

# Update

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Thom McDaniel, TWU Local 556 President



### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

At press time, the schedule for the next round of Membership Meetings had not been finalized. The schedule for these meetings will be published in the Union Glass Case in each lounge as well as on the TWU Local 556 Website as soon as they are confirmed. Simply visit [www.twu556.org](http://www.twu556.org) and click the "Union Business" button on the left side of the page.

In the meantime, we continue to encourage each of you to attend Crew Member Self Defense Training. Below are the dates available for the next few months (additional classes may be scheduled, so check the site often). For more information on class locations and how you can sign up, go to [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov), click the "What We Do" button at the top of the page, and then the "Crew Member Self Defense Training" link.

**Atlanta, GA:**

November 30  
December 1

**Charlotte, NC:**

November 26  
December 1

**Chicago, IL:**

November 29  
December 6, 13, 20

**Dallas, TX:**

November 28  
December 3, 7, 13  
January 8, 18, 30

**Denver, CO:**

November 29

**Houston, TX:**

December 4, 5

**Miami, FL:**

December 4, 11

**Phoenix, AZ:**

December 3, 14

**San Francisco, CA:**

November 28  
December 5, 12

**Washington, DC:**

December 11, 17  
January 21

On a daily basis, whether commuting between my home in Houston and the Union Office in Dallas or most recently at the Class 238 (can you believe it?) New Hire Presentation, I am asked the same question – "What are we going to ask for in Negotiations?". With the current trend in our country to "go green", I am only too happy to respond with a recycled answer from our last Contract campaign – "Whatever our Membership wants."

During our last Negotiations, your Negotiating Team (NT) faced some huge challenges. Our industry was reeling from the tragedies of 9-11, our Contract was far below industry standard, and our Membership was frustrated and divided. With the odds stacked against us, the only sure bet was our Membership.

As we move toward Negotiations this time with an industry leading Contract, it would seem that we are far ahead of the

game, but think about it. Other Flight Attendant Contracts have been destroyed through bankruptcy or bankruptcy threats, the industry is reeling with record fuel prices, and the majority of our Membership is content and some are apathetic. The times have changed, but in many ways, our challenges are still the same, and our Membership is still our only sure bet.

The basis of a "Membership-driven" campaign is of course the Membership. Your NT takes their marching orders from the Membership's priorities. In return, we ask that Members become involved to achieve the Contract that we deserve. It seems like a fair trade, and I believe it is the only way that we will be successful.

How do we get there? First of all, we need our marching orders. When you have an idea about something you would like to see changed in our Contract, please submit it through the

"What's Next?" tab on the Local 556 Website ([www.twu556.org](http://www.twu556.org)). We will also be reviewing contractual grievances to determine areas in the Contract that need to be corrected.

Your Negotiating Team will take these issues and prepare surveys to determine the Membership's priorities. Once again we need you to participate to ensure your voice is heard.

Our biggest asset at the table is YOU. Get involved, wear your Union pin, read your Union's publications, call the hotline, volunteer to help educate the Membership, and be an informed and involved Union Member.

We can't be Membership-driven without our Members, so get involved and let's recycle our success.

# THIS IS THE SEASON For Depression

by Allyson Parker-Lauck  
TWU Local 556 Board Member at Large



For many people, the phrase "Happy Holidays" brings up images of friends and family joyously gathering together in celebration. But for others, the holidays are anything but joyous. Their holiday experience includes a time of self-evaluation, loneliness, reflection on past failures, and anxiety about an uncertain future. The "holiday blues" can be caused by many factors: increased stress and fatigue, unrealistic expectations, over-commercialization and the inability to be with one's family.

For Flight Attendants, these factors are magnified due to our schedules. Imagine that your whole family will be at your house for Christmas. The out-of-town guests arrive Christmas Eve morning, but you're on a 3-day trip, and don't get home until 9:30 PM that night (if you don't get rerouted). By the time you get home, it's almost midnight, the kids are in bed, and your spouse is trying to put together the toys. You end up only getting 3 or 4 hours of sleep, and in the morning, after opening the presents, you are expected to cook a magnificent meal for ten people, three of whom are vegetarians, one is lactose intolerant, two don't do carbs, and onions give grandma's stomach a fit!

The previous story only describes those who are lucky enough to be off for the holidays. How about this one... you're a new Flight Attendant, you've got three kids, and you're about to spend your very first holiday away from them. Your family is home enjoying the holiday without you, while you are alone in Columbus eating Cup 'O Soup with hot water from your in-room coffee maker hoping hubby doesn't burn the house down when he tries to deep fry the turkey.

Now imagine being a Flight Attendant who doesn't have any family. You hear about all of the fantastic plans your co-workers have, but when asked about your holiday plans, you either awkwardly reply that you don't have plans, or you make something up and quickly change the subject. If you are off during the holidays, you end up spending Christmas alone. You may even decide to pick up a trip just so you won't have to be by yourself.

And finally, imagine that you are a Flight Attendant who lost a loved one recently. Instead of being a time of joy, your holiday turns into a time of grief.

While preparing to write this article, I talked to several Flight Attendants who have suffered from various levels of depression. One of these Flight Attendants

commented, "As a Flight Attendant, we're constantly surrounded by people, but ironically it can be the loneliest job in the world."

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION?

The National Mental Health Association (NMHA) lists the following symptoms of depression:

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
- Sleeping too much or too little, middle of the night or early morning waking
- Reduced appetite and weight loss, or increased appetite and weight gain
- Loss of pleasure and interest in activities once enjoyed, including sex
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment (chronic pain or digestive disorders)
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless
- Thoughts of suicide or death

The NMHA adds that if you have five or more of these symptoms for two weeks or more, you could have clinical depression and should see your doctor or a qualified mental health professional for help.

## HOW CAN I AVOID HOLIDAY DEPRESSION?

First of all, keep in mind that clinical depression is an illness. Although some people are able to manage their depression without treatment, it is highly recommended that you seek help if you show signs of depression.

As with any illness, maintaining a healthy lifestyle will help you manage your depression. Try to incorporate the following into your daily life:

- Get plenty of sleep. Stick with a regular sleep routine.
- Exercise regularly.
- Set aside time to be with friends and family and do the things you enjoy.
- Watch your diet. Eat balanced meals. Avoid caffeine, sugar and salt.
- Follow your treatment plan: see your therapist, take your medications as prescribed and attend

- your support group meetings.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol.

One of the Flight Attendants I talked to regarding his depression was diagnosed with clinical depression several years ago. He began a treatment program including regular visits with his therapist and anti-depressant medication. Most of the year he manages his depression well; however, each year as the holidays approach, he feels his condition worsen. He said, "I seem to make the same mistake each year. Normally, I rarely drink. But as the holidays near and I feel more depressed, I make myself think that I will feel better if I go out and have drinks with friends. Unfortunately, the next morning, I feel even more depressed than before. Alcohol has a very significant depressing effect on me."

In closing, I am not an expert. I simply know people who have suffered with depression and did a little research. You can find a wealth of good information online, by calling Clear Skies, or by talking to your doctor. Don't take signs of depression lightly. Take care of yourself, get plenty of sleep, eat right, and listen to those messages your body sends you. Most importantly, don't be afraid to ask for help.

#### MENTAL HEALTH LINKS:

The National Institutes of Health: [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

The Nat'l Institute of Mental Health: [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

Mental health center locator: [www.mentalhelp.net](http://www.mentalhelp.net)

Depression help site: [www.undoingdepression.com](http://www.undoingdepression.com)

The American Institute of Stress: [www.stress.org](http://www.stress.org)

## Staying Sober During the Holidays

The holidays can be a time of great joy and celebration, or a time of great pain, sorrow and depression. Either way, these can be particularly dangerous times for people who are in recovery, especially those in early recovery.

The following links are great resources for anyone struggling with drug or alcohol addiction:

Find a 12-step Meeting anywhere:

<http://mobilemeetingfinder.mysobriety.net>

Alcohol/drug treatment center locator:

[www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

Alcoholics Anonymous: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

Narcotics Anonymous: [www.na.org](http://www.na.org)

Al Anon: [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org)

National Institute on Drug Addiction:

[www.nida.gov](http://www.nida.gov)

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug

Information: [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)

If you are a struggling with drug and/or alcohol addiction, please get help. Your career, and your life may depend on it. Email [get-help@twu556.org](mailto:get-help@twu556.org) and we will help you find the assistance you need.



## PHOENIX

*by John DiPippa, PHX Executive Board Member*

Hello PHX base and other fellow Union Brothers and Sisters. My name is John DiPippa and I am the new PHX Domicile Executive Board

Member (DEBM) filling Michael Broadhead's vacancy. I was hired in April, 2002 in Class 197, so I've been flying for 5 1/2 years. I still sit Reserve and work weekends, and chances are I have run into or flown with many of you.

Michael did such a great job with the PHX E-Connection electronic newsletter, and I will continue this means of communication. If you don't receive it already, drop a note with your name and email address in my box (#56750), and I'll get you signed up. If there is anything that you would like me to discuss regarding Union and/or Company issues, or any other personal issues in your lives such as births, deaths, etc., that you would like to share with your fellow Flight

Attendants, let me know and I will include them in future PHX E-Connections and with your permission, I'll put them on the PHX page on the Union Website. My Union email address is [phx-debm@twu556.org](mailto:phx-debm@twu556.org) and my Union cell phone number is **602-295-0125**.

Finally, I'd like to make sure you all know who your PHX Shop Stewards and designated reps are. They are: Michael Broadhead, Richard Locher, Mike Foley, Tim Blore, Darryl Daoang, Mark Savage, Nancy Osborne, George LaMonda, Lisa Vallet, Tina Coffee, and Kathleen Gregory. For the rest of you that aren't PHX based, if you go to the TWU website [www.twu556.org](http://www.twu556.org) and click on Contact Us/About Us at the top of the page, the next page will display a link for Shop Stewards at all bases.

Finally, while you are on the website, there is a link to the left titled "What's Next?". This link allows you to submit your input on what you would like to see in the next Contract since negotiations are coming up soon.

I look forward to seeing you all out on line!

# SOUTHWEST JETS ARE HAUNTED

## We Ain't Fraid of No Ghosts!

Yes, you heard it right, Southwest jets ARE haunted! In addition to the increased number of "announced check rides", Supervisors are conducting record numbers of "unannounced check rides" or as we like to call them "Ghost Rides". We all know that we should do our best on every flight, so why should we care if we get a checkride, right? Unfortunately, so many of our Supervisors now have never done our jobs that they are writing up things as miniscule as serving peanuts back to front, and questioning issues as serious as Flight Attendants informing the Pilots about maintenance issues. Imagine the uproar in the Flight Ops Department if Southwest hired Check Pilots who had never flown a Boeing 737 - or even a Piper Cub for that matter. Incomprehensible.

On October 31st, your TWU Local 556 Domicile Executive Board Members along with other Local 556 Officers hosted "GhostRIDEbusters" lounge mobilizations across the country. Make sure to check out the TWU Local 556 Website at [www.twu556.org](http://www.twu556.org) to view a video compilation of the day's events. Also, make sure to click the "Resources" tab. There you will find a current list of Inflight Supervisors and Managers which you can check against the "Specials" list. You can ask your Ops Agent to print this for you. In the meantime, keep on doing the great job you always do!



## By the Numbers

### 2007 Negotiating Team Election Synopsis

by Sonia Hall, Chairperson  
Local 556 Board of Election

The voting deadline was 9-28-07 and the results of the Negotiating Team election were as follows:

Victor Conejo.....	40
Kelley Martin.....	159
Michele Moore.....	194
Kim Zimmer.....	84
Val Lorien.....	419
James Malone.....	102
Michael McNeil.....	409
Robin Hampton.....	107
Cindy Ritner.....	596
Gregory Hofer.....	241

There were 8821 eligible voters, for which 1191 cast ballots, representing 13.5% of the eligible voters. Of the 1191 ballots received, 574 (48.2%) were cast via telephone voting, and 617 (51.8%) were cast via the web. There were 0 ballots cast in which the voter did not make a selection. There was 1 ballot declared void. Four (4) Members protested the recent NT election. Questions regarding the NT election should be sent to your Board of Election via email at [ibsunni2@yahoo.com](mailto:ibsunni2@yahoo.com).

## Announcing the 2007 TWU Local 556 Toy Drive

Benefitting the U.S. Marine Corps "Toys for Tots" Foundation

It's that time of year again! For the last 6 years, the Flight Attendants of TWU Local 556 have played a significant role in helping make children just a little happier during the holiday season.

Please help us continue that tradition by donating a new, unwrapped toy. Collections boxes are now set up in each Flight Attendant Lounge. The Marines have asked that we turn in all donations by December 12. If you would prefer to make a cash donation, feel free to leave a check or money order made payable to Toys for Tots in your Union Domicile Executive Board Member's Mailbox: BWI - Lucy White-Lehman #34900; DAL - Gwen Dunivent #3095; HOU - Jill van der Werff #18133; LAS - Kevin Onstead #39417; MCO - Susan Kern #45511; MDW - Kyle Whiteley #35350; OAK - Mark Torrez #68952; and PHX - John DiPippa #56750.

Thank you for helping us give back to the community and for making the holidays a bit brighter for those in need.



## UNITY Update

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

7929 Brookriver Drive, Suite 750  
Dallas, TX 75247  
Phone: 800-969-7932  
Fax: 214-357-9870  
Hotline: 800-806-7992

**UNITY Update Editor:**  
Allyson Parker-Lauck  
MDW F/A #17928

[www.twu556.org](http://www.twu556.org)

