it can mask itself as a medical illness (diabetes, high blood pressure, etc.). It is now recommended that if you suffer from a medical condition that is chronic that you also take a short quiz/test in your doctor's office or counselor's office for depression.

Clear Skies is probably one of the most under used and misunderstood services provided to us as Employees of Southwest Airlines, but one of the most important benefits that we have at this Company. Clear Skies is a part of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), however it is but a small part. The EAP covers living well, working well and being well. Living well encompasses things such as relationships, parenting skills, legal and financial help, and information for military families. Working well covers school, education, travel and workplace issues. Being well is the area that covers addictions, health issues, counseling, etc. All of these benefits are readily accessible to each of us on a daily basis.

Obtaining help from Clear Skies is as easy as 1,2,3. Step 1) call 1-800-742-6911; Step 2) speak confidentially with a degreed, licensed counselor who is trained in psychology/counseling and Step 3) begin the healing.

This process is highly confidential. NO ONE at Southwest Airlines will know that you called or what was discussed. Clear Skies can offer you counseling via telephone on the spot. You can also obtain up to three counselors names in your area who participate in our EAP program. In addition, the best part of this is that Employees are granted five FREE visits with a participating EAP counselor. After the five free visits, we only pay a small co-pay (usually less than \$30) per visit. Although I have made this sound easy, when you are suffering from depression, there is NOTHING easy about seeking help. If you believe that you might suffer from depression, please seek help. There is NO SHAME in being strong enough to ask for help.

Clear Skies may be accessed through the internet at <https://www.liveandworkwell.com/public/> and entering the code "SWA737" to remain anonymous or register for more specific services

Here are two additional Websites on depression

<http://www.adaa.org/>

<http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=home>

live and work  
well



Michele Nickleberry is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and serves on the TWU Local 556 Grievance Team.

## Our CAN Members

... big and small.





# Q & A with the TWU Local 556 Scheduling Committee

by Lisa Trafton

## Who writes our pairings?

Pairings are built by a computer system known as the Duty Period Optimization System (DPOS). DPOS builds the pairings based on the flow of the aircraft, duty periods per base and staffing levels.

## Who writes our lines?

Eleven active, working Flight Attendants from all seniority's and different bases write our lines. On average, we each fly approximately 90 TFP per month. Our committee is made up of commuters and non-commuters. We try to have at least one Flight Attendant from each base represented on the committee. However, any Committee Member is capable of writing the lines for any base; you do not have to be based there to write the lines for that base.

## How long does it take to write lines?

Southwest Airlines gives the Scheduling Committee one day to write Vacation Relief (VR) Lines (from 0800 until 1730). We are given two days to write Primary Lines (from 0800-1730). We try to come in early if space is available and if the necessary information is ready in advance.

## Who pays the line writers?

The Scheduling Committee is a joint committee, with expenses shared between TWU Local 556 and Southwest Airlines.

## Do Line Writers build their own lines?

No. We must bid for lines with everyone else at our own seniority.

## Why are there five trips on my line?

Usually, if there are five trips on a line, there are also five of those start days in that month (five Sundays).

## Why are there so many "junk" lines?

Contractually we can only build 18% junk lines. (i.e. three on/three off lines with one or two 48-hour domicile breaks).

## Why are there no clean Vacation Relief (VR) lines?

Historically we have never had clean VR Lines. VR Lines are made up of any pairings that were left over after building Pri-

mary Lines, vacation pulls and any pulls made prior to noon on the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month (i.e. Medical, maternity, Union, military, OJI, jury duty and terminations).

VR Lines vary greatly by month. It all depends on the seniority of the Flight Attendants holding vacation during the month and what trips they bid for. During junior vacation months, you'll see more weekend flying and during senior vacation months you'll see more weekday and holiday trips on VR Lines.

## Do you build with the Flight Attendants in mind?

Yes. All lines are built by Flight Attendants that fly, just like you. We build lines to the best of our ability with what we are given. We have certain Contractual obligations that we must meet (i.e. 35% weekends off, a minimum of two turn lines, 70% "pure" lines and no more than 18% junk lines).

## Why do all the vacation slots offered require you to fly weekends in order to be pulled from two pairings?

Our vacation slots have been the same for at least the last 25 years. However, each year, the calendar changes.

## Why are there AMs on PM lines and vice versa?

With all the frequent schedule changes, pairings that were generated as AMs one week sometimes turn into PMs the next week. Per our Contract, we can only have one "color change" per line.

## Why do we not have the same pairing every week?

Southwest Airlines Network Planning now changes the flight schedules more frequently. As a consequence, this sometimes prevents the same pairing from being built throughout the month. Also, if we have four pairings that are exactly the same from week-to-week, but only pay 19.5 TFP each, one will have to be changed. Contractually, all primary lines must pay at least 80 TFP.

Lisa Trafton is a Houston-based Flight Attendant and the Chairperson of the Scheduling Committee.



**Sometimes when I bid, I can clearly see pairings with the same overnight. Why are they not on the same line?**

We do try to place the same pairings or at least the same overnights on the same line, time permitting. Unfortunately, we cannot physically look at all 41,354 pairings (October 2014) in the short time that we are given to build the lines.

**Why is an 1159 Central check-in on an AM line?**

Contractually, any pairing that checks in prior to noon Central, regardless of the time zone or release time, is an AM pairing.

**Why do we have so many "PM turned AM" pairings?**

More than 50% of our Flight Attendants are commuters. On average, only 5% of all pairings are PMs which turn into AMs.

**Why has the length of our overnights decreased?**

Our average overnight is still 16 hours, give or take five to ten minutes either way.

**Why are our duty days longer?**

Our average duty day is still eight hours, give or take five to ten minutes either way.

**Why there are so many aircraft swaps?**

When Southwest Airlines schedules more flying in the day (summer), we will have more aircraft swaps. The number of aircraft swaps has decreased with the implementation of the fall schedule.



***Our Union Office hosts Contract Negotiations, Board of Adjustments, Membership Meetings, dinners for Special Merger Training (SMT) and New Hire classes, numerous committee meetings, and of course, our Executive Board meets here once a month.***



## What Does the TWU Local 556 Grievance Team Do for You?

by Beth Ross

The TWU Local 556 Office is the foundation of our Union. There are numerous activities here on a regular basis. Our office hosts Contract Negotiations, Board of Adjustments, Membership Meetings, dinners for Special Merger Training (SMT) and New Hire classes, numerous committee meetings, and of course, our Executive Board meets here once a month. Another important group that reports to the TWU Local 556 Office daily is our Grievance Staff.

The TWU Local 556 Grievance Staff currently consists of eleven dedicated Flight Attendants, from all seniority levels. These Flight Attendants applied, interviewed and were selected to work on the Grievance Staff for TWU Local 556. We have a Grievance Chairperson who oversees our Team Members, of which seven file grievances, and one specializes in leave information. Each Team Member brings unique knowledge and



experience to help our Flight Attendants navigate the grievance process. However, the team also juggles many other duties and works hard to meet the needs of our 12,000 plus Members.

As I'm sure most of you know, the TWU Local 556 Office is located in Dallas. Our office hours reflect Southwest Airlines Headquarters' office hours because our Union business is conducted Monday through Friday 0800-1800 CST. This is so that we may conduct business with Management daily. These hours provide our team the ability to work on all types of cases with Scheduling, Planning, Payroll, the Attendance and Leave Department and Inflight Labor Relations. We also answer calls on Saturday and Sunday from 0900-1700.

Flight Attendants reach out to our Union first, so the Grievance staff begins each day answering Member's questions and solving problems. When you are rescheduled and are experiencing irregular operations, we experience it too. What impacts you, impacts our team. We provide guidance to help Members in all types of situations. If you have an emergency or crisis, an illness or leave, a contractual question, a discipline issue or any type of general question, whatever the issue, the Grievance Staff is available to answer your call. When needed, our Team also works as a liaison with the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Flight Attendant Drug and Alcohol (FADAP) Teams.

All Grievances are managed by the Grievance Staff in Dallas. The Team works with our Domicile Representatives and our Shop Stewards to conduct Fact-Finding and Step 2 Meetings for disciplinary grievances. When discipline is issued, the Grievance Staff is ready and prepared to file a grievance on behalf of our Members. Here's what happens when a disciplinary grievance is filed:

1. The grievance statement is prepared and faxed to Inflight Employee Resources.
2. The grievance statement is acknowledged with a Manager's signature or Director's signature.
3. A Step 2 Hearing is set up.
4. When a Step 2 decision is rendered, the decision is written on the grievance statement and returned to the TWU Local 556 Office via fax.
5. Step 3 is the reply to a Step 2 decision. The reply depends if

the grievance has been accepted, settled or denied.

6. If the Grievance is denied and the decision is appealed, and if the Flight Attendant wants to continue the grievance, the case is moved forward and is sent to our Executive Board for further review.
7. If the Grievance is denied by the Executive Board, the grievant can withdraw the grievance and choose not to pursue it.
8. If the Grievance is settled or accepted, we speak with the Flight Attendant involved to ensure they agree with the settlement. Then we notify Management during Step 3 and accept the offer.

If it is a contractual grievance, similar steps are taken with the Grievance:

1. The grievance statement is filed with Management.
2. Management (Employee Resources/Labor Relations) has ten days in which to respond.
3. Management can accept, settle or deny the grievance.
4. If it is denied, the grievance moves forward to our Executive Board for review.
5. The grievance can be withdrawn by the grievant.
6. If it is accepted or settled, the grievance is considered settled.

Filing a grievance is a very detailed process. When managing either type of grievance, the most important issue is the "time frame." As you can see, there are several steps when overseeing a grievance and failure to maintain correct time frames can be detrimental to our members.

We hope you have enjoyed a small view into our world. Just like the airplane, it is a busy, fast-paced work environment. Please remember your TWU Local 556 Grievance Staff works for you.



*Beth Ross is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant. Beth serves as a Shop Steward and on the Grievance Team.*



# When Did You Become Part of the Union?

by Roy Soria



How do you get the most accurate and up-to-date information to a work group that is spread across ten bases, four time zones, fifty states, and sometimes international locations? It is definitely a difficult task but one that TWU Local 556 has taken seriously. We rely on a Communications Team to update our Website and Facebook page, print quarterly Unity Magazines that are placed in Flight Attendants' mailboxes, send bi-monthly Unity Updates via email and Domicile Executive Board Members put information on the Union Red Racks in the lounges. However, probably the most visible lately is our team of Lounge Educators. Currently you may have seen Members of the Contract Action Network (CAN) in the lounges and on the airport concourse in bright orange t-shirts and polo shirts. After all, how can you miss us?

Our Membership is unlike most other work groups in a unionized environment. We check in for a trip, print out a trip sheet, go to our aircraft, and we are gone for days at a time. The workforce is a very transient one and we rely heavily on jumpseat gossip and social media for "updates." That is exactly what Lounge Educators strive to get away from. Our two main goals are to pass along information directly from the source and to engage the TWU Local 556 Membership. We are in the lounges to answer your questions and to get feedback on current subject matters from both the Negotiating Team and the Executive Board. Lounge Educators are often seen as the face of the Union simply because of visibility and accessibility, being face-to-face with the Membership.

Volunteer Members of TWU Local 556 that are passionate about organizing and mobilization usually staff lounge Mobilizations. Their willingness to help the Membership is unfortunately a thankless job, but without our volunteers, our Mobilizations would not be possible. These educators are eager to answer your questions and listen to your concerns. They are demonstrating a Servant's Heart and living by the Golden Rule every day by being in our bases serving the Membership.

As Members of TWU Local 556, we must realize that our obligation to our Union is not over when we pay our Union dues. We are ALL part of the Union and it is up to each and every one of us to engage in the process. It is our responsibility to keep informed and to periodically make sure that the Union that has given us an

industry-leading Collective Bargaining Agreement, stays healthy and runs efficiently. We cannot rely on chatter and rumors and take them as truth.

Often times I hear, "Oh, I did not know you were part of the Union" or "I'm glad you keep up with the Union because I do not." Each and every one of us should contribute to our Union the best way we can. I know many of us are tied to personal obligations in our home lives and it becomes a difficult task to schedule a few hours to volunteer, but it only takes a few minutes to read a publication or to stop and chat with the CAN Members when they are in the lounge. It is our obligation to stay informed and to stop non-factual rumors from continuing to spread. Please get the information directly from your Union and its representatives, take the time to vote, and help strengthen our Local. As a collective force, we are much more powerful than any one Member standing alone.

So the next time you see a bright orange shirt walking towards you in the concourse or in the lounge, please take a minute to stop and talk with us. Share your concerns with your Lounge Educators but please be respectful and courteous to them. In my experience, many Members have shared words of encouragement and thanks with us and that act alone makes us feel like we are appropriately serving the Membership, when the work of the Union does not go unnoticed and appreciated.



Roy Soria is a Chicago-based Flight Attendant. Roy serves as a Contract Action Network (CAN) Leader.

# Eat Better. Don't Text.

by Cuyler Thompson

"But she's so young and pretty and happy, Tina."

"So was I, twenty-five years ago."

"And she's so sweet to the Passengers."

"So are you, Ashley. But I don't see you texting while you're watching the overwing exit."

Jaime jumped in, "Is it really any of our business, Tina?"

"I don't want sweet, pretty Alice from Dallas getting fired. I'm going to tell her." Tina released her seatbelt.

"Let's talk about this, Tina."

"I'm going to pass out their peanuts. And try and save her job!"

"The Fasten Seatbelt Sign is still on; you'll get her in trouble for that, too. SIT DOWN!" Jaime blocked

Tina's access to the center aisle.

Ashley activated her verbal judo diversionary skills with a Red Vine licorice and a copy of LUV Lines magazine. "Look, Tina. Southwest Airlines has a new Vice President of something!"

Tina settled back into her seat and crossed her arms.

Jaime tried to quietly reason with her. "Tina, think about this. We don't know the Crew's relationship; they might not be getting along, and if you remind Alice that being on her phone during boarding will get her fired, the other Flight Attendants might hear you and might write her up."

Ashley tried another tactic. "Remember the time we stole the Captain's pants, Tina?"

Tina spoke up, "Why do these Flight Attendants continue to write each other up? It's just stupid and very Junior High, in my opinion. Alice may not even know how serious of an infraction it is. We've got to have our Union Brother and Sister's backs, Jaime. Famous TV sister Marsha Brady once said, 'You know, by tattling on your friends, Cindy, you're really just tattling on yourself. You're just telling your friends that you're a tattletale. Now, is that the tale you want to tell?' WE are not tattletales."

"No, we're not, Tina."

Tina continued, "It would be extreme, but Southwest Airlines Management might discipline a Flight Attendant for being on their phone during boarding or during taxi, takeoff or landing. Violating Class 1, Section 14 of the Flight Attendant Work and Conduct Rules could result in up to a 30-day suspension or possible termination for the first offense. Also, a Class 3, Section 1 violation is 'engaging in any conduct while on duty that creates the impression or appearance that you are not devoting yourself and your attention 100 percent to the safety, comfort, and well-being of all Customers.'"

Ashley asked, "What's a Class 1, Section 14?"

Tina replied, "Class 1, Section 14 is intentional conduct which endangers the life or safety of others including failure to comply with all safety rules and regulations. Flight Attendants are prohibited from utilizing cell phones to make calls or text while in front of Customers."

Ashley said, "The guy I flew with last week was always texting his boyfriend while we taxied to the gate."

"And did you tattle, Ashley? Of course not."

"The Captain tattled on you for stealing his pants, Tina."

"He called the Professional Standards Committee, Ashley."

Ashley squealed, "Oh, let's call Professional Standards about Alice! They're always really sweet and will be really nice to her!"

Tina and Jaime both turned to look at Ashley.



*Cuyler Thompson is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant, serves as the Executive Board's Recording Secretary and as the Communication Chairperson of TWU Local 556.*



# On-the-Job Injury (OJI)/ Workers' Compensation Investigation

by Donna Keith

"Well, when I'm flying 'A,' I sometimes forget that I have to stay up front until all the Passengers are off before I cross seatbelts. And sometimes I forget to get on the plane during a Crew change because the Pilots just keep briefing me and briefing me... And one time they called and asked me if my shorts were too short."

"Were they?" Jaime asked.

"Of course they were. Tina told me when I was on probation that Stewardesses eat better on layovers if they shorten their shorts."

"Tina!" Jaime exclaimed, and glared at her.

Ashley tried to explain, "But I was always on a diet back then!"

"That's not what Tina meant, Ashley. She meant that, well...Pilots...Oh, never mind."

Tina tossed her hair and said, "Ashley? Didn't your handsome husband, the one that used to always come out and help us clean the plane and buy your dinners, just upgrade to Captain?"

"Yes! He's so awesome!"

"I've obviously never been shy about helping out New Hires with good advice, Jaime. But this time, I'm going to call Professional Standards about sweet Alice from Dallas when we land. A fellow Flight Attendant who serves on the Committee will call her in the next day or so and make sure that she knows the rules about cell phones. An Inflight Supervisor will never know a thing about it."

"Here comes Alice from Dallas. You look so pretty in your dress. Do you want a Red Vine?"

Alice replied, "Oh, no thank you; I'm still trying to lose a few pounds."

"Just shorten your dress!" exclaimed Ashley.

Alice tilted her head and smiled. "What?"

Ashley carried on, "Oh, we need to talk! Take my number, Alice. Text me when we land, but certainly not on the jumpseat and never at the overwing or where a Passenger can see you: that could sooo get a Flight Attendant fired! Cool? OK, bye, Alice."

As Alice walked away, Jaime said, "Or, we could just let Ashley handle it. You've trained her well, Tina."



As many of you might have read in the Executive Board Meeting Minutes, the Union authorized an OJI/Workers' Compensation investigation and Flight Attendants may have gotten the impression that it will reveal the "horrors" of Sedgwick and force Southwest Airlines to get rid of Sedgwick. Unfortunately, that is not going to be attainable. In fact, California has passed a law, (Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9767.12) requiring the use of Sedgwick during the OJI and Workers' Compensation process. During the investigation, conducted by Domicile Executive Board Members John DiPippa, Donna Keith and Pamela Forte, we have discovered that due to HIPAA privacy laws we are precluded from providing you a detailed report. As far as the Union working to inform the Membership about On-the-Job Injuries, John DiPippa, Donna Keith, Pamela Forte, and Leave Specialist Alice Hinckley will look for alternative ways to provide you with information to help you understand the process while operating within any HIPAA laws.



Donna Keith is a Chicago-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Chicago Domicile Executive Board Member.

# Is Retirement in Your Future?

by Denny Sebesta

Our Contract provides protection in several areas when you decide it's time to move on to the next phase in your life. However, saving for retirement is the first thing you should be doing before reaching that point. Whether you've been here six months or 43 years, everyone should be saving for retirement and our Contract provides you the opportunity to do just that with dollar for dollar Company match, which has significantly increased over the years.

Age 55 is the magic number: this is the minimum age for retirement in our Contract to use the options for retirement health benefits. So, when you are ready hang up your wings to enjoy more time with family/friends, explore new opportunities or just travel, those additional options are there for you. There are caveats to qualify and this article will explain when and how you can utilize this contractual language when you make the leap to retirement.

## Type of Retirement Plans

**Profit Sharing** – The Southwest Airlines Profit Sharing Plan became effective in 1973 and has continued to this day. Contributions are made by Southwest Airlines and the percentage number is determined each year by the Board of Directors based on Southwest Airlines' profitability and prosperity in that year. The contribution allocation you receive is based on your annual compensation for the Plan Year (including pre-tax contributions to 401(k) plan). Once you receive the allocated dollars into your Profit Sharing account, it's up to you to determine which funds in the Plan you want to invest your money.

While it would be highly unlikely, our Contract also provides our workgroup protection to reopen the Contract for the purpose of negotiating a plan to replace the Profit Sharing Plan, in the event the Board of Directors take action to terminate the Profit Sharing Plan.

**401(k)/ROTH 401(k)** – The initial 401(k) language was added in the 1991 Contract and has been significantly enhanced since that time.

Today, we have two

types of 401(k) Plans that you may choose to contribute to, either separately or percentages divided among the Plans and, the Company match is now \$1.00 for \$1.00 up to 9.3% of your contributions. In order to receive the full Company match, you must contribute a minimum of 10% to the 401(k) and/or Roth.

Now, the basic difference between a 401(k) and Roth 401(k) is pre-tax (deferred to pay when you take withdrawals at retirement) or, post-tax (paid at the time of contribution and no tax paid on withdrawals at retirement).

There are multiple funds to invest your contributions for the Profit Sharing Plan and 401(k)/Roth 401(k), including the JP Morgan Securities self-directed; therefore, it's important to research and/or talk to a financial expert to educate yourself on the best plan of action for your contributions, as well as the Company match.

Our Contract also outlines protection within the 401(k) Plan to offer our Members the additional or different investment funds offered to any Employee Group participating in Southwest Airlines 401(k) Plan. This provision does not apply to the Pilots since their 401(k) Plan is administered by SWAPA.

Are you "vested"? When planning for retirement from our Company, vesting is an important word to keep in mind. You may have recently joined Southwest Airlines after retiring from another career or started fresh out of college and think that you may stay for just a "few" years. Well, this is why it's important to understand how vesting applies; otherwise you could be forfeiting those Company match dollars. Article 30 – Profit Sharing and Retirement, discusses how and when you have full rights to the Company match portion in your retirement funds. Here are the years of Vesting Service outlined in our Contract:

*Completed Years of Vesting Service	Vested Percentage
Less than 1 year	0%
1 year	20%
2 years	40%
3 years	60%
4 years	80%
5 years	100%

*\* This applies to years of service within the Company and is not exclusive to Inflight years of service. For example, you have been a Southwest Employee for ten years in another department and*



## It's important to research and/or talk to a financial expert to educate yourself on the best plan of action for your contributions, as well as the Company match.

*transferred to Inflight one year ago. You are vested in the Company match due to your "completed Years of Vesting Service."*

There is one more piece to this and it is called "accelerated vesting"; which means there are exceptions when you may become fully vested in the Company matching contributions, even if you do not meet the five completed years of service. To see the exceptions, please refer to Article 30.2.C, (page 145 hard copy) in the Contract.

### **Life and AD&D Insurance**

Even though you may decide it's time to retire from the Company, maintaining the Life and Accident/Death/Dismemberment insurance you qualified for may be important to you and your loved ones. That is possible! In the 2008 Contract, language was added to ensure that the Company would continue to contract portability of this type of insurance when you leave the Company. For more information on portability of insurance, please contact the Benefits department or you may visit the "About Me" page on SWALife and review the Southwest Airlines Welfare Benefit Plan Summary Description.

### **Retiree Healthcare Plan**

The maximum sick leave you may accrue is 2,400 Trips for Pay (TFP) and is not payable upon leaving the Company; however, you may use your accrued sick leave to exchange for health benefits to age 65.

**Age 55 or after** - A Flight Attendant retiring at or after age 55, with at least fifteen years of credited service as a Flight Attendant, and has 720 TFP's of sick leave available, will be permitted to:

- Utilize any provision of the current Contract for which they are eligible; or
- Elect to be covered under Medical Plan C and Basic Dental for the entire duration of retirement coverage to age 65. The Flight Attendant may trade unused sick leave at the rate of one month's coverage for each 12 TFP of sick leave accrued. If the Flight Attendant does not have enough credited sick leave to cover to age 65, then she/he may purchase continued healthcare coverage at the age-banded actuarial cost for Medical Plan C and Basic Dental.
- Surviving spouse or committed partner and/or eligible dependent continued coverage under retirement.

**Age 60** - Flight Attendant with at least twelve years of service may do the following:

- Trade accrued sick leave for medical coverage under any coverage option under the Flexible Benefits Health Plan at the rate of one month's coverage for 16 TFP of sick leave accrued, or choose Medical Plan C and Basic Dental at the rate of one month's coverage for each 12 TFP accrued until sick leave is exhausted or reaches age 65, whichever occurs first.
- Surviving spouse or committed partner and/or eligible dependent continued coverage under retirement.

**Age 61 ½** - A Flight Attendant with at least 10 years of service may do the following:

- Trade accrued sick leave for medical coverage under any coverage option under the Flexible Benefits Health Plan at the rate of one month's coverage for 16 TFP of sick leave accrued, or choose Medical Plan C and Basic Dental at the rate of one month's coverage for each 12 TFP accrued until sick leave is exhausted or reaches age 65, whichever occurs first.
- Surviving spouse or committed partner and/or eligible dependent continued coverage under retirement.
- If you meet eligibility requirements at age 60 or 61 ½, but do not have sufficient sick leave to purchase coverage to age 65, you may purchase coverage under Medical Plan C and Basic Dental equal to the applicable COBRA rate.

**Age 65 & Spouse or Committed Partner Coverage** - A Flight Attendant who has retired and purchased healthcare coverage under this section, with remaining sick leave may elect to trade unused sick leave for continued coverage under Medical Plan C and Basic Dental for a spouse or committed partner under the age of 65 at the same rate as Age 55 requirement (12 TFP for each month of coverage).

If a Flight Attendant meeting the requirements for the specified age of 55, 60 or 61 ½, and has exhausted all sick leave accrual, coverage may be purchased for the younger spouse or committed partner at the age banded actuarial cost of Medical Plan C and Basic Dental. Coverage will end the earlier of age 65 or the date the surviving spouse or committed partner ceases to be eligible in the Plan.

If you would like to review the Contract language regarding retiree Health Benefits and Profit Sharing/Retirement Plan, please refer to Article 16.1 (page 89, hard copy) and Article 30 (page 145, hard copy).



*Denny Sebesta is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and former Member of the TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team. She serves on the Local's Education Committee and is a regular contributor to Unity Update and Unity Magazine.*



# The Benefits of Sticking Together

by Bryan Orozco

Being a Union Member has many benefits. There are benefits associated with being a part of organized Labor in general, from the AFL-CIO to Transport Workers Union (TWU) International, to the Coalition of Flight Attendants, to being a Member of TWU Local 556. As an individual, we are one vote. However, as a voting bloc, TWU Local 556 represents 12,000+ votes, as Members of a Flight Attendant Coalition we are 90,000, as part of TWU International we are 140,000 and as a part of the AFL-CIO we are part of 14.8 million workers. Collectively, we carry a lot of voting power and are able to lobby our elected officials effectively on various issues and concerns.

Organized Labor has effectively fought to end child labor, unsafe working conditions and slave-shop type labor, and fought for weekends off, fair pay for a day's work and paid vacation time to name a few. Recently, Flight Attendants' lobbying efforts, political activism and influence have helped to win the certification of Flight Attendants as Inflight Safety Professionals, improved the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) as it applies to us and gained the protections of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

In 2003, certification of Flight Attendants as Inflight Safety Professionals was passed by Congress and signed by President Bush. Flight Attendants were certified by Congress under Vision 100-Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act. From the U.S. Department of Transportation, "Congress acknowledges that Flight Attendants perform vital Crew Member functions onboard air carrier aircraft, including emergency functions for aircraft evacuations, firefighting, first aid, and response to security threats. Flights Attendants are concerned safety-sensitive Employees subject to FAA drug and alcohol testing requirements and flight time limitations."

In 2009, Congress passed and President Obama signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act, Airline Flight Crew Technical Amendments, which allows Flight Attendants' qualifying hours for FMLA coverage to be based on our unique work schedules. "The amendment provides that an airline Flight Attendant or flight Crewmember meets the hours of service requirement if, during the previous twelve-month period he or she (1) has worked or been paid for less than 60 percent of the applicable total monthly guarantee (or its equivalent), and (2) has worked or been paid for not less than 504 hours, not including personal commute time, or time spent on vacation, medical, or sick leave."

In 2012, Congress passed and President Obama signed the FAA Modernization and Reform Act, which extended Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) coverage to include Flight Attendants. In 2013, it required that airlines would comply with applicable OSHA standards and training for Flight Attendants.

In 2013, the Transport Safety Administration (TSA) looked to allow knives to be carried on commercial airlines. Though the efforts of TWU Local 556 Members, with other unionized Flight Attendants and Pilots, Federal Air Marshals and family members of 9/11 victims gained congressional support to prohibit the TSA from allowing knives on commercial aircraft. The lobbying and protest efforts of all those involved pressured the TSA to indefinitely delay their plans to allow knives on planes. Although there is an indefinite delay by the TSA, we must continue our efforts to make "No Knives on Planes" permanent law.

In 2013, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) announced that it would lift the ban on talking on cell phones during flight. Members

**Because of our unified, collective goal and voice, our "Membership," together we have effectively fought to improve our lives and the safety of our workplace.**

of TWU Local 556, and the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) joined together and expressed our concerns to members of the House of Representatives and the Senate about problems that could arise during flight if the ban was lifted.

Being an individual Union Member does have its benefits. However, because of our unified, collective goal and voice, our "Membership," together we have effectively fought to improve our lives and the safety of our workplace.

*Bryan Orozco is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant. Bryan serves as a Shop Steward and as the Co-Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Committee on Political Education (COPE).*



TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA

**TWU**

**Local 577**

the Union of **allegiant** Flight Attendants



# Update

by Kevin Barber

The Flight Attendants of Allegiant Air, represented by TWU Local 577, have been working to secure their historic first Contract with TWU Local 556 as an inspiration, seeking a fair Contract, good working relationship with their Management and a strong culture.

Their first year of bargaining saw much progress, getting within a few paragraphs of completing a full Tentative Agreement on which their Members could vote. Unfortunately, Allegiant Air's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Maury Gallagher, Jr. (who makes our former CEO Jim Parker seem like Santa Claus), drew firm lines in the sand. He has remained unwilling to bargain on the most important issues for Allegiant Flight Attendants including compensation, pay for extended delays, and dues check off that would allow Allegiant Flight Attendants to provide fair representation for their Members.

Deadlocked, TWU Local 577 filed for and has remained in federally mediated talks with Management since October 2011. Since that time, much work has been focused on chasing Management's almost daily changing policies and views.

Under the Railway Labor Act, until there is a Contract in place there is not "status quo." As a result, our TWU Local 577 Sisters and Brothers have watched their Management make arbitrary changes in just about every aspect of an Allegiant Flight Attendants' lives. The company switched to a broken Preferential Bidding System (PBS), which violated even the most basic seniority rights; cut their commission rates, changed and violated work rules, outsourced their flying, and perhaps most grotesquely, sent hundreds of non-

unionized Allegiant ground Employees to mandatory Flight Attendant training in order to serve as scabs in the event of a strike.

All the while, TWU Local 577 continues to build and maintain a strong Local by providing its Members with a successful communication network, a Professional Standards Committee, a Unity Committee, a strong Shop Steward program, and a recently implemented Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP). Their combined efforts have recovered pay, fixed scheduling errors, blocked policy changes which would negatively affect Members, reversed discipline and saved jobs – all this without the protections of a Contract.

Steadfast, the TWU Local 577 Negotiating Team remains diligent in representing their work group by maintaining a strategic plan and are confident they will reach an agreement with Management, sooner than later. They have also developed a close working relationship with the Pilots and Dispatchers who, suffering from the same poor working conditions, have voted for representation with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and have faced the same aggressive Union-busting tactics from Allegiant's Management.

Today, TWU Local 577 Members continue to stand firmly on their convictions and commitment that by remaining unified, they will secure the legally binding voice of their first Contract. As our Sisters and Brothers move forward, please stand by them as others have stood by us and support them in their battle for the fair work rules, compensation, and benefits that all Flight Attendants deserve.



*Kevin Barber is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant. Kevin serves as an advisor and Communications Coordinator for TWU Local 577 and other TWU Organizing Campaigns at Virgin America, Frontier, Envoy, and jetBlue.*



by Michael Massoni and Michele Moore

The TWU Local 556 Safety Team believes in creating the safest work environment possible for our Flight Attendants. The Aviation Safety Action (ASAP) Program was adopted by our Union in conjunction with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Southwest Airlines to help accomplish this goal. The ASAP is one example of the safety programs in which TWU is that help promote safety. The program allows us to identify safety issues without the fear of discipline. We feel that giving Flight Attendants an avenue to report safety items as well as safety mistakes, which we have all made from time to time, without worrying about getting anyone in trouble, was the type of program that our Flight Attendants would embrace. In conjunction with the ASAP, the TWU Local 556 Safety Team negotiated a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with Management to further protect our Flight Attendants from discipline in the event they committed a safety infraction inadvertently.

Because of the ASAP, the Event Review Committee (ERC), comprised of representatives from TWU, the FAA and Southwest Airlines, has been able to identify several areas in need of improvements. As a result of the reports we have received from you, we have made several recommendations to Management to help improve our workplace. Here are two examples of how the ASAP has improved safety for our Members:

- During boarding, the "C" Flight Attendant felt that a row of seats at the OWWE were installed incorrectly on the aircraft and appeared partially impede the exit. The Flight Attendants notified the Pilots, but were not taken seriously. Once the flight reached the gate, the Flight Attendant took pictures of the seat placement and included them with an ASAP report. When the report was received by the ASAP Manager, Southwest Airlines Maintenance was called to check out the aircraft. Maintenance immediately tracked down the aircraft and realized that the exits were actually installed wrong. The aircraft was immediately taken out of service and the seats were re-installed properly. This information was shared with Flight Operations and the Maintenance Department so they could address the breakdown of policies and procedures. This mistake was

caught because of an ASAP report that was submitted by a Flight Attendant.

- The highest risk item that is regularly reported to the ASAP is door arming/disarming events. The Event Review Committee (ERC) feels that this issue needs to be addressed, as we are concerned that someone will be hurt. We have made several recommendations to change procedures to help alleviate the risk factors. We initially recommended changing the verbiage from "Prepare/Secure" to "Arm/Disarm." We felt that this verbiage was much less confusing for Flight Attendants since arm and disarm is the actual "action" that is being performed. We also wanted to further define the cross-check procedure. As a follow-up, we also recommended that a verbal cross-check between "A" and "C" Flight Attendants take place and a cross-check public address (PA) be made by "B" Flight Attendant. The cross-check was already in the procedures, but the ERC felt that if it was stated verbally, it would be less likely to be forgotten.

**Because of the ASAP, the Event Review Committee (ERC), comprised of representatives from TWU, the FAA and Southwest Airlines, has been able to identify several areas in need of improvements.**

Safety will continue to be our number one goal, and we will continue to search for and engage in any programs that we feel will benefit our Membership.



Michael Massoni is a Phoenix-based Flight Attendant and serves as the TWU Local 556 Operational Safety Chairman.



Michele Moore is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and serves as the TWU Local 556 Occupational Safety and Health Coordinator.



# Where is the Grass the Greenest?

by Bill Geisert and Jaime Drain

In our industry, it is normal to look into someone else's backyard to see if their grass is greener than ours is. Are they taking better care of their grounds? Are they living better? It is both unavoidable and necessary to monitor constantly what our peers are doing at other airlines. While we must stay abreast of other Flight Attendants' Contracts and Negotiations, it is easy to forget not only tend to our own "garden," but it's also easy to take what we have for granted.

Between the two of us, Bill and I have worked for a collective total of seven(!) airlines (Skyways, Ozark Airlines, Trans World Airlines (TWA), US Airways and Southwest Airlines for Bill; Northwest Airlines (NWA) and Southwest Airlines for Jaime). Combined, we have 61 years of flying experience and numerous mergers, Contract Negotiations and labor disputes behind us. We want to share our stories with you as a way of putting things into perspective and also to send a reminder to never become apathetic.



## Jaime's story:

When Flight Attendants hear that I quit Northwest Airlines after twenty years, the first question I am asked is, "What was so bad that would make you leave after twenty years?" My response? "Sit down. Let me tell you." During my time at NWA, I found that I was always "chasing the carrot." Constant labor struggles, Contract changes and, finally, bank-

ruptcy made my professional life constantly unstable. I took two pay cuts during the course of my career, the final one being the biggest. This included cuts in all of the different incentive pays (ground time, lead pay, short Crew comp) along with a sizeable cut in my base pay and per diem, extending into the loss of half of my accrued vacation as well as sick time. All of these cuts were perfectly legal due to the fact that the company was in bankruptcy. Once in bankruptcy, a corporation has the right to petition the bankruptcy court to have labor Contracts altered or thrown out entirely, all in the name of cost savings. To make a long story short, I finally realized that I was in a very dysfunctional relationship (at times abusive) and the only way to change that was to walk out. In April 2007, I did just that, and was promptly welcomed into the Southwest family. I've never looked back.

## Bill's story:

I've been in the airline industry since 1980. Thirty-four years later I've been employed with five airlines. As a Flight Attendant, I've flown for Ozark Air Lines, Trans World Airlines (TWA), USAir (which became US Airways) and finally Southwest Airlines. I have trained and been qualified on twenty different aircraft types over the years made by Fokker, McDonnell Douglas, Boeing, Airbus and Lockheed. I've been through two mergers and one near merger, Chapter 11 bankruptcies three times, three Flight Attendant Unions and during the TWA and US Airways years, probably more pay cuts than pay raises.

My career was stable through the Ozark years, which sadly ended in Septem-

ber 1986 when overnight I went from having a promising career with an airline I loved to "just a job" at TWA, with an airline for which I had zero desire to work. The TWA years were frustrating. Because of a weak independent Flight Attendant Union at TWA, the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA), we had no backing from an international Union. We had zero bargaining power against corporate raider Carl Icahn, who at the time was the owner of TWA. TWA Flight Attendants were the lowest paid and had the worst work rules among the larger U.S. airlines. Only Continental Airlines, owned at the time by Frank Lorenzo who was later banned by our government from the airline industry, had it worse than us. I had some good years at USAir/US Airways, however the growth within the airline was slow with very little



hiring for many years. I was on reserve for the first eight years. It was not a rotating reserve like the one we have at Southwest Airlines. I had a line for three years until after September 11, 2001, when US Airways, like most other airlines around the world slashed Employee wages, parked aircraft and furloughed thousands of Employees. (Please note during this time not one Southwest Airline Employee was furloughed).

In late 2004, after going through the second Chapter 11 in two years at US Airways, I questioned the future of my career. I was back on reserve with no end in sight. I wanted stability with a decent Contract, good pay and benefits with an airline I knew would be around for the rest of my career. I applied with Southwest Airlines.

In March 2005, I started training in Dallas with Southwest Airlines and I've been based in Chicago ever since. I spent my first few years getting to know my fellow Southwest Employees, the way our airline works, learning our work rules and Contract. During the last Union election, I decided to be more involved as a Shop Steward. I hope that in the 34 years I've been in this industry I've learned and seen enough to help make a difference for our Membership. Though it's not a perfect world at Southwest (or anywhere else for that matter), I can honestly tell you that our Employees, our Culture, our strong Union Leadership with a knowledgeable Executive Board, along with Southwest Airlines Management, is the envy of most in our industry. This is something I will never take for granted. I know how green my grass is.

The morale of our story is this: Although it may seem that life is better/different/fabulous for somebody else, don't forget how great your life is. Honor those who have come before you and worked diligently to give you this life. Never let down your guard and continue to fight the good fight for those who will come after you and remember: there will always be someone who is admiring YOUR perfectly manicured lawn.



Bill Geisert and Jaime Drain are Chicago-based Flight Attendants. Bill serves as a Shop Steward and as a Contract Action Network (CAN) Leader. Jaime is a Member of the CAN.

# If You're Sick, Call in Sick

by Michele Moore

Your TWU Local 556 Safety Team is continuing to monitor the health pulse of the world. We have Ebola, Chikungunya, Influenza, and West Nile Virus on our radar. These are just a few of the illnesses that appear daily in the news. We work closely with Southwest Airlines to ensure that our Flight Attendants are given the maximum amount of protections and information that is available.

The best protection against most illnesses is good hygiene – washing hands often with warm soapy water for at least twenty seconds. Hand sanitizers can be substituted in the absence of soap and water. Always wear gloves when picking up trash or when dealing with ill passengers. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth or face with your gloved or ungloved hands. It is very important to change gloves and wash your hands every time after picking up trash. Needless to say – should any medical emergency arise on a flight, utilize universal precautions in order to protect you from any disease that may be transmissible through direct contact with bodily fluids.

As always, if a Passenger boards and appears ill, you can contact StatMd on the ground and have them assess the Passenger's illness and suitability to fly.

We also need to be respectful of our fellow Crew Members. If you are sick and possibly contagious, please stay home from work. Just as we don't like Passengers to fly when they are sick, our Crew Members don't want to fly with us if we are sick. A good rule of thumb is, if a Passenger boarded with our symptoms, would we be upset? If the answer is yes, then it is probably best to stay home.



Michele Moore is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and serves as the TWU Local 556 Occupational Safety and Health Coordinator.



# Airline Angels

by Robin Brewer



Lynn Schwirtz  
Dallas-based Flight  
Attendant

Having survived breast cancer in 2002, I was truly thankful for the renewed gift of life that I received. Along with that thankfulness, I had a "pay it forward" mindset, and wanted to, in some fashion, use my love for children to give back. I knew that I had a special gift of working with troubled children and I learned about Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). I've been working with the Denton County, Texas CASA since 2008 and have found this to be a very rewarding experience.

CASA is a volunteer organization empowered directly by the courts to work with the children in foster care. As a volunteer, I get to know the child by talking with everyone in that child's life: parents and relatives, foster parents, teachers, medical professionals, attorneys, social workers and others. I attend family meetings, court, Child Protective Services (CPS) meetings, Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) meetings at the schools, and take the children out at least once per month. I then use the information gathered to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities. Many times CPS relies on my knowledge and expertise regarding situations relating to medicines, relationships, living arrangements, education and school situations. By having this working relationship with CPS, a CASA volunteer can equally be involved in a child's life and is able to make recommendations to ensure the children are in a safe place and are being taken care of, whether they are in a foster home, treatment center or children's home.

For many abused children, a CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives. We are really the only people in a child's life who are there throughout the legal process until the child either goes back with their family or are placed in loving permanent homes. It is common for children to have several CPS workers, schools and homes. As a CASA volunteer, I make sure that the child's safety, happiness and needs are continuously being met.

To date, I have worked with eight children and my goal is to let each child know that they matter and they have a voice. These children have been through neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, incest and abandonment. These children are strong, beautiful and resilient. They are warriors. They are my heroes!

I have been honored to receive the 2010 Shelby Hiser Child Advocate of the Year award: in 2011, the Southwest Airlines Volunteers of LUV award: and in 2012 the WIIT Award (Whatever It Takes for Teens). The only thing these awards represent to me is that I am supposed to be here and I am on the right path!

Every day in this country, 1,900 children become victims of abuse or neglect, and four of them will die. So many children need an advocate. Please contact TexasCASA.org or outside of Texas, CASAforChildren.org.



CASA selects a volunteer each month and places this sign in their yard to honor them in their work



2010 Shelby Hiser Child  
Advocate of the Year Award



2011 Volunteers of LUV Award

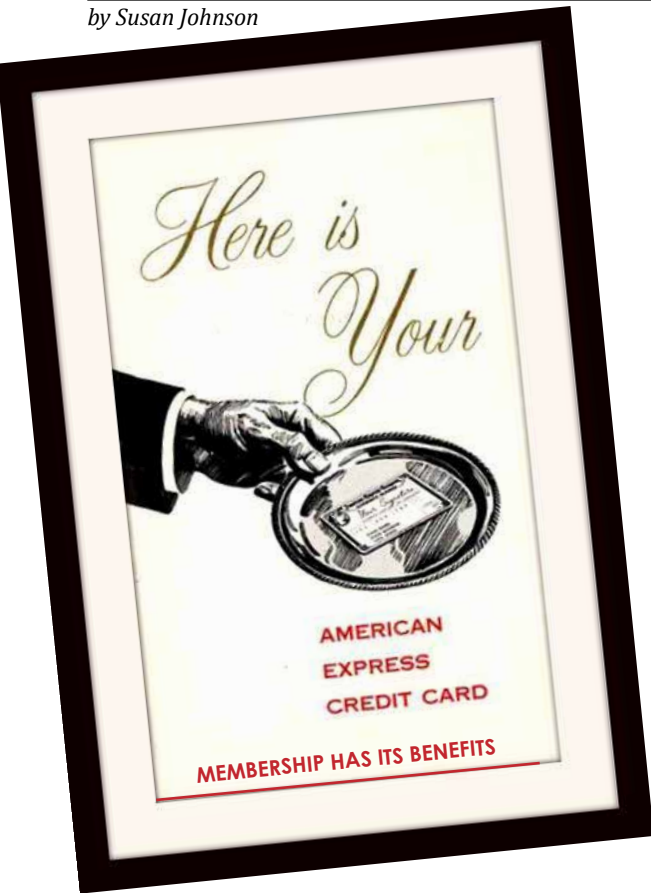


2012 Whatever It Takes  
For Teens Award



# MEMBERSHIP *has its benefits*

by Susan Johnson



Those of us of a “certain age” remember an advertising slogan from the 1980’s made famous by American Express: “Membership has its privileges.” Actors portrayed people taking exotic vacations and enjoying gourmet meals at glamorous special occasions, actively implying that you had to be a member of American Express to have access to those privileges. This campaign was trying to convince us to apply for the product they were selling. That’s all well and good, but here’s the funny thing; in the end you still had to be able to pay for those vacations or your credit would be ruined.

Here at Southwest Airlines, Flight Attendants are required to join the Union, but unlike our counterparts with their American Express card, Membership in TWU Local 556 actually does have its benefits. Probably the most important benefit anyone could ask for is the benefit of having a vote.

As a Member of our Union, you have the benefit of having direct input on how our Local operates on many levels. When you attend a Membership Meeting, you can do more than just find out about our Union’s financial status and get your questions answered on the “hot topics” of the day. You can also make a motion to modify the Local’s daily working practices. The motion will be presented at all sessions of the meeting during which all Members in attendance have the opportunity to vote on that motion (a list of motions previously adopted can be found under Union Business/Bylaws Constitution tab on the TWU Local 556 Website.) Some examples of motions approved at a Membership Meeting are the special Negotiations Assessment Fee and requiring that a link to the LM-2 be placed on the Union Website.

Another benefit of our Membership is their ability to modify our Bylaws. The Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote of the Membership. As a Member, you are able to present your amendment during the second Membership Meeting of the odd-numbered year. Then in the third Membership meeting of the year, those in attendance have the opportunity to vote on the amendment. Once an amendment has passed and been approved by TWU International, it becomes a working Bylaw governing our Local Union.

Every three years, our Members have the benefit of electing Executive Board Members to handle the administration of our Local and our Dues monies. Nominations for these offices are taken during a Membership Meeting, and Members exercise their vote for the candidate they feel is best qualified to handle the position. At the first Membership Meeting after the Executive Board Election, Shop Stewards are nominated and elected in each base. These are the people who help our Members in the event they need to meet with Management for any issue that could result in discipline and to assist our Domicile Executive Board Members in distributing information to the Members in the base.

Another benefit of Membership is the ability to run for any of these positions in the Union! That would include running for or serving in an appointed position on the Negotiating Team. Only a Member of TWU Local 556 can run for these positions, and only a Member can vote for these positions.

Last and by no means least, only Members of our Union may vote on our Contract. Once a Tentative Agreement is brought to the Membership, it is up to us, the Members, to vote yes or no. In 2012, we voted on three separate Side Letters, and with any luck we’ll have a Tentative Agreement on our Contract on which to vote in the near future. Again, just like voting for a candidate for office, only a Member can vote on a Tentative Agreement.

Our Contract and the enforcement of that Contract is what makes our lifestyle possible. It helps us to pay for our wants and needs, while protecting our quality of life. Given a choice between the American Express privilege and our Membership benefits, I’ll take the Membership benefits any day. I want to be able to have a say in something that so directly affects my life, something that enables me to take care of my family. I hope you do too.



*Susan Johnson is an Orlando-based Flight Attendant and serves on the TWU Local 556 Board of Election. Susan served on the Negotiating Team’s Coordinating Council during the 2002 Contract Negotiations.*



Send us your pictures! email to [communications@twu556.org](mailto:communications@twu556.org)



The colors may slightly change,  
but we remain the same -  
**THE BEST FLIGHT ATTENDANTS !**





# TOYS FOR TOTS

**The 2014 TWU Local 556  
Toys For Tots  
Toy Drive is almost here!**



**U.S. MARINE CORPS RESERVE**