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President's Message

Happy Holidays everyone!

A few weeks ago my partner asked me to complete an interview about how my life has changed since 9/11 for an assignment in his doctoral program. Wow, what could be easier I thought, and then I realized that my life and job as a Flight Attendant has changed so much since 9/11 that it's hard to remember what it was like before.

There has been so much change for our workgroup, our Company, and our Customers, but probably the most visible reminder of those changes is the airport security checkpoints and the Transportation Safety Officers (TSOs) who man them.

Before 9/11, security checkpoints were often contracted out to private companies and even airlines with very few standard procedures or requirements. Security officers were often poorly trained (if at all), and procedures varied significantly from airport to airport; many private security companies did not bother to do background checks, and some security officers had criminal records.



Thom McDaniel
President TWU 556

All that changed when the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was formed and placed under the Department of Homeland Security. While there were many problems in the beginning due to the almost overwhelming task of creating this huge government agency, procedures are finally standardized, agents are well trained, and when faced with a new security threats, the TSA has become adept at responding quickly to address them. It's far from perfect, but the TSA has worked—and continues to work—to make the airport experience safer and more convenient for Flight Crews and our Customers.

Unfortunately, as the airport experience has gotten better for us, the TSA has not had the same success in creating safe and secure work environments for their own workers. Wages are low, working conditions are poor, and they do not have a fair grievance process. The current attrition rate is thirty percent per year. When the TSA was formed, the screeners were prohibited from forming unions as a matter of national security. This seems an unlikely reason, as many safety and security professionals are unionized, including firemen, police, some military, and, of course, even Flight Attendants. Most government employees are prohibited by law from striking, so it seems is ridiculous to assume that giving collective bargaining rights and a grievance process to TSOs would jeopardize national safety and security.

Currently there is a very real possibility that the prohibition on allowing Transportation Security Officers from organizing may be lifted, and the American Federation of Government Employees hopes to represent our TSO friends. The week of December 13 – 19 has been designated as a week of solidarity for the TSA workers. Our Union is supporting this effort, and I hope that all our Members will do their part, as well.

Please go to our Web site to download and print the AFGE flyer and leave it in the tub when you go through the security checkpoint to let them know you support TSOs having a strong union. You should not engage or disturb the agent while they are on duty, but the simple act of leaving the flyer will let them know that you support them. They know our Employees are happy and have great contracts, as well as a profitable Company—and that speaks volumes about why they should have a union, too. There will also be rallies all over the country at different airports in support of TSOs joining the AFGE. There is a link on our Web site where you can find a rally near you, so please go in your uniform and show your support the same way other workers supported us during our hard-fought Contract campaigns. In the future, we will also be distributing stickers and bag tags provided by the AFGE to put on crew bags to show our support.

I'm pretty sure that by now some of you are wondering why we care whether the TSOs have a Union. I mean, going through a security checkpoint can be a hassle, and some TSOs don't make it any easier. I would like to know, however, that when I go through a security checkpoint the TSOs screening the Customers who get on my aircraft are dedicated, career employees, with a vested interest in their future and safety. It's as simple as that. Much of what we have as Southwest Employees was

fought for and achieved by our Unions. We have earned the respect of our Company, and the TSOs deserve the same opportunities and respect that we have.

Best wishes during the holiday season, and remember the best gift a working person can have is a strong Union. We have one and so should everyone.

Live Web Cast Scheduled

Join us for our second live Web cast, Wednesday, December 16, 2009 at 18:00 Central. We will be discussing recent issues that affect the TWU Membership both on the line, and as Members of the Union. The broadcast will last 30 minutes.



You may submit your questions now and during the broadcast via email to: livebroadcast@twu556.org. Please keep your questions as concise as possible, so we can get to as many questions as possible during the live Web cast.

If you are unable to tune-in during the live broadcast, a replay will be available on the Union's Web site the following day.

We hope you will tune-in as we continue to find new ways to keep you informed of the news you can use!

Membership Meetings

The first round of Membership Meetings has been scheduled for 2010. The meetings will be held in February, and we would really like to see a large turnout to kick off the New Year. Please mark your calendar now to save the date! Additional information regarding the locations and times can be found in the Union's Glass Cases in the Lounges as well as on the TWU 556 Web site, www.twu556.org.

Baltimore - Feb. 25
Chicago - Feb. 22
Dallas - Feb. 15
Houston - Feb. 19
Las Vegas - Feb. 9
Oakland - Feb. 10
Orlando - Feb. 11

Phoenix - Feb. 8

Contract '08 Education

Everything you need to know about Parental Leave

Today, there are many different ways that individuals may become a parent other than through giving birth. There is adoption, foster care, surrogacy, and legal guardian, just to name a few. Our previous Contract had language to cover Maternity leave due to pregnancy and Personal Leave for Adoption, but it didn't cover those Flight Attendants who obtained their child through the diverse legal possibilities.



Denny Sebesta
Contract and Leave
Coordinator

Bringing home a new member of the family is new and exciting; parent(s) and child need time to settle in and bond, and your Negotiating Team understood the importance of having broader language. The new contractual language covering these various avenues to starting a family are referred to as "Parental Leave."

One of the great things about Parental Leave is that you are permitted to use your accrued sick bank and/or any vacation remaining in the current year during the Leave. This is different from the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), where you may use your vacation, but cannot use your sick leave for anyone other than yourself. You also don't have to worry about being eligible for Parental Leave based on hours flown, as is required under FMLA. Keep in mind, though, that if you are eligible for FMLA, those hours will run concurrent with your Parental Leave.

Another enhancement to this new language is that when taking a Parental Leave, you will not lose your SWA insurance benefits or seniority. In fact, you will continue to accrue seniority during the Parental Leave.

If you are interested in taking Parental Leave, here are some important things to know:

- You should request your Parental Leave in writing as soon as you are certain of the date you will begin your leave. This must be provided to your Base Leadership. The following information should be included:
 1. Start and end date of your leave
 2. Decision on whether to be paid from your sick leave or vacation
- Legal documentation supporting the adoption, birth or legal custodial rights

It's very important to communicate with your Base Leadership to ensure a smooth process in obtaining your Parental Leave. Make sure that the documents are sent in a timely manner; otherwise, your leave request could be delayed.

- Parental Leave must be taken within fourteen (14) days from the date the child begins living in your home
- The Parental Leave period is for up to twelve (12) continuous weeks (no intermittent times allowed). You may choose to take less than twelve (12) weeks, but you will not be able to restart your Parental Leave once you return to active status
- The child must not currently be living in your home, but will be in the near future
- You will be required to turn in your SWA ID badge, which is required for any type of leave of absence
- Pass Privileges: You may only travel on Buddy Passes or awarded Positive Space Passes.

For all of you Parents to be, enjoy your upcoming happy occasion, and I hope this new Contract language will help give you peace of mind knowing that you will retain your insurance coverage, and, if you choose, have the ability to continue receiving income by utilizing your sick bank or vacation.

As always, should you have any questions about Parental Leave or any other Contract questions, please contact the Union office at 1-800-969-7932 or submit your questions through the TWU Web site at www.twu556.org.

Aircraft 301 - Full Circle

Phoenix Flight Attendant and newly announced Professional Standards Chair Michael Broadhead submitted the following information on our old beloved aircraft N301SW.

Aircraft N301WN below in original livery, then later painted in canyon blue. (Photos from airliners.net)



Delivered to Southwest in December of 1985

Retired in 2009

Flew 24.5 years

- Flew an average 350 days a year, six flights per day, 2,100 total flights each year.
- 2,100 flights a year over 24.5 years is 51,450 total flights
- At a lifetime load of factor of 65 percent is roughly a total of 4,630,500 passengers flew on N301SW
- 350 days a year at an average of nine hours of flying each day is 77,175 total hours flown. With 8,760 hours in a year, the airplane was airborne in totality the equivalent of 8.5 years

On it's way to serving America in a different way.



Union Plus Scholarships

Union Plus is brought to you by Union Privilege, established by the AFL-CIO to provide consumer benefits to members and retirees of participating labor unions. TWU is a participating member of this organization.



Through Union Plus, being a Union Member makes you and your dependants eligible for discounts on all sorts of products, from movie tickets to discounts on new homes.

Education is also very important to everyone in the labor movement. We want to ensure you are aware of the scholarships available through Union Plus.

Apply for the Union Plus College Scholarship with cash awards ranging from \$500 to \$4,000 for undergraduate and graduate students. Union members and their children are eligible for Union Plus Scholarships.

Deadline: All applications must be postmarked by January 31, 2009.

For additional information on Union Plus and their scholarship program, visit <http://www.unionplus.org/college-education-financing>

TWU Local 556 and TWU International also offer scholarships that are separate from Union Plus. Keep an eye out for information on these Scholarships in the near future.

unity update

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