



OCTOBER 5, 2015

unity update

Your bi-monthly
Unity supplement

1st Vice President's Message



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

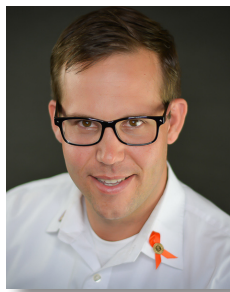
A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to address some of our newly elected Shop Stewards at their inaugural training. Shop Stewards are trusted to guard and maintain both the confidentiality of individual Members' personal situations as well as other private matters of the Union. Part of my job during the training was to address the importance of confidentiality and to present our Shop Stewards with the TWU Local 556 Confidentiality Agreement to sign.

I am bringing up this topic because Members often ask me questions pertaining to the confidential matters of an individual Member or the Union in general. All Executive Board Members have signed a Confidentiality Agreement as well, and we are bound to protect all confidential matters and may be held accountable if we do not. The agreement covers all aspects of confidentiality pertaining to Union matters, whether it is for an individual Member or the Union and Membership as a whole.

Although some conspirators believe Union Leaders are "hiding" information from the Membership, in all true honesty we are not. Confidentiality is not at odds with transparency. Confidentiality amongst Union Leaders actually allows for the free and open exchange of ideas before coming to consensus and/or a vote on what is best for the Membership and our Union. Without confidence in this process, your Union Leadership cannot represent TWU Local 556 in the best way possible.

The Membership of TWU Local 556 should expect their elected leaders to maintain confidentiality. I hope that Members will continue to respect the confidentiality to which Executive Board Members and Shop Stewards are bound.

Electronic Unity Update Turns Two!



Erich Schwenk is a Chicago-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Co-Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Communications Committee.

Two years ago today, TWU Local 556 launched **e-Unity Update**, your bi-monthly supplement to Unity Magazine. When we launched e-Unity Update, we aimed to provide frequent, timely updates, relevant Contract education, and stories about our Members. We have succeeded in these goals. Over the last 48 editions of Unity Update, we have sometimes made last minute changes as situations arise (i.e. Polar Vortex). We launched two new series of articles: *Contract Quickies* and *Contract Education 101*. We also began polling our Members twice monthly via the *Crew Check-in Poll*. By far my favorite part of Unity Update is our *Member spotlights*. The topics of these touching and memorable pieces have ranged from breast cancer awareness and testing, substance abuse and texting while driving.

As a result of direct feedback from our Members, we have made several changes to our email updates, which now include a PDF of Unity Update that may be easily read on tablets and full articles are included in the email instead of short snippets. In addition to the full Unity Update, each Domicile Executive Board Member (DEBM) has the option to add base-specific information, sent only to Members in their respective bases. The Communications Team has seen the Union through a logo redesign and completely changed the format of e-Unity Update to make it more Member-friendly.

A few facts about e-Unity Update:

- Total editions of e-Unity Update48
- Total emails sent 465,601
- Days of the week Unity Update was sent7
- Times sent from the air2
- Average time of day sent 2000 Central
- Deadlines missed0
- Deadlines almost missed 2 Whew!

We look forward to sharing more Union news and Member stories with you in the future. As always, your input and feedback is always welcomed. We create these publications for you, the Members of TWU Local 556. Thanks for reading!

Introducing TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team Member Trish Krider



Trish Krider is an Atlanta-based Flight Attendant. Trish serves as a Member of the TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team.

As a mother of two and grandmother of five, it's been a long journey from stay-at-home mom to becoming a Member of your Negotiating Team; so let me tell you how I got here. Even though I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education, I chose not to pursue a career when my children were little, but to stay home and immerse myself in motherhood. When the time came to pursue full-time employment, I considered following my dream of being a Flight Attendant. Initially, I was hesitant because I felt perhaps I was "too old," but I was pleased to find that the industry had changed over the years – thanks to the hard work of Union Sisters and Brothers who preceded me. So in October of 1995, I began training to become a Flight Attendant for ValuJet Airlines.

For the first six months, I was happy just flying three "day-trips" each week (or "turns" as they are called here) and returning home to my family each night. That all changed in May of 1996 when tragedy struck our airline. The aftermath of losing Flight 592 ultimately resulted in a total furlough, many base closures, and, eventually, a merger. ValuJet became AirTran and I became a commuter.

Until 2006, I was happy as a line-flying Flight Attendant who didn't feel the need to get involved in any Union activities. At that time, a very good friend of mine planned to run for President of our Local and asked me to consider running as his Secretary/Treasurer. At first, I told him he had lost his mind! But he convinced me that I had much to offer so I agreed. At the time, the Membership of the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) Council 57 wasn't totally convinced I was the best person for the job – too many of them didn't know me, and I had never stepped up to do anything before. Who did I think I was after all? However, I won the election – by the slimmest of margins – and went to work to make a difference for my Co-workers.

During my first term in office, I am proud to say that I brought all four budgets, which had previously been in terrible shape, into the black. At the same time, I acquired office space from which to run our Council – something our Local had never had before. These budgets remained in the black until AFA Council 57 ceased to exist. I also worked hard to revamp how we communicated with our Members – keeping them well informed and abreast of Union activities. My performance during my first term earned me an overwhelming vote of support when I successfully ran for re-election three years later.

In September of 2010, the acquisition of AirTran Airways by Southwest Airlines was announced. At that time, we were im-

mersed in our own Contract Negotiations. Working as part of that team, we completed those negotiations only to be immediately thrust into Seniority List Integration (SLI) Negotiations with TWU Local 556 and Southwest Airlines. I also served on this team. Although we worked as a team, making all decisions as a group, one of my greatest contributions to that process was my outstanding note-taking ability. This is a vital function at the Negotiating Table, as these notes become an important record that will forever be used as a reference to support the language that is written in the final Contract or Agreement.

The merger was a scary thing to many of us at AirTran. When I chose to transition to Southwest Airlines in the first Special Merger Training (SMT) class in June of 2012, I promised my Brothers and Sisters at AFA Council 57 that I would "blog" home every night so they would know just what to expect. Over the years, many have told me just how much that communication helped them to ease into the transition. Although I am based in Atlanta, I choose to continue to fly out of Baltimore, a base I came to know and love as I first became immersed in the culture here.

Initially, after transitioning to Southwest Airlines, I totally removed my "Union hat," taking a much needed break from my Union responsibilities. However, when a call came from the Union Office for editors for their publications, I decided it was time for me to step up once again; I still remain a part of the TWU Local 556 Editorial Team. I was also chosen and continue to serve on the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team.

When the Executive Board recently published an "Open Call" for Members interested in serving on the Negotiating Team, many people who I respect and with whom I have worked in the past, both at AFA Council 57 and at TWU Local 556, encouraged me to submit a Letter of Interest. My family is still the most important part of my life, so I discussed this decision with them before applying. Having served on Negotiating Teams twice before, I understand the grueling process of negotiations, as do they, but I have always been one to step up and volunteer when help is needed. I also understand that those who will sit at the bargaining table with Southwest Airlines Management are not speaking for themselves and their own personal "demands," but for the 13,000 plus Members whom they represent. I have done this in the past, and I will do my best to do it again. This is not MY cause, it is yours. I am here to listen to what you want addressed in the new Contract and fight my hardest for you to get it.



Reporting an On-the-Job Injury (OJI)



Alice Watkins is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and Shop Steward. Alice serves as the Leave Specialist for TWU Local 556.

As Flight Attendants, our working environment makes us more prone to on-the-job injuries than most other Employees. Often, our injuries are minor, resulting in simple scrapes and/or bruises. However, sometimes what we may initially believe is a simple scrape or bruise proves to be merely an initial symptom of a more serious injury requiring medical attention, treatment and recovery time away from work to heal.

If you are injured while at work, even if you don't feel like you need medical attention, please have the base fill out an Injury Report (I3R) on your behalf. If the report is filled out in your presence, read it over thoroughly before you sign it. If a Supervisor fills out the report over the phone, it's perfectly acceptable to ask the Supervisor to email it to you for review, prior to giving them authorization to sign it on your behalf.

If you do go to the doctor, please remember that different states have different rules regarding work injuries. If your state requires you to go to the Southwest Airlines Company

Doctor first, you must. You will not be paid for Workers Compensation (Comp) until this doctor sees you. If you are pulled from your trip and do not go to see this doctor, you will be assessed Attendance Points and will be paid from your Sick Bank. Workers Comp cannot backdate a doctor's note; it is effective the day you go to the Workers Comp Doctor.

Finally, please document the name of everyone with whom you speak. Save a copy of all documentation that is sent to Southwest Airlines. You are responsible for all trips that appear on your Crew Web Access (CWA) screen until they are pulled. Don't No Show! Call in sick for all trips until they are off your CWA screen. Call me at 214-640-4350 if you have any questions. I can help guide you in the right direction.

Fly Safely!

"Open Call" for Professional Standards Committee Members



Kurt Beggs is a Houston-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Chairperson of the joint TWU Local 556/Southwest Airlines Professional Standards Committee.

Professional Standards is looking for qualified Flight Attendants to join our growing Team of conflict resolution specialists. We are looking for Flight Attendants who are truly interested in working to improve our work place through direct interaction with Co-workers. Professional Standards has gone through an extensive "redo" in virtually all aspects of how it has operated. We are excited about new and enhanced ways for us to assist Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants in a more active and defined manner.

Professional Standards is an industry-wide program that allows trained volunteer Flight Attendants to assist Co-workers with conflict resolution in order to promote a safer working environment through improved Crew Resource Management (CRM). Professional Standards attempts to resolve duty-related conflict, thus improving CRM and making

safety our number one priority. It is a confidential service.

If selected to be on the Committee, you will complete a one-day group training, scheduled to be held in February 2016. Completion of training is required to serve on the Committee.

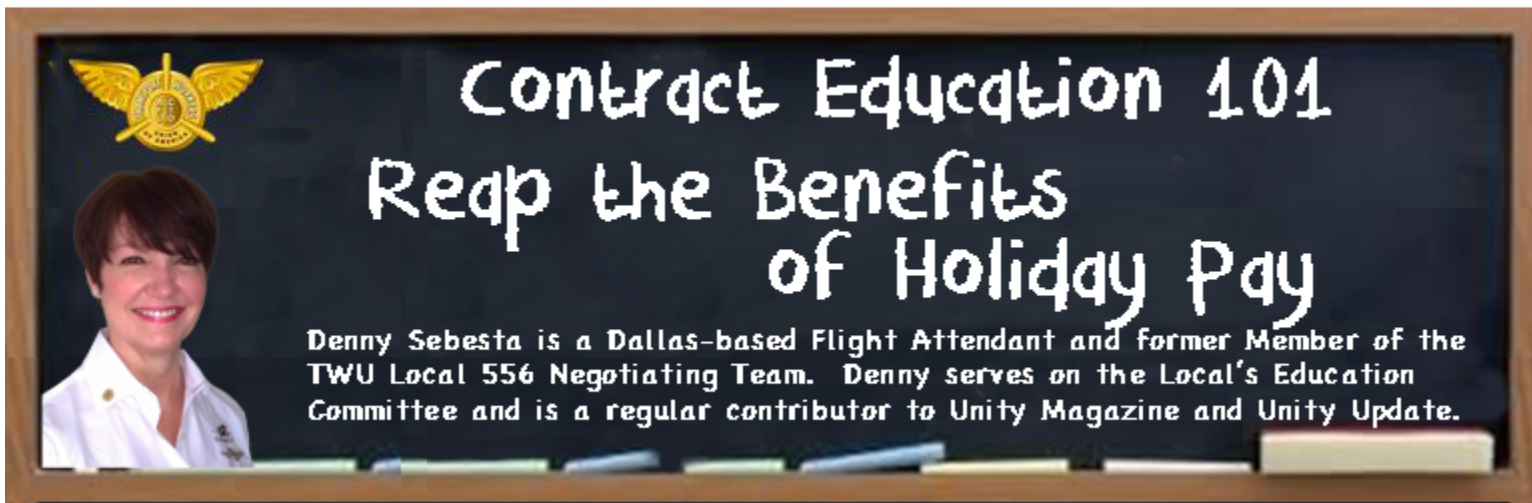
You can read more about what Professional Standards is and how it operates by visiting www.twu556.org and click on: *Committees* ► *Workplace Tools* ► *Professional Standards*.

Applications will **ONLY** be taken online and can be submitted using the online application at www.twu556.org and clicking on the "Professional Standards Online Application" link.

The deadline for application submission is October 15, 2015.

Thank you for your interest





This year has rushed by so fast! Later this month during Trip Trade/Give Away and Open Time night, some of you will be making decisions to adjust your schedules for the Thanksgiving holiday. Since this is the first of three holidays outlined in our Contract that pay a premium, now is a good time to review how Holiday Pay works.

The Contract outlines under Article 21.21, page 117 (hard copy), *"Holiday Pay will be paid on RIGs and will also be paid above premium pay. If applicable, the Company will pay double time for all trips actually flown on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve. Flight Attendants sitting Reserve on those days who are available and do not fly will receive an additional 6.0 TFP above their monthly guarantee (or trips actually flown for the month, whichever is greater)."*

This means the double time pay (2.0) for the actual holiday is based on all trips flown and/or credited, including Reserve days flown or credited and RIGs. In addition, the Holiday Pay premium is paid on top of any other premium pay that may be associated with the pairing (i.e. VJA, double time, triple time, etc.).

Note: The only time you will receive Holiday Pay for an illegality pull with pay is for an FAR adjustment (not contractual adjustment).

In 2012, with the ratification of Side Letter 10 (Overwater/Near International Flying), additional pay protection language was added to include the following:

"Holiday Pay will be paid on all RIGs and TFP for any duty period reporting on the Holiday. A Flight Attendant who actually flies a single pairing containing duty periods both before and after a Holiday, but not reporting on the Holiday, will receive Holiday Pay for the duty period following the Holiday."

Some Flight Attendants may encounter a long layover on a multi-day pairing that encompasses a designated Holiday and not fly on the actual Holiday. In this situation, your Holiday premium pay (double time) would be calculated on the first "duty period" following the Holiday.

Remember, no matter which way you acquired the pairing (original to your line or picked up and/or traded with Open Time or Flight Attendant) you will receive the Holiday premium pay.

Below is an example to show how pay is calculated on a VJA pairing with RIGs, Holiday pay (Thanksgiving, November 26) and a pairing that includes both VJA and Holiday pay.

Herb Time <- Click to toggle. ->												Totals			
Date	Flight	Depart	Arrive	Eq	Pax	Position	NI	Block	Ground	Meal	Wrk Codes	Block	Duty	Credit	Overfly
26 Nov	957	Rpt 1600 PHX 1830	BUR 1955	700	95			125	35					160	
26 Nov	957	BUR 2020	SMF 2135	700	130			115	25					140	
26 Nov	2177	SMF 2200	ONT 2315	700	136			115	1655					140	
		Rls 2345											545	463D	
ONT: 1525															
27 Nov	2668	Rpt 1510 ONT 1610	OAK 1725	700	140			115	110					140	
27 Nov	2381	OAK 1835	SAN 2000	700	126			125	30					160	
27 Nov	2468	SAN 2030	SFO 2200	700	142			130	25					170	
27 Nov	743	SMF 2225	PHX 0015	700	143			150	0					210	
		Rls 0045											905	680	
Flight Time Color												Total: 1455 1300			

VJA pay only

Day 1 = 4.4 TFP at time-and-a half resulting in an additional 2.2 TFP
 Day 2 = 6.8 TFP at time-and-a-half, resulting in an additional 3.4 TFP
 Total pairing pay: 11.2 + 2.2 + 3.4 = 16.8 TFP

Holiday pay only

Day 1 is Thanksgiving and pays double time resulting in an additional 4.63 TFP
 Total pairing pay: 13 + 4.63 = 17.63 TFP

Holiday pay and VJA pay

original pairing = 13 TFP
 holiday pay = 4.63 TFP
 VJA pay = 2.2 + 3.4 TFP

total combined pay = 23.23 TFP

Below is an example of Holiday pay on a pairing with a long layover and no flying on the actual Holiday (Thanksgiving, November 26).

Herb Time <- Click to toggle. ->												Totals			
Date	Flight	Depart	Arrive	Eq	Pax	Position	NI	Block	Ground	Meal	Wrk Codes	Block	Duty	Credit	Overfly
25 NOV	1067	Rpt 1350 ATL 1450	BWI 1640	700				150	40					210	
25 NOV	1101	BWI 1720	ATL 1920	700				200	40					230	
25 NOV	1101	ATL 2000	PUJ 2330	700				330	2930					410	
		Rls 0000											680	1010	850
PUJ: 2830 **Hotel Information Not Available. Contact Crew Scheduling**															
27 NOV	1757	Rpt 0430 PUJ 0500	ATL 0855	700				355	40					460	
27 NOV	665	ATL 0935	TPA 1100	700				125	40					160	
27 NOV	665	TPA 1140	ATL 1310	700				130	0					170	
		Rls 1340											610	910	790
Flight Time Color												Total: 1290 1920 1950 A			

Holiday pay only

Holiday pays double time for the day after Thanksgiving since there was no actual flying on Thanksgiving day resulting in an additional 790 TFP
 Total pairing pay: 1950 + 790 = 2740 TFP

How a JetBlue Flight Attendant Saved My Life



Elizabeth Leapley is an Orlando-based Flight Attendant and Shop Steward.

Early April of 2015, I was packed and ready to go on a great three-day trip with really fun layovers. I boarded the crowded Employee bus and immediately saw a very dear friend and Co-worker of mine, Orlando Flight Attendant Adam Moir. When we arrived at the terminal, Adam offered to get my bags. With no bags to worry about, I waited patiently for a JetBlue Flight Attendant to get all of her bags off the luggage rack as well. As I watched her place her bags at the base of the steps of the bus, I turned around, still talking to Adam, stepped off the bus and fell directly over on top of the JetBlue Flight Attendant's poorly placed roll aboard, lunch box, and flight bag.

Bam! Right over I went, using my left hand to stop the first fall, my more than ample hips cushioning the second bounce off her steel-framed Purdy Neat Stuff roll aboard. More embarrassed than immediately hurt, I got myself together and brushed myself off, while trying to stop the JetBlue Flight Attendant's continuous pleas to "forgive her for her careless placement" of her bags.

Breezing thru Known Crew Member (KCM), Adam and I said our goodbyes and downstairs I went. After check-in, I picked up a buddy pass and chatted and laughed with the Supervisor about what had just happened. Remember those really fun layovers I had planned? ...uhmm, they were now gone. The Supervisor advised me I would not be going on my trip and that instead, a visit to the On-the-Job Injury (OJI) doctor was now in order. So, off I went to the OJI doctor. Diagnosis? I had a fractured wrist, bruised spine and a sprained ankle. "You've GOT to be kidding me!" I thought.

I now had unintentional "time off to heal." What to do, what to do? "Oh, I know. I'll go get that mammogram/ultrasound that I've been meaning to follow up on for months now." So on one of the days that I wasn't at the OJI clinic, I made my US/MRI appointment. Appointment #1: Ultrasound; not good – must now have MRI. Appointment #2: MRI returned ominous suspicious results, biopsy needed – Appointment #3: biopsy performed and three days later, finally an answer! Diagnosis? Stage III Invasive Ductal Carcinoma (IDC) Breast Cancer that had spread to my lymph nodes! A double mastectomy, chemotherapy and radiation were necessary. You've GOT to be kidding me!

After such a diagnosis, there are so many decisions that must be made immediately and you must understand the consequence of each treatment course. Long gone are the days when the doctors tell you what THEY are going to do. You now are a partner and have a say in the "options" that would fit your type of cancer treatment. Do I choose chemo, surgery, then radiation

or surgery, chemo, then radiation? Neither option had a better medical prognosis based on my tumor markers. My choice was to see an oncologist for chemo, a surgeon for mastectomy, and then a radiation oncologist for radiation. There were MUGA scans to be had to see if my heart was strong enough tolerate the chemo; then PET scans to see if the tumors had spread; and ports to be installed in my chest for the administration of the chemo. I felt as if I had just stepped onto a roller coaster ride that I never wanted to be on in the first place. And that was just week one after diagnosis.

There were work-related choices to be made as well. How would I survive financially if I didn't work through treatment? Should I continue to work? How would the chemo affect me? Would I still be able to pull my bag, stow my bag, and "assist" with Passenger bags after mastectomy? Would I suffer from lymphedema (breast cancer's dirty little secret for Flight Attendants)? Should I choose a medical leave, Short-Term, Long-Term Disability, FMLA? Each has its own consequences. The most important choice for me was not losing my insurance and having to go on COBRA after 120 days of last date actually flying a paid TFP trip.

How many Flight Attendants actually know that if you haven't worked in over 120 days and you get sick and go out on a Medical Leave, you "lose" your United Healthcare (UHC) insurance coverage that very day and are required to use COBRA? However, by using your Southwest Airlines Sick Bank, you can add to your days of insurance coverage. For example: if a Flight Attendant has accrued 250 Trips for Pay (TFP) in their Sick Bank, their insurance coverage could be extended by an additional 83 days. (Divide 250 by 90 = 2.7777; multiply 2.777 by 30 to get 83.33. This would "buy" you 83 more days of insurance, added to the 120 days of coverage, for a total of 203 days of insurance coverage). See Contract Article 15.4 for additional information or call the Union Office for assistance.

For me it was an easy choice: give away ALL my trips, clear my board, or fly an occasional turn or easy 2 or 3 day (restarting my flying clock every 120 days) and pay my medical premiums directly to



Editor's Note: I am amazed and inspired by Liz's strength and bravery. I appreciate her so much for sharing her story with the Membership during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. ~ Cuyler

Southwest Airlines of \$179.00 per month vs \$987.00 to COBRA for family coverage. What's the lesson here? Fly a turn at least every 120 day for gosh sakes! That was information overload week two.

During week three, I was rushed to the hospital, moments from death, unable to breathe due to a punctured lung from an incorrect port installation. Chemo was stopped immediately and the mastectomy was then scheduled for late June. Complete wound healing after surgery had to be achieved before chemo could be restarted. After three and a half weeks in a hyperbaric chamber every day, my incision healed and the administration of these ironically life-sustaining poisons could be resumed. I still have twelve more weeks of intravenous (IV) infusions, followed by a three-week break (for healing) before six more weeks of daily radiation is to begin.

The Union, especially Leave Specialist Alice Watkins, has been extremely helpful in navigating me through the questions regarding my duties and responsibilities moving forward, as far as a timeline for loss of insurance, conversion to COBRA, Medical Leaves, FMLA, etc. I requested, and immediately received from the Company, a Letter of Accommodation allowing me to wear a headscarf in Southwest Airlines accent colors with my uniform while working in lieu of a cranial prosthetic (a wig). To me, the thought of wearing a wig on a 737-300 in August was worse than sitting in any chemo chair. Additionally, in the society in which we live that glamorizes Botox, breast augmentations, and brow lifts (yep, been there, done them all), I found it somewhat ironic that the thought of wearing a wig was just too "fake" for me, not to mention trying to take off a life vest demo too quickly only to end of looking like Sinead O'Connor standing in the aisle!

When I found out that one in eight women will hear those four dreaded words, "you have breast cancer," I knew I could not remain silent, hidden behind my headscarves, only to come back a year later none the wiser. I decided that if I am able to encourage just one person to get checked for breast cancer, I will have sacrificed my vanity (see "baldy" picture) as well as my medical privacy for the good of a Union Sister (or Brother – yes, males can get breast cancer). So please do your monthly exams, be proactive, get your regular mammograms and finally, be educated as YOU are your best medical advocate. I will con-



tinue to be here to share my personal experiences (as no one's diagnosis mirrors another person's, and it would be foolhardy to think otherwise) by answering your questions and directing you to the blogs, websites, forums, and support groups that I have found to be personally helpful to me.

I have learned to accept my "new" normal: where first, you cry, then you heal, then, most importantly, you MUST expect to win. I'm half-way there. It's just a matter of time until this unwelcome beast that only recently reared its ugly head, taking more from me than I ever thought I had to give, will no longer control my body or my life. I will have won. I will have put a swift ending to its very existence. And soon, like a one-two punch from a prize fighter, boom-boom, I will be well, be back online, and "leaving on a jet plane." This is the battle of my life, for my life.

So thank you Adam Moir for keeping me so busy catching up with you, and I thank the JetBlue Flight Attendant for so "carelessly placing your bags" at the foot of the steps of the bus so that I was able to trip and fall, be sent home, and finally take care of something I would have normally put off for another day. What's the moral of the story? Don't wait until you trip and fall to fit in the time to take care of YOU. It may be, unfortunately, too late by then.

In Unity,
Elizabeth Leapley,
Orlando Flight Attendant and Shop Steward

unity
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