

UNITY Update

NOVEMBER 2006

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 2007 MEMBERSHIP
MEETING* - ALL TIMES ARE LOCAL

OAK

DATE/TIME: Thur., 01/18/07 at 10:00 AM
LOCATION: OAK International Airport
Esther Love Conf. Room
(Take elevator to 2nd Floor,
Go through wheelchair
accessible door; turn left,
room is on right)
(510) 563-6424

PHX

DATE/TIME: Fri., 01/19/07 at 10:00 AM
LOCATION: PHX Sky Harbor Airport
Terminal 3 - Level 2
(End of hall next to Sbarro)
(602) 273-3382

DAL

DATE/TIME: Mon., 01/22/07 at 10:00 AM
LOCATION: Holiday Inn Select Love Fld.
3300 W. Mockingbird Lane
(214) 357-8500

HOU

DATE/TIME: Tues., 01/23/07 at 10:00 AM
LOCATION: Hobby Airport
The Cloud Room
(713) 641-7723

MCO

DATE/TIME: Wed., 01/24/07 at 10:00 AM
LOCATION: Hawthorn Suites MCO
7450 Augusta National Dr.
(407) 438-2121

MDW

DATE/TIME: Thur., 01/25/07 at 10:00 AM
LOCATION: American Legion
Clearing Post 600
4352 W. 63RD Street
(773) 767-0230

BWI

DATE/TIME: Fri., 01/26/07 at 10:00 AM
LOCATION: BWI Airport
BWI Conf. Room NTE 247
(At the end of the Air Tran
counter; turn right to the
Meditation Room, then take
another right. The BWI
Conf. Room, #NTE 247, will
be on the left behind the Air
Tran ticket counter)

MEETING AGENDA: - General Business

* All sessions constitute the meeting.

GENERAL UNION MEETING - OPEN
TO MEMBERS ONLY - ID'S WILL BE
CHECKED

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Thom McDaniel, TWU Local 556 President

As I write this, I have just returned from my quarterly whirlwind tour of all seven (soon to be eight) bases conducting the final regular Membership Meetings of 2006. Thanks to everyone who attended to share their concerns and ideas and to vote for the Board of Election and Shop Stewards.

The hottest topic of discussion at our meetings was the completion of the Scheduling Survey. About 48% of our Members answered the survey and the results are posted on www.twu556.org. Thanks to everyone who participated. This is one of the highest turnouts we have ever had for a non-negotiations related survey providing an excellent sampling of our Membership.

The survey showed us what most of us already know with few surprises. As a group, we want fewer 4-day trips, and if we are scheduled to fly four days a week, we want those four days to consist of turn, 2-day, and

3-day pairings.

The high participation and consistent results have provided a valuable resource for our Scheduling Committee and the Crew Planning Department. Due in a large part to the results of the Scheduling Survey, Crew Planning has reduced the number of 4-day trips in the December schedule from an average of 19% to approximately 5%. This will provide an improvement in the quality of life for our Members during the upcoming holiday season.

By reducing the Schedule to 4-6% 4-day trips, Crew Planning can reduce the number of 4-day Reserve Lines saving money in Reserve guarantee and reducing the total cost of the schedule. This is a very obvious win-win for all, and this cost savings through flexibility was what our Union sought to negotiate for in our current Contract.

Another strong indicator in the survey was that our Members preferred fewer 4-days to "clean" lines so there is



some inconsistency in the pairings. With fewer 4-days, the flying had to be spread out over a greater number of turns, 2-days, and 3-days, so there may be more pairings per line. We will continue to try to improve this situation.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to our Scheduling Committee as well as all those Domicile Executive Board Members and Shop Stewards who worked hard to get out the vote on the survey. We all know however that the hard work would be in vain without the participation of our Membership.

Don't forget to participate in our annual "Toys for Tots" toy drive to help brighten the holidays for a needy child. Fly safe and best wishes for a wonderful holiday season.



You are Not Alone

The TWU Local 556 Peer Support Group

*by Brett Nevarez, TWU Local 556 Board Member at Large
and Drug and Alcohol Committee Chair*

Two years ago, we published an article in *UNITY Update* titled, "Tis the Season... for Depression". The following is an excerpt:

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. For many people, the holidays are 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 4-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 new bike, skateboard, doll house, and all the other toys that will make your kids squeal with joy. Of course you're not going to miss getting up at the crack of dawn to watch the kids open Santa's presents - so you end up only getting 3 or 4 hours of sleep. 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 get to hear about all of the fantastic plans your co-workers have. 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, as your friends are with their own families. 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."

In this issue, we're going to look at depression from a different angle. Some people attempt to deal with their depression by using alcohol and/or drugs. The TWU Local 556 Drug and Alcohol Committee is working on improving treatment/recovery options for Flight Attendants, and are developing a Peer Support group so that those who need help can talk to someone who has truly "walked a mile" in their shoes. The following is a testimonial from one Flight Attendant:

"I was 8 years old the first time I got drunk. I distinctly remember feeling as if a switch had been flipped and really liking the buzz. I 'blacked out' that night, meaning I did not remember what happened after a certain time. I was not scared by this reaction and was off to make sure I could feel like that again by sneaking beer and liquor from my parents, family, and my friends' families whenever possible.

At 11, I smoked marijuana for the first time and enjoyed that also. I began to smoke pot regularly. I tried speed at 13, acid, cocaine, and heroin at 15. Somewhere between junior high and high school my drug use had gone from recreational to habitual. At 16, I ended up getting suspended from school and kicked out of sports for getting caught with pot at school. I could not have cared less. My parents were at their wits end. During college the partying (my euphemism for drug and alcohol abuse) increased dramatically. I got a DWI at 18, and my parents were fed up. I moved out on my own and continued my lifestyle with no limits.

A year later I found myself in an alcohol/drug treatment center because my parents would no longer give me money. I was able to stop drinking but continued to smoke pot. 1 year later I was introduced to crack, and things really began to unravel for me quickly. In just 4 months I had lost my job, apartment, and 40 pounds. I had begun to do all the things I said I would never do; steal from friends and family

etc. I was making promises to everyone around me, including myself, that I would stop, slow down and maintain control. It was only a matter of seconds, minutes, or hours until I broke them. I began to hope and pray that I would not wake up the next day. I was suicidal and at the end of my rope.

I believe it was only my earlier exposure to treatment and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) that kept me alive. I went to another treatment center and ended up living in a halfway house for 6 months. I began to "work a program" and changed my entire way of thinking and living. That was almost 17 years ago this month. I am convinced that AA/NA saved my life. Over the years I have seen countless other people turn their lives around by doing the same things I had done. Now I want to help people that I work with get help and change their lives for the better."

This is just one story from one of the Members of the TWU Local 556 Peer Support Group. Everyone's story is different, but one thing they do all have in common is that they sought help, are clean and sober working a 12-step program, and they want to help others. If you or somebody you know wants help please contact us at **gethelp@twu556.org** and we will help you find the assistance you need.

If you are currently involved in a 12-step program

and have 12 months or more sobriety and would like to participate in the TWU Local 556 Peer Support Group, please email me at **ebm-at-large@twu556.org**.

The following is a list of resources with information on mental health and drug and alcohol recovery and treatment. Get help. Your career, and your life, may depend on it.

MENTAL HEALTH LINKS:

The National Institutes of Health: **www.nih.gov**

The Natl' Institute of Mental Health: **www.nimh.nih.gov**

Mental health center locator: **www.mentalhelp.net**

Depression help site: **www.undoingdepression.com**

The American Institute of Stress: **www.stress.org**

ALCOHOL AND DRUG RECOVERY AND TREATMENT LINKS:

Alcohol/drug treatment center locator:

www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Alcoholics Anonymous: **www.aa.org**

Adult Children of Alcoholics: **www.adultchildren.org**

Narcotics Anonymous: **www.na.org**

Al Anon: **www.al-anon.org**

National Institute on Drug Addiction: **www.nida.gov**

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information:
www.healthfinder.gov

Announcing the 2007 TWU Local 556 Toy Drive

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

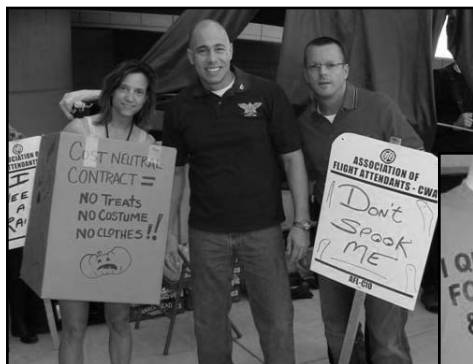


It's that time of year again! For the last 5 years, the Flight Attendants of TWU Local 556 have played a significant role in helping make children just a little happier during the holiday season. Please help us continue that tradition by donating a new, unwrapped toy. Collections boxes are now set up in each Flight Attendant Lounge. The deadline to donate will differ in each base, so please check the collection box or your Union glass case for base specifics. In most cases, the deadline will be in mid-December. Please help us make this year our biggest year yet!

We Support America West and US Airways Flight Attendants

Our Members give a Halloween treat to fellow Flight Attendants

On October 31, 2006, America West Airlines and US Airways Flight Attendants, represented by the Association of Flight Attendants - CWA (AFA-CWA), picketed at seven airports across the country to protest stagnant wages, sluggish Contract Negotiations and Management's "nothing-for-workers" negotiating stance. These same Flight Attendants supported us during our 2-year Contract battle, so it was time to return the favor. Thanks goes out to all those who participated. Please continue to support your fellow Flight Attendants during this difficult time.



NEWS BRIEFS

THE VOTES ARE IN: A re-vote on the \$2 per month Assessment Fee was conducted during the August Membership Meetings. The Assessment Fee was reaffirmed with a vote of 63 to 4. The votes to elect the TWU Local 556 Board of Election were cast during the October Membership Meetings. The new Members of the TWU Local 556 Board of Election are: Sonia Hall, Jannah Dalak, Chris Sullivan, and alternate Kelley Martin.

TWU LOCAL 556 OPEN HOUSE: The Officers and Staff of Local 556 invite you to an Open House at our new offices on Tuesday, December 5 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 7929 Brookriver Drive, Suite 750. From Love Field, take Mockingbird to Brookriver Drive and turn left. The building is on the right. Take the elevator to the 7th floor. See you there!

HELP WANTED: The TWU Local 556 Grievance Team is looking for a few good men and women who are willing to work in the Union Office to help cover temporary absences due to vacation, sick leave, training, meetings, etc. If you are willing to work hard and would like to get your feet wet doing Union work, this may be your opportunity. Please submit a letter of interest to Thom McDaniel at president@twu556.org.

UNITY Update

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

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