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YOUR MONTHLY UNITY SUPPLEMENT

MARCH 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Opening Our Contract, Again

TWU Local 556 President

Thom McDaniel on our return to the Negotiating Table

With the addition of the 737-800 aircraft to our fleet in early 2012, as well as Gary Kelly's announcements that he intends to expand service to international destinations and Hawaii, Southwest Airlines has requested that our Union reopen our Contract under Article 24.6. Also, Management has included the addition of additional aircraft to their request to prepare for the inclusion of the Boeing 717 aircraft if the proposed purchase of AirTran Airways is approved.

ARTICLE 24.6

"The basic Agreement shall be reopened for the purpose of negotiating rates of pay, rules and working conditions in the event that the Company places into service an aircraft other than the Boeing 737-200/300/500/600/700, or institutes meal service or international flights. Either party will give the other a sixty (60) day notice of intention to reopen the Agreement, unless a shorter period is mutually agreed upon. Notice to reopen hereunder shall be given in accordance with Section 6, Title I of the Railway Labor Act, as amended"

Your Union and Management have also mutually agreed to waive the sixty-day notice to begin negotiating as soon as possible. With the addition of new aircraft, international flying, and overwater training, there will be additional training required for all Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants, and we know that we need time to negotiate a fair Side Letter agreement that addresses these

important changes for our Flight Attendants. We are fully prepared to move forward in every way thanks in part to your commitment to our future through your approval of our special assessment fund for issues such as these talks.

These negotiations with Southwest Airlines will be regarding pay, work rules, and hours of service related to the changing operation of our Company. We have not begun discussions with the AFA regarding seniority integration, and will not do so until all appropriate regulatory agencies and AirTran Shareholders approve the acquisition. Nevertheless, we have continued to maintain and build our relationship with AirTran union leadership, and will be fully prepared to meet with them regarding seniority integration at the appropriate time. We also continue to support them in their over three-year struggle to negotiate a fair Contract with AirTran Management.

You may have heard that SWAPA and Southwest Airlines have reached a Transition Agreement Side Letter regarding the AirTran acquisition. The side letter basically requires that if the acquisition is approved, the transition to a single carrier must be completed within two years, current productivity levels will be maintained, and that all future growth occurs at Southwest Airlines. Our Members are also protected by this agreement due to the "me-too" provisions under Article 3.10 of our Contract.

As we move forward, we will keep you fully informed of the status of negotiations and seniority integration when it begins. Your Union is the only place where you know you will get accurate information, so there is no need for speculation or rumor. An informed, involved, and united Membership has always been the key to our success, so please access the TWU Local 556 Web site and social media pages often for the most updated information.

Finally, on March 11, Southwest Airlines class 248 graduated initial training. On behalf of all of us at TWU Local 556, we would like to offer our congratulations, and we wish each of you a long and happy career at the best airline in the country.



THOM MCDANIEL

is a Houston Flight Attendant, and TWU Local 556 President. He can be contacted at president@twu556.org or 214-640-4301.

Leave of Absence and Your Seniority by Contract and Leave Coordinator **Denny Sebesta**

The last thing you want to worry about when you are sick or injured is how your seniority will be affected. The good news is that you don't have to worry, because we have good protection under our Contract. When you are on a *continuous* leave of absence due to your own medical condition, including an on-the-job injury, your seniority will continue to accrue for a period of up to one year and a maximum of four years.

There are other types of leaves in the Contract that provide protection for seniority and accrual; those leaves include Parental Leave, Post Maternity Leave and Union Leave. Federal law governs FMLA and Military Leaves, so protection for them is provided outside of our Contract.

If you have a need or desire to take a personal leave of absence for reasons other than your own illness or injury, there are additional provisions in our Contract. You may apply to the Company and if approved, be granted this

type of leave for a period of up to ninety days; however, it's important to remember that with this type of leave, your seniority will only accrue for those ninety days. If the Company agrees to extend your leave, then you will only retain your seniority and it will not continue to accrue past the first ninety days.

There is one area that will be affected if you're out for more than twelve consecutive months and that's your vacation accrual. Article 15.11.B in the Contract outlines that vacation continues to accrue for up to one year during a leave of absence. The only exception to this is a personal leave of absence, which only continues to accrue for up to ninety days. If you are on a continuous leave of absence for *more than* twelve months, you will begin to lose vacation accrual for the following year's bid for vacation weeks. The calculation is as follows:

Take the total number of earned vacation days based on your Company seniority and divide that number by twelve months; then take the sum and multiply it by the number of months that exceeded the twelve months. This will be the final number of vacation days lost for the following year.

Examples:

28 days vacation (4 weeks)	14 days vacation (2 weeks)
<u>/12 months</u>	<u>/12 months</u>
2.33 days	1.2 days
<u>x 4 months</u>	<u>x 3 months</u>
9 days (9.32 rounded down)	4 days (3.6 rounded up)

2011 SCHOLARSHIPS

The TWU Local 556 Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce that for 2011, there are four different scholarships available to Flight Attendants and their immediate family members. Completed applications must be received no later than May 1, 2011. For more information, please visit the Scholarship Committee page on the Union's Web site www.twu556.org/scholarships.php.



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Unity is the official publication of
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