



The 2010 Toys for Tots drive continues through December 13. Please drop-off a new, unwrapped toy in the donation box in your lounge. Thanks for your support!

unity^{update}

YOUR MONTHLY UNITY SUPPLEMENT

NOVEMBER 2010

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Preserving our Culture

It's our individual responsibility to preserve our culture, says TWU Local 556 President Thom McDaniel.

Two of the most basic principles of our Southwest Airlines culture is: practice the "golden rule," and "do the right thing." This is easy and straightforward, but I've noticed lately that many of our coworkers have neglected doing the right thing—and it has consequences. Most of our Members understand this and live it every day, so if it doesn't apply to you, stop reading now.

As an active Southwest Airlines Flight Attendant, you will either be awarded a scheduled flying line or a reserve line, depending on your seniority. In the first instance, you are assigned pairings to fly, and you are expected to report to work an hour before departure. On a reserve line, you are assigned duty days and hours, based on your reserve designation, where you must be able to report for duty within two hours, and there is an expectation for you to be in your domicile during the times when you may be called to report for duty.

As Grievance Chair Allyson Parker-Lauck reports in this issue of *Unity Update*, Management has the ability to track

network IP addresses when you check into CWA, and can easily determine whether you have non-revved to your domicile. If you are not in your domicile to be on-call during your designated time and are unable to be contacted, or after you receive an assignment, Management may determine that you never intended to fly, and are intentionally disregarding an assignment from Scheduling. Intentional disregard of an assignment may be grounds for termination, and several Flight Attendants have been fired from their jobs recently for this reason. Being where you are expected to be, when you're expected to be there, and prepared to fulfill your Reserve obligation is an example of doing the right thing.

Secondly, if you observe a crewmember exhibiting unusual behavior or violating a Southwest or FAA policy, your first obligation as a professional Flight Attendant, Southwest employee, and TWU Local 556 Member is to check on them, and make sure they are OK. Notify them of your concerns, allowing them the opportunity to correct their behavior, either through direct conversation, Professional Standards, or, as a last resort, an irregularity report. In other words, if your initial inclination is to take a picture or write an IR about your coworker's behavior instead of giving them the opportunity to explain or correct it, your emphasis is on the wrong thing—and that's not the Southwest Airlines way.

As we begin adding new employees—either through direct hires, or when we begin to integrate our AirTran colleagues into the Southwest family—we should be concerned about preserving our culture, but doing so begins with each and every one of us as individuals. Our Union will defend and protect the rights of every Member from unjust discipline, but we also remind our Members of our unique obligations to one another. As simple as it sounds, at Southwest Airlines and TWU Local 556, our continued success depends on treating each other as we would like to be treated, and doing the right thing! Our culture and our future depend on it.

I wish everyone a safe, happy, and healthy Thanksgiving and holiday season!

THOM MCDANIEL

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

Grievance Update

by TWU Local 556 Grievance Chair **Allyson Parker-Lauck**

Your TWU Local 556 has continued to work diligently to resolve outstanding grievances as quickly as possible, and the total number of cases has fallen from 123 grievances to 108 active grievances since my report in last month's *Unity*.

Terminations are on the rise again, and we are seeing more and more cases of alleged sick leave abuse and intentional disregard of an assignment. Please be aware that with the new CS2 Reservations System, it is very, very easy for the Company to track our nonrev history, and even our future travel plans. In addition, the Company can easily see the IP address from which you log in to CWA. In other words, if you call in sick for a pairing or Reserve days, the Company may check your non-rev activity or CWA transactions to see the location of your IP address. I am aware that some of us get sick when we're not at home, and if this happens to you, it would be a very good idea to see a doctor where you are--and make the Company aware of this. If you feel well enough to travel back home while you're still on a sick call, make sure to clear your travel with your base. Lastly, if you are one of the few who call in sick in order to take a vacation, you are risking your job, because the Company takes a very dim view of this.

A very significant change to our grievance procedures will be implemented on December 1. Currently, when a Member files a contractual or disciplinary grievance, the Company investigates the situation, and makes a determination whether to accept, settle, or deny the grievance. If the grievance is denied, your TWU Local 556 Grievance Team then thoroughly researches the grievance, and about two weeks before the monthly Executive Board meeting, each case is presented to the Team to ensure that no stone has been left unturned in our research. The information is compiled into presentation packets which are distributed to the Executive Board for review approximately a week before the monthly meeting.

On the Monday preceding the Executive Board meeting, the Grievance Review Committee (GRC)—comprised of TWU Local 556 President Thom McDaniel; Contract and Leave Coordinator Denny Sebesta; Board of Adjust-

ment and Arbitration Coordinator Lyn Montgomery; three rotating Executive Board Members; and your Grievance Committee Chairperson (that's me!)—reviews the merits of each and every non-termination case, and determines whether the Company had just cause to issue discipline on disciplinary cases, or whether a violation exists and the Union can meet our burden or proof on contractual grievances. The GRC makes a recommendation to the Executive Board on whether or not to proceed on these cases if the GRC reaches unanimous consent.

If unanimous consent is not reached, no recommendation is made, and the case is brought before the Board for a full discussion. If any Executive Board Member has questions about a case, or disagrees with the GRC's recommendation, that Board Member may ask that the case be taken off the recommendation list, so that it can be discussed with the entire Executive Board, which has the final vote on each grievance. The Member who filed the grievance is notified once the Board has made a determination on whether or not to proceed with the case. In the past, the grievant has had two options if the Board decides not to proceed with their case. They could either withdraw their grievance, or proceed with their grievance on their own and at their own expense.

One of the many changes in our most recent Contract is in Article 19 ("Grievance Procedures"), which now states that "the Union is the Sole Representative of all Flight Attendants in all grievance matters, unless waived by the Union." Where we run into problems is with contractual grievances. Discipline is a very individual matter, but the Contract does not belong to, nor can any one Member interpret it. Therefore, the Executive Board has agreed that, beginning December 1, 2010, once the Board votes not to proceed on a contractual grievance, it will automatically be withdrawn. Members will still have the opportunity to proceed on their own and at their own expense with disciplinary grievances.

Finally, your Grievance Team is working on a project to make pertinent settlement letters and letters of agreement available on the TWU Local 556 Web site, which we hope to complete early next year. The Web site is a great place to stay informed with important information, so please visit us often at www.twu556.org.

ALLYSON PARKER-LAUCK

is a Chicago Flight Attendant, and TWU Local 556 Grievance Committee Chair. She can be contacted at aplauk@twu556.org or 214-640-4330.

Beating Holiday Stress

by CISM Chair **Eileen Rodriguez**

The holidays are a joyous time filled with friends, family and loved ones. For some, however, the holidays are stressful or even sad. As a Flight Attendant, you may be away from your loved ones, and this can create feelings of loneliness and even depression. Planning ahead and preparing can help alleviate the sadness. Here are six tips that may help you get through the season.

STAY ORGANIZED. It's easy to become depressed if you feel overwhelmed. Strategize time for holiday shopping, baking, friends, family, and work. Schedule time with friends and family, especially if you're going to be alone on actual holidays.

CREATE NEW TRADITIONS. When your family isn't close by, your friends and coworkers become your surrogate family—and your support system. Hold on to a few old traditions, but make some new ones, such as volunteering at a shelter, soup kitchen, or buying holiday gifts for an underprivileged child. Perpetuate the spirit of the season.

SAY "NO." Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and family will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity.

DON'T FORCE IT. The holidays may be especially difficult if someone close to you passed away in the preceding year. Take time to acknowledge your feelings, and realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. Remember, you can't force yourself (or anyone else) to be happy just because it's the holidays.

MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF. Spending just fifteen minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do.

DON'T ABANDON HEALTHY HABITS. Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence may only contribute to feelings of stress and guilt.

EILEEN RODRIGUEZ

is an Orlando Flight Attendant, and the Critical Incident Stress Management Chairperson. She can be reached at erodriguez@twu556.org.

EXCUSE ME, BUT I CAN SEE YOUR I.P., AND THE COMPANY CAN TOO!

by Grievance Teammember
Erich Schwenk

Every computer connected to the Internet has at least one address, its Internet Protocol (IP) address, which looks something like 74.125.227.19—if you typed that number into your Web browser, you would find yourself at *Google.com*.

Why is this important? Your computer or other Web-connected device has its own IP address that is logged many times each day, including when you log onto *SWALife* or CWA. In fact, if you look up your crewmember transactions, you'll see your IP address, as well as which Web browser you use, and your computer's operating system.

What's more, IP addresses are location-specific, and are traceable. It's not an exact science, but your network activity can be tracked to specific regions of the world, specific cities, and often the very neighborhood you are connecting from.

Southwest Airlines is paying attention to this data, and may use it if they suspect an employee is abusing sick leave, which is grounds for termination.

Here comes flu season!

by Health Committee Chair
Michele Moore

Flu season is here again, and just because H1N1 isn't making daily headlines doesn't mean we shouldn't take precautions against the flu. It's never been easier to get a flu shot; they are available in grocery stores, pharmacies, and in doctor's offices all across the country. And as an added incentive to get your flu vaccination, the seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccinations have been combined this year into one shot.

In addition to getting inoculated, remember to take the following precautions not only during flu season, but throughout the year.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Use gloves for trash pick-up and when you tidy the cabin
- Cover your nose and mouth with your arm when you sneeze or cough
- Get plenty of rest
- Eat healthy
- Exercise
- Take a daily multivitamin to help boost your immune system

Have a safe and healthy holiday season!

Vacancy bids and ROR

by Contract and Leave
Coordinator **Denny Sebesta**

In our Contract Article 29 ("**Domiciles**"), outlines how vacancy bids and Right of Return (ROR) are applied. The first provision requires that vacancy bids are made available on a monthly basis for the purpose of movement between bases. Prior to this new contractual language, a vacancy bid only took place if the Company added aircraft, new hire Flight Attendants or determined a need due to attrition. The second provision is also new to our Contract and allows for Right of Return (ROR) in the case where a Flight Attendant is involuntarily moved to another Base. This is called "force-basing" and it is done in reverse seniority. For example, if Crew Planning needed to reduce the number of Flight Attendants in Dallas and involuntarily move ten out of Dallas, this would be considered a force base and these Flight Attendants would be given ROR status back to Dallas.

On May 1, 2010, the new Right of Return (ROR) language in our Contract took effect. This language provides protection for those Flight Attendants who are involuntarily moved out of their respective base and gives them an opportunity to have return priority in order of seniority of the base they were forced out of, as long they maintain that specific base as their first choice and the ROR does not cause displacement elsewhere in the system.

Recently the Union sat through a tutorial with Crew Planning to see how the Vacancy Bid program works with ROR. It's a complicated process, which involves running multiple scenarios before the final vacancy bid is closed. ROR and voluntary vacancies are interconnected, so if a displacement occurs anywhere in the system when Crew Planning is closing the bids, no ROR can take place. For example, if ten Flight Attendants from Baltimore are awarded ROR back to the base they were forced out of, ten Flight Attendants would have to move into Baltimore voluntarily to fill those positions and if not, then force basing would occur. Simply put, one has to be able to fill the voids created by base movement, otherwise, more displacement occurs.

Being force based is tough, but there is some relief coming early next year with the Company's announcement of hiring approximately 250 new Flight Attendants. This should help to alleviate force basing like we've seen in 2010, and open up more opportunity for Right of Return.



unity
THE MAGAZINE OF TWU LOCAL 556

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

KYLE WHITELEY
Unity Editor

Communications Coordinator
kwhiteley@twu556.org
MDW 35350

TWU Local 556
7929 Brookriver Dr. Ste. 750
Dallas, TX 75247
Phone: 800-969-7932
Fax: 214-357-9870
Hotline: 800-806-7992
www.twu556.org

CONNECT WITH US ON

