

1st Vice President's Message



Todd Gage is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and serves as the 1st Vice President of TWU Local 556.

When I first started doing Union work, one of the most intriguing facets of my new list of responsibilities was learning and understanding the Grievance Process. Today, this is still probably my favorite part of the job. I believe that EVERYONE deserves due process. After a Flight Attendant files a grievance and the Executive Board finds that it has merit enough to continue to the next step, our Grievance Chairperson Becky Parker, Grievance Specialist Barbra Fitzhugh and I take that grievance and try one last time to reach a resolution with Management before it moves to the next step: either Board of Adjustment or Arbitration. Each month, the three of us meet with Southwest Airlines Labor Relations to discuss the recently filed grievances or past grievances with new information. This is our chance to really advocate on behalf of the Members, trying to “make them whole” and to resolve their grievances. These meetings are beneficial because it gives both sides a chance to really dissect the real, underlying obstacle of each grievance and try to find a remedy. We have had a lot of success at these meetings. However, there are times when both sides must agree to disagree; then we continue through the grievance process as outlined in our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Many times a grievance has been filed, but it hasn't yet been considered by the Executive Board and our Committee is able to reach a resolution for the Flight Attendant early on in the process.

Some of you experienced and many have heard about the events that occurred this past weekend when the weather in the Northeast caused cancellations and re-schedules for many of our Members. During the irregular operations, some Flight Attendants were sent to cities without an available hotel room. In our CBA, Southwest Airlines MUST provide a hotel on an overnight. When these Members were not provided a hotel room, Southwest Airlines violated our Contract. This took place on the evening of February 14 with the Union staying in close communication with Management during the entire situation.

President Audrey Stone and Southwest Airlines Management officially began discussions regarding the seriousness of these Contract violations first thing on Monday morning, February 16, and a grievance was filed immediately on behalf of the Members.

Today, I am pleased to report that after more discussions between the Union and Management (and some midnight oil burned by Audrey Stone), a favorable settlement has been reached for these Members. We believe that the settlement recognizes the severity of the violations and the fact that it was agreed upon so quickly is a testament to the commitment from Southwest Airlines Management that such incidents cannot be repeated.

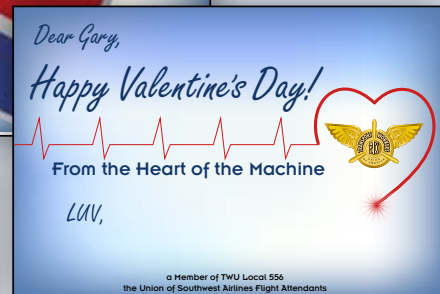
We have an amazing Grievance Team. I am so privileged to work with them, fighting for the Members of TWU Local 556.

[*click here to see settlement letter*](#)

Happy Valentine's Day, Gary!

Last week, TWU Local 556 Members delivered thousands of Valentine's Day cards to our favorite CEO, Gary Kelly, sending “LUV” from the Flight Attendants of Southwest Airlines, “The Heart of the Machine.”

Contract Action Network (CAN) Leaders and Volunteers, who collected the signatures, reported an overwhelming response from Flight Attendants wanting to be more involved in our campaign to maintain and improve upon our industry-leading Contract.



So you want to run for Office?



Mark Torrez is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and Shop Steward. Mark served as the TWU Local 556 Oakland Domicile Executive Board Member from 2003 to 2009 and as Board Member at Large from 2009 to 2012.

I hate to admit it, but when I first got involved with the Union, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. Sure, I knew the Contract and I thought I knew what the Union did on a daily basis, but I soon discovered I really had no idea. If you're thinking of getting more heavily involved with TWU Local 556 as we prepare for elections and Committee appointments, I thought I'd do my best to let everyone know the basics of Union work and involvement level depending on the role you seek to fill. I've held a couple of different positions on the Executive Board so I can personally speak to those, but I have also served on three different Executive Boards, watching many different people engage in their roles as various Members of the Executive Board.

I'd like to begin by mentioning some things that are not specific to any Officer position but is required by ALL Members of the Executive Board. First, every Officer is REQUIRED to attend a monthly Executive Board Meeting in Dallas. It is traditionally held during the second full week of each month to avoid any issues with those who VJA at the beginning or end of the month. Typically, Board Members fly to Dallas on Monday. Tuesday is spent reviewing Officer Reports and reports from each of the various Union Committees that detail activity from the previous month. Wednesday is spent meeting with Inflight Management and reviewing Termination and Grievance cases presented to the Executive Board by our Grievance Team. When a New Hire class is in session, the entire Executive Board is asked to attend a dinner hosted by the Union to further introduce the New Hires to TWU Local 556 outside of the classroom setting. Thursday is spent on both old and new business and then commuting home.

Each Executive Board Member is required to sit Emergency On-Call several times each year. Similar to a Supervisor on call after business hours, the Emergency Officer On-Call must assist Members in dire need. I've taken calls ranging in severity from suicide threats, medical emergencies of a fellow Crew Member, drug and alcohol tests on line, death of a family member, to the disastrous shut down of "Maestro" by Southwest Airlines in 2004. The Board Member sitting Emergency On-Call must return a call within twenty minutes, which means you can't be on a plane. You must be available from 1800 until 0800 Central Time Monday through Thursday and 1800 Central Time Friday until the following Monday at 0800. This week is typically unpaid. Thankfully, each Executive Board Member sits three or four weeks of Emergency On-Call each year.

Then there is the TWU Local 556 Bylaw requirement to fulfill "Other duties as assigned by the President and/or Executive Board." This umbrella clause appears in every job description for Executive Board Members in the Bylaws and could be used to refer to a number of things. Executive Board Members are also expected to participate in conference calls when needed and must occasionally fly to Dallas for impromptu meetings when things like Tentative Agreements are reached. The TWU Constitutional

Convention is another such event that requires attendance of an Executive Board Member, and is typically hosted by TWU International in Las Vegas once every four years. Finally, each Officer is expected to attend Membership Meetings, and log all communications with Members into our Grievance database, Laborsoft.

Are you still with me? I know this is long but I truly wish someone had told me all this before I decided to throw my hat in the ring back in 2003.

To me, the specific duties of the Domicile Executive Board Members are crucial to our Membership and our Executive Board. These ten Executive Board Members are the "face" of the Union to most of us. We fly with them, we see them in our lounges, and more often than not, they are the ones who accompany us in the unfortunate event we have to meet with Management. If you're thinking of running for this position, I will tell you from my experience as the Oakland Domicile Executive Board Member that it is equally as demanding as it is rewarding. Domicile Executive Board Members are not pulled full-time to do Union work, unless they are working on a special project.

Domicile Executive Board Members (DEBMs) must be based and reside in the Domicile they represent. They are responsible for many things on a monthly basis in addition to maintaining their flying schedule. They must attend the monthly Executive Board Meeting in Dallas. They must coordinate at least one monthly Lounge Mobilization in their base, but may hold up to three. DEBMs write a monthly E-Connection specific to their base, keep their Base Webpage updated regularly, post all current information in their Union Glass Case, as well as maintain the Union Red Rack in the Flight Attendant Lounge. They ensure all publications are distributed in their base as well as meet with their Base Management monthly. Typically, when a Flight Attendant is called in for a Fact-Finding Meeting, the DEBM is called first to conduct the meeting. DEBM's are also charged with communicating monthly with the Shop Stewards in their respective base and coordinating events in their Domiciles such as the annual Toys for Tots drive.

Sound busy? You bet and there's more! Domicile Executive Board Members must maintain

contact with their local Labor Council by attending council meetings. They also must participate in their TWU State Conference. DEBMs are the acting Union Safety Representative in their respective Domicile and must attend Safety Meetings in both their Domicile and when Southwest Airlines holds system wide events. Finally, DEBMs must write monthly Base Reports documenting their actions for the month to present during monthly Executive Board Meetings as well as write a quarterly Base Report for Unity Magazine.

If you want to be in the trenches this is definitely the job for you! It requires you to be available in your base much of the time. Thankfully, most Domicile Executive Board Members have a great support group of Shop Stewards that help make sure all of these duties are completed each month.

The TWU Local 556 President, on the other hand, must work full time in the Union Office in Dallas. According to the Local's Bylaws, the President also serves as our Lead Negotiator. The President must stay in communication with TWU International; serve as a representative at the Southwest Airlines Labor Council, the Flight Attendant Coalition, AFL-CIO events, and several other organizations. The President attends regular meetings with Inflight Management. It is the President's responsibility to see that all facts are assembled pertaining to grievances pending before the Board of Adjustment or Arbitration, and to assure the proper presentation of said grievances. The President attends and presides over all Membership Meetings (currently thirty meetings each year) and the monthly Executive Board Meeting. The President is also responsible for staffing of the Union Office. Our TWU Constitution also states that our President shall be the Chairperson for the Committee on Political Education (COPE) and the Organizing Committee.

The Treasurer must also work full time in the Union Office in Dallas and is responsible for a vast array of tasks each month. The Treasurer maintains an accurate reporting of all financial transactions of the Union, closes payroll each month with Southwest Airlines, and provides a monthly financial report for the Executive Board to review. The Treasurer submits all of the Union's financial records at least once a year to a Certified Public Accountant for audit and forwards the information to the International Union. The Treasurer processes all bills to vendors, and is responsible for tracking, accounting for and paying all "per capita" funds to TWU International as well as the AFL/CIO. She/he is responsible for deposits into all cash and investment accounts and reconciles these accounts monthly, analyzing cash flow and investment gain/loss trends and making recommendations to the Executive Board. The Treasurer is also responsible for tracking and collecting dues owed from Members not paying dues through Southwest Airlines payroll deduction, utilizing the Union's Dues Recovery Database. She/he is also responsible for the Pull-Sheet Database and tracking all Union business work performed for reconciliation of Lost Time with Southwest Airlines. The Treasurer prepares the TWU Local 556 Annual Operating Budget, utilizing Excel spreadsheets or other documentation provided by Committee Chairpersons. Finally, the Treasurer tracks and reports the Local's budget vs. actual expenditures and provide monthly reports to the Executive Board and to Committee Chairs as requested.

The Recording Secretary attends all Executive Board and Membership Meetings and maintains the official Minutes for each. The Recording Secretary handles any charges that come forth to the Executive Board under the TWU Constitution and maintains the TWU Local 556 Minutes archive.

The 1st Vice President assists the President in the discharge of his/her duties, and during his/her absence, performs the duties of the President. In the absence of the President, the 1st Vice President assumes the duties of the President. According to the TWU Local 556 Bylaws, in the event that the President is unable to fulfill the duties/term as President, the 1st Vice President assumes the position of President. It is very important that the 1st Vice President remain up-to-date and aware of everything going on within the Union, because they may be asked to step in for the President at any time.

The 2nd Vice President does not follow the order of succession, but assists the President in the discharge of his/her duties, and during the President's or 1st Vice President's absence shall perform the duties of the President. This position is very similar to the two Board Member at Large positions, as these three positions have no specific job description. They must perform the functions stated earlier that all Officers must perform, but that is all they are technically required to do.

Previous 2nd Vice Presidents and Board Members at Large have taken on other roles by accepting some of the more labor-intensive Committee positions such as: Chairperson of the Grievance Committee, Communications Committee, Scheduling Committee and Safety Committee. Other Committees that have been chaired by a 2nd Vice-President have included the Flight Attendant Drug and Alcohol Program, Survey Committee, Scholarship Committee, Education Committee, and other tasks assigned by the Executive Board. Basically, these three positions have an ability to "create your own" job and list of responsibilities.

I must point out that holding one of these titles does not entitle the 2nd Vice President or Board Member at Large to simply pick whatever Committee position they want. The Executive Board will consider all "letters of interest" from all Members interested in leading a Committee and choose the person best qualified for that Chairmanship, even if it's not an Executive Board Member.

Speaking of Committee Chairpersons, you may be thinking you want to get involved but want to

stay out of the political side of things. If so, serving as a Committee Chairperson might be a better option for you.

There are currently twenty Standing and Special Committees that all need Chairpersons at TWU Local 556. Some are much more time-intensive than others, but all are equally important. Some of these are “joint” committees between Southwest Airlines and TWU Local 556 and some are literally a committee made up of one person. Here is a list of our current committees:

- Committee on Political Education (COPE)
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
- Grievance Committee
- Scheduling Committee
- Safety Committee
- Health Committee
- Education Committee
- Professional Standards Committee
- Communications Committee
- Civil and Human Rights Committee
- Shop Steward Committee
- Mobilization/Organizing Committee
- New Hire Committee
- Scholarship Committee
- Survey Committee
- Veterans Committee
- Working Women’s Committee
- Information Technology Committee
- FADAP Committee

I hope this article gives you some insight as to what you may be getting yourself into if you decided to run for Union office or otherwise get involved. I also hope it serves as a resource for all voters to be able to ask potential candidates questions as they run for office.



What’s So Special About “Orange?”



Patrick Reynolds is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant. Patrick serves as a TWU Local 556 Shop Steward and as a Contract Action Network (CAN) Leader.

On May 31, 2013, the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) or “Contract” between TWU Local 556 and Southwest Airlines became “amendable.” This will be the ninth Contract that we have negotiated. To differentiate more easily between them, the “cover” of each Contract has traditionally been a different color. For example, to answer the question of when the Flight Attendant Fatigue Policy was incorporated, we say that it was in the “purple” Contract.

When we began the negotiations process for our new Contract, we chose the color orange, and have incorporated the color into our overall Contract campaign. Though orange may not be a color that many people call their favorite, there isn’t a more fitting color to represent us as Flight Attendants. We chose orange as an ode to our humble beginnings. Orange showed the world who we were as an airline. From our logo, to the color on our aircraft, from the hot pants and the numerous uniforms that would follow, orange has represented Southwest throughout our almost 44 year history like no other color has.

Orange is representative of the tenacious and steadfast nature that Herb Kelleher possessed fight after fight and year after year. And collectively, we have continued to make history time and again, proving why we are the best airline and workforce in the industry. As Southwest has grown and battles have been waged, we have always fought the good fight together. Our Union has grown and atmospheres have changed, but we must always remain aware and involved and stand united together.

As TWU Local 556 Members, we are responsible for writing our own history and using the determined and strong-willed nature that has been ingrained in us to settle for nothing less than fair. We have done so as an airline. We have done so as a Union. And together, we must continue to do so during these ongoing Contract Negotiations.

Our orange bag tags and ribbons represent more than just a Contract. They represent the spirit of June 1971 and the non-negotiable determination we wielded as one in our struggle to survive. They represent the color of our strength and our solidarity, the color of our hard-fought history and who we are. They are the color of our battle cry and the color that has run through the veins of this airline from its inception. Throughout our future, the color orange will continue to be indicative of what we’ve always been, who we are and who we will be: United, Unyielding and Strong.

Voting for the TWU Local 556 Officer Elections will Open in Eight Days!



Susan Johnson is an Orlando-based Flight Attendant and serves on the TWU Local 556 Board of Election.

Voting opens at noon CST on Sunday, March 1 and closes Monday, March 16 at noon CST.

1. Ballots will be mailed to the last address on file with Southwest Airlines on or about February 24, 2015.
2. Voting can be done either via Internet or telephone. Telephone voting takes longer, so be sure to have a strong signal and sufficient time if you decide to use this method.
3. Ballots will be sent to all Flight Attendants, both active and inactive. Voting credentials will not be included for those Flight Attendants who will be on Probation when voting closes or who have an Agency Fee Only status.
4. You may cast your vote ONCE, so be sure to do sufficient research before you vote.
5. Results will be posted on the TWU Local 556 Website as soon as possible on the 16th.
6. The protest period for the election ends on March 26, 2015 at noon Central.
7. If you do not receive a ballot, or will not have access to your ballot before the close of the vote, contact VoteNet at 888-404-5750 (toll-free) or 202-207-0529 (if calling from outside the United States). You can also email your questions to TWU556ElectionSupport@votenet.com.
8. Check the TWU Local 556 Website at twu556.org under the Board of Election tab for a list of candidates, the nomination/election notice, the rules for candidates, and the results from the 2012 Officer Election.

Please contact the Board of Election with any questions or concerns at 800-969-7932 extension 4324 or via email at BoardOfElection@twu556.org.



Contract Quickies!

Brandon Hillhouse is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and a Member of the TWU Local 556 Grievance Team and Negotiating Team.



- **Article 21.12 – Cancellation Pay** – If any flights appearing on a Flight Attendant's line of time are cancelled due to irregular operations or to suit Company convenience, and such flights are not made up the same day or days in the case of a multi-day pairing including an overnight, the Flight Attendant shall be paid according to her/his schedule bid for the trips scheduled. Flight Attendants will be paid her/his actual or scheduled flying, whichever is greater over the life of the pairing for the number of day(s) the Flight Attendant was originally scheduled to work.
- **Article 11.17 – Reserve Cancellations** – When a Reserve is assigned a pairing and encounters a cancellation, the Reserve will be credited the appropriate TFP for such cancellations for that day. In the event the Reserve is reassigned, she/he will be credited for the TFP flown or cancelled that day, whichever is greater.
- **Article 9.5 – Move Up** – Move up will occur at check-in when a Flight Attendant is moved up to cover a pairing that originates prior to the Flight Attendant's original pairing. A move up will be requested of the Flight Attendants having like pairings in order of seniority and assigned in reverse seniority. In determining like pairings, Scheduling will first consider pairings with an equal number of days, then pairings with more days and finally pairings with fewer days.
- Keep in mind that a Move Up occurs "at check-in" and does not mean Scheduling can give you an earlier check-in of a pairing. This simply means you have checked in at your original time and they need someone to cover a trip that is pushing prior to the push of your original trip (but after check-in of your original trip.)
- You are pay protected and will be paid your actual or scheduled flying, whichever is greater over the life of the pairing for the number of day(s) originally scheduled.
- Any flying above originally scheduled will be paid at time and one-half; or if the move up results in more days of flying, you are entitled to a day off without pay in lieu of time and one-half pay. This choice must be made at the completion of the move up.

TWU Local 556 Celebrates Black History Month



Fifty-seven years ago, on February 11, 1958, Ruth Carol Taylor made history.

Journalist and nurse Ruth Carol Taylor became the first African American airline Flight Attendant in the United States when she joined Mohawk Airlines in 1958. While she is most commonly known for her achievement in the airline industry, she spent much of her career as an activist for minority and women's rights.

Taylor was born in Boston, Massachusetts on December 27, 1931 to Ruth Irene Powell Taylor, a nurse, and William Edison Taylor, a barber. When Ruth was young, her family moved to a farm in upstate New York. She attended Elmira College in New York and in 1955 graduated from the Bellevue School of Nursing in New York City as a registered nurse. After working for several years as a nurse, Taylor decided to break the color barrier that existed in the career of airline Stewardesses.

Now called Flight Attendants, Stewardesses at the time were hired primarily based on physical attractiveness and height/weight conformity. Wishing to be the first African American Stewardess, Taylor applied to Trans World Airline (TWA) but was rejected and subsequently filed a complaint against the company with the New York State Commission on Discrimination. About the same time, the regional carrier Mohawk Airlines expressed interest in hiring minority Flight Attendants, and Taylor applied for a position. She was selected from 800 black applicants and was hired in December 1957. On February 11, 1958, she became the first African American Flight Attendant on a flight from Ithaca to New York City. Three months later, Margaret Grant was hired amid pressure by TWA as the first African American Flight Attendant for a major airline carrier.

In a 1997 *Jet* interview, Taylor admitted that she had no long-term career aspirations as a Flight Attendant but merely wanted to break the color barrier. Six months after making aviation history, Taylor married

Rex Legall and was forced to resign from Mohawk due to restrictions that

Flight Attendants remain single. The couple lived in the British West Indies and then London, UK but divorced shortly after the birth of their daughter. Taylor moved to Barbados, where she founded the country's first professional nursing journal and became active in civil rights. Her son was born there in 1969.

Taylor returned to New York in 1977 to resume work as a nurse and co-founded the Institute for Inter Racial Harmony, which developed a test to measure racist attitudes known as the Racism Quotient. In 1985, Taylor wrote *The Little Black Book: Black Male Survival in America*, a survival guide to help young black men succeed in a racist society.

In 2008, fifty years after her historic flight that broke the color barrier for airline attendants, Taylor's accomplishment was formally recognized by the New York State Assembly. Now using the name Carol Taylor, the activist lives in Brooklyn, New York.

[Click here to read the bio of Ruth Carol Taylor.](#)

[Click here to read the article in Jet Magazine.](#)



Apply for the TWU Michael Quill Scholarship Today



Matt Hettich is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant. Matt serves as the Oakland Domicile Executive Board Member and as the Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Education and Scholarship Committees.

Applications are now being accepted for the TWU Michael J. Quill Scholarship Fund. This scholarship offers fifteen college-bound dependents of TWU Members with a scholarship worth \$4800, with \$1,200 paid annually to winners who continue to be eligible over their four-year course. Applications must be postmarked on or before April 17, 2015; no applications postmarked after this date will be accepted. Please visit www.twu.org for an application and additional information, including eligibility requirements.

Negotiating Team Update



Our TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team (NT) participated in negotiations with Southwest Airlines Management on February 16-17. Although we had originally anticipated having further discussions regarding Article 8 (Hours of Service), Article 28 (Scheduling Policy), and the overall compensation package discussed at our last session, that changed due to recent events.

Our NT made the Valentine's Day disaster their immediate priority. Our Contract states in Article 22.2.B (Expenses), "The Company will provide at all RON stations suitable hotel accommodations with single rooms for each Flight Attendant." This language was broken on February 14-15 when Scheduling failed to secure hotel rooms for our Flight Attendants. While we realize that severe weather and aircraft diversions sent Flight Attendants into unexpected cities for the night, and that Management attempted to secure hotel rooms, the fact remains that they failed. This is not the first time this has happened, but it must be the last time.

At the bargaining table, we discussed what happened, and the obvious deficiencies in the new Crew Ops Support in the Network Operations Control (NOC). We agreed that a lack of planning, communication, and proactive measures led to our Crews being stranded, with no hotel accommodations. Your NT has demanded that the issues be fixed, and that new procedures be implemented to provide further protection to Flight Attendants when these irregular operations happen.

Our next bargaining session is scheduled for March 18-19, but please know that your NT will continue pushing this issue forward even between our negotiating sessions, as we look to incorporate further protections for the Flight Attendants into our Contract.



The TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team: (left to right) Paul Sweetin, Brandon Hillhouse, Audrey Stone-TWU Local 556 President, Bill Holcomb, Brett Nevarez-TWU Local 556 2nd Vice President.

I have remained in direct contact with Management since Saturday evening regarding this unacceptable situation and we continue to work diligently on the group grievance filed by TWU Local 556, seeking a remedy for the affected Flight Attendants.

Your NT will continue to keep you updated. Thank you for your perseverance and your support. I am proud to lead the team at the bargaining table, representing the best Flight Attendants in the industry.

In Solidarity,

Audrey Stone
TWU Local 556 President and Lead Negotiator

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TWU Local 556

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