



JULY 5, 2014

# unity update

Your bi-monthly  
Unity supplement

## President's Message



*Audrey Stone is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant and the President and Lead Negotiator of TWU Local 556.*

I want to thank each of you, again, for your perseverance this year dealing with Southwest Airlines' operational struggles. I say this year because while I have only been a Flight Attendant here for ten years, the last six months have been the longest period of continuous challenges that I have seen at our Company. This year began with a disastrous bang with what is now referred to as the Polar Vortex. While the operation has not been crippled again as it was during the first week of January 2014, it has continued to be stressed, which has resulted in hardships for many of you. Please know I realize this and am taking it seriously. I understand that many of you are enduring what feels like endless reschedules, long days, and hotel difficulties. If you have been following our Union updates, then you know that we have been in discussions with Southwest Airlines Management about these topics for months, both at the negotiating table and in separate meetings.

I wish there was a simple answer to explain why your quality of life has been affected, but unfortunately, there are several factors contributing to this negative situation. We are seeing the effect of the Pilot's new FAR 117 rule that was implemented in January, as well as the results of business decisions made long ago that have stressed the operation beyond what it is capable of handling well. Southwest Airlines Network Planning, who builds the flight schedules, will be making changes moving forward that should help in the future. Leaders at Southwest Airlines are also looking at ways to better predict and plan for potential problems, including those that come when Pilots time out, leaving a plane full of Customers and Crew stranded. They are also looking at separating duties on the Scheduling Floor, including a section that will deal only with hotel issues. While I understand that these are future changes, they are a step in the right direction.

"What about right now?" you may be asking. If you encounter a situation flying that we need to know about, please contact the Union Office. We will address any Contractual violations immediately. We are also trying to address reschedules in our ongoing Contract negotiations; please email the Negotiating Team (NT) with your specific reschedule concerns at [www.nt@twu556.org](mailto:www.nt@twu556.org). This issue of Unity Update contains more information on our Contract language regarding hotels, as well as a Negotiations update. The NT has also put out our first video regarding negotiations that can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

Please know that we hear you loud and clear. Your Union Leaders have first-hand knowledge, and have experienced these trials themselves when out there flying. We will continue to demand answers

to your questions. I will continue to advocate for you, as your concerns are my concerns. For those of you who have endured these trying times, your continued professionalism sends a message loud and clear to Management why we have EARNED our industry-leading Contract. I cannot say enough how proud I am to be a Member of TWU Local 556, and to represent the best Flight Attendants in the industry.

In Unity,

Audrey Stone

## Negotiating Team Update



On June 25, we had continuing dialogue with Southwest Airlines Management over Article 8-Hours of Service and Article 9-Additional Flying. These two Articles represent what we know are some of your most pressing concerns: reschedules and their impact on your quality of life. We have received dozens of screen shots of difficult and costly reschedules and will be taking them directly to the bargaining table with us. We cannot thank you enough for your hard work now and in the summer months to come. We also opened with our proposal for Article 11-Reserve and received Management's proposal for Article 32-Attendance Policy. We spent June 26 in caucus, preparing for our next bargaining sessions. A list of our upcoming negotiation dates will soon be posted on the TWU Local 556 Website and calendar ([www.twu556.org](http://www.twu556.org)).

Thank you for your continued support and hard work, and for being the best Flight Attendants in the industry.



*Denny Sebesta is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and former Member of the TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team. She serves on the Local's Education Committee and is a regular contributor to Unity Update and Unity Magazine.*

It's not Halloween, but the horror stories are making the rounds about hotel rooms and transportation issues among our fellow Flight Attendants. You've probably heard some of them or actually experienced one of these unfortunate situations yourself – 1) Your crew was rerouted and Scheduling told you to call when you land for hotel information but, when you call back, the clock is ticking for much needed crew rest and it takes what seems like an eternity to get confirmed hotel rooms; 2) You have a short overnight and the hotel van doesn't show up for over an hour; 3) During reroute, Scheduling cannot find rooms in your new overnight city so, your crew is told to deadhead to another city that has available hotel rooms; now your duty day is longer and crew rest is reduced; 4) Your crew is rescheduled and finally arrives at the hotel but now, the front desk says they have no rooms and it takes two hours from the time you arrive with Scheduling's help to confirm rooms; 5) You are an AM crew and starting at 2330, the hotel fire alarm goes off three different times, interrupting your ability to sleep and you have to lobby at 0430! And last but not least, 6) the fire alarm goes off in the middle of the night at the hotel and everyone is required to evacuate. Hours go by before a decision is made to allow you back into the hotel and now you are running on very little sleep, if any.

Yes, all of these scenarios have happened in some form. It's exhausting and can wreak havoc on you; not to mention affecting your sleep/rest, mental/physical wellbeing. It's important that you understand and know how the language in our Contract can help you.

#### **HOTELS AND TRANSPORTATION – Article 22.2 - Expenses**

**Article 22.2.A, page 121** – *“The Company will provide transportation to and from the airport and hotel at RON sta-*

*tions. If transportation is not available within thirty (30) minutes from the time the Flight Attendants require such transportation, the use of a cab is authorized subject to proper receipts.”* Per our Flight Attendant Manual, section Your Flight Beginning to End 8.8.1, you may also request a taxi voucher from a Customer Service Supervisor if transportation is not provided.

This Contract language is to help ensure transportation to your hotel does not fall through the cracks and you can get to your hotel to start your much needed crew rest. We understand that it may require you to use your own cash or credit card to pay for the cab upfront but, you will be reimbursed when you submit your receipts! To submit receipts go to SWALife>About Me> My Expenses, then click on “Create Expense Reports”.

**Article 22.2.C, page 121** – *“Scheduling will not ask Flight Attendants to share a hotel room. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, the Company is unable to provide suitable hotel accommodations with single hotel rooms for each Flight Attendant, Scheduling will contact the Union to notify them of the situation. Crew Members may volunteer to share a room to rectify the problem.”* This language came about because it actually happened! You will NEVER be asked to share or be required to share a hotel room. While I hope you never encounter a situation like this, if Scheduling is not able to find you hotel rooms for any reason, in a reasonable amount of time or, says there are no hotel rooms, please be proactive and contact the Union office immediately too.

One more thing on this, if you are rescheduled and told by Scheduling to call when you land at your overnight for hotel information: please consider calling Scheduling back before you land at your overnight, and respectfully request to hold until the hotel information is provided to you. Receiving hotel information beforehand can help you and your crew know who to contact for transportation and where you are going to sleep that night without adding more wait time- more wait time equates to less crew rest!

**Article 22.2.D, page 121** – *“The Company will pay directly for any hotel rooms and transportation required. Upon request, Flight Attendants will be provided a hotel room when given an unscheduled RON in domicile. If transit time through any outstation exceeds four (4) hours, the Company will provide single hotel rooms for each Flight Attendant”.* I'll break down and explain each part of this language:

- You should never pay for a hotel room out of your own pocket. If you encounter a problem in a scheduled or rescheduled situation, contact Scheduling immediately to deal with the hotel on a direct bill. Even when rescheduled to overnight in the domicile where the pairing begins, you are entitled to a hotel room. Staying at the hotel versus driving home and back to the airport the next morning may provide you additional time for rest.
- Scheduled/rescheduled transportation should always be provided by the Company and if that transportation runs more than thirty (30) minutes late, remember you have the contractual right to take a cab and submit receipts for reimbursement.
- If you ever encounter ground time for any reason that is over 4 hours in an outstation (not a domicile, even if it's not the domicile where the pairing started), you may request a hotel



room. The departure time of the flight must be posted at least 4 hours from the time of the call to Scheduling. A rolling delay will not apply here. Rolling delay examples: delayed departure posted at 1300 and moves to 1500 and back to 1445; delayed departure posted at 1845, then moves to 1915, then 2000.

## **RON HOTEL TRANSPORTATION DELAYS – Article 8.4-Hours of Service**

*This Contract language states “A Flight Attendant(s) with less than nine hours thirty minutes (9:30) of consecutive rest from block to check-in, who experience circumstances that significantly delay her/his arrival at the RON hotel accommodations, will be responsible to contact Scheduling to advise of the situation. In such situations, Scheduling will make every effort to reschedule another Flight Attendant(s) or assign a Reserve to ensure that the Flight Attendant(s) has adequate rest to avoid fatigue.”*

What this means is, if your crew rest goes down to nine hours and twenty-nine minutes (9:29) block-in to report time and you are delayed getting to the hotel, you have the right to call Scheduling and let them know you need more rest to avoid fatigue. There are many examples and these are for illustration purposes only and not all inclusive: no rooms and Flight Attendants are walked to another hotel, transportation was 30 minutes or more delayed picking you up, accident or traffic delays, transportation never showed and you took a cab. It's important to remember two things: 1) the Flight Attendant(s) is responsible to contact Scheduling and advise of the situation and, 2) Scheduling will make every effort to replace the Flight Attendant(s) and, if Scheduling does not, or is not able to, then the Flight Attendant(s) has the option to utilize the Fatigue Policy in the event the Flight Attendant deems themselves unsafe to fly or perform required duties due to fatigue.

## **FATIGUE POLICY – Article 25.15 – Health and Safety**

This is very important language in our Contract. In 2002, during negotiations, the Company finally agreed to a Fatigue policy; however, they were not agreeable to incorporate it into our Contract until the 2008 Contract. Remember, Safety is number one and if you ever believe that you are unable to perform your job in a safe manner, using the “F” word, meaning Fatigue, is there for you if necessary. Don't be intimidated or afraid of utilizing this part of our Contract. Only you can determine if you are fatigued and make the call to Scheduling. Once you make that decision and contact Scheduling, you should be clear in your statement, “you are fatigued and unsafe to perform your duties as required”. There are specific steps that Scheduling will take in order to ensure you receive at least the minimum ten (10:00) hours rest. At no time should Scheduling question you about your fatigue or what caused it. Their responsibility is to accept the call, pull you and schedule the required rest. However, you should file an Irregularity Report, which will be reviewed by your Inflight Base Manager. Please refer to Article 25.15, page 132 (hard copy) of the Contract to read the entire Fatigue Policy language.

*Disclaimer: All of the examples and/or scenarios included in this article are illustrative and should not be considered exhaustive to real life situations that may occur.*

## **Audrey Stone's Listening Layovers**

Though she spends most of her time in Dallas lately, TWU Local 556 President and Lead Contract Negotiator Audrey Stone flew a Las Vegas trip last weekend (Audrey is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant). Her trip put Audrey in position to continue her Listening Layover tour of Inflight Bases. Accompanied by 1st Vice President Todd Gage, 2nd Vice President Brett Nevarez, Treasurer John Parrott, Recording Secretary Cuyler Thompson and Las Vegas Domicile Executive Board Member Rachel Brownfield, Audrey spent Monday in the Las Vegas Flight Attendant Lounge answering Members' questions regarding the status of our ongoing Contract negotiations and listening to their constructive criticism and input. The seemingly endless reroutes and reschedules that our Members have experienced in recent months was (of course) the hottest topic of conversation.

Phoenix Domicile Executive Board Member John DiPippa welcomed Audrey, Todd, Brett, John and Cuyler to the Phoenix Flight Attendant Lounge as Audrey's Listening Layovers continued on Tuesday. TWU Local 556 Safety Committee Chairperson Michael Massoni was also on hand and heard many of our Phoenix Flight Attendants' complaints about their working conditions aboard our “Sweat Jets.”

During a quiet moment in the lounge and after talking non-stop for three hours, Audrey Stone was overheard saying, “I have a lot of work waiting for me at the Union Office, but it's worth it to be here and hear firsthand what matters most to our Flight Attendants.”



# Contract Action Network (CAN) Update

TWU Local 556 has begun the next phase of our Contract negotiations with Southwest Airlines Management. On Monday, June 23, Contract Action Network (CAN) Leaders from all ten Inflight bases flew to Dallas to strategize, train and prepare with the Union's Negotiating Team (NT), Coordinating Council and Strategic Advisor /Legal Counsel, Mark Richard. These twenty-nine intelligent, intuitive and well-respected Flight Attendants, led by President and Lead Contract Negotiator Audrey Stone, spent an energetic afternoon getting to know one another and laying the foundation of trust and unity that will be critical in the months ahead. Candid conversations about issues that are most important to the Members of TWU Local 556, as well as our Union's strengths and weaknesses lasted through a working dinner and into the evening.

After a short overnight, the team returned to the Union Office on Tuesday morning ready to work. Together, with the NT and Coordinating Council, the CAN Leaders helped develop a strategic plan and Membership-driven Contract campaign to educate our Members about our Contract negotiations, to mobilize our Members to help maintain an industry-leading Contract for the Flight Attendants of Southwest Airlines, and to recognize our Members contributions to the Company's record-breaking profits while ensuring its continued success for years to come.

Our Members can expect to see more of the CAN Leaders in the airports and Inflight Lounges in the months ahead as education efforts are increased. The CAN Leaders will assist the NT and Coordinating Council to build a Contract Action Network in each Inflight Domicile. More than 700 Flight Attendants have already notified the NT and volunteered to be part of the CAN. Thank you! The Union will be contacting you with further instructions very soon.

The Membership of TWU Local 556 is our Union's most important resource. We are extremely fortunate to have among our ranks such a talented, forward-thinking and positive group of Flight Attendants who have volunteered to lead the CAN. Again, if you are interested in serving on the TWU Local 556 CAN, please contact your Negotiating Team at [NT@TWU556.org](mailto:NT@TWU556.org).



## TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team:

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Audrey Stone      | LAS #74952 |
| Brandon Hillhouse | DAL #77053 |
| Bill Holcomb      | OAK #35896 |
| Brett Nevarez     | LAS #26363 |
| Paul Sweetin      | DAL #11020 |

## TWU Local 556 Coordinating Council:

|               |            |
|---------------|------------|
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| Crystal Reven | HOU #64032 |
| Sam Wilkins   | OAK #45023 |

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Josh Rosenberg #73663

### PHX:

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Nathan Koschmann #77032





# Summertime, Heat and Hot Airplanes

Summertime is here and we are taking steps to keep our airplanes cool. The TWU 556 Health and Safety Team has been meeting regularly with Southwest Airlines Management to ensure that we have procedures in place to help our Flight Attendants in the process.

One recent change for our workgroup was the timing of the “please close shades and open all the vents above you” Public Address (PA). In the past, this PA was made during the deplaning phase. Now the PA should be made prior to gate arrival instead of during deplaning. Having passengers lower their blinds and open their vents can make a 5-10 degree difference in the cabin temperature. A reminder about the PA can now be found on your Flight Attendant sheet, in the “Comments” section.

If the cabin gets too warm during boarding/deplaning, or at any time the air conditioning is hooked up to ground services, please ask the Captain to start the Auxiliary Power Unit (APU). If they don’t, this needs to be reported in the form of an Irregularity Report (IR) and Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) report, so that Management is aware of how often this is occurring and the problem can be addressed with Flight Operations.

If you are told that the air conditioning is broken or isn’t working adequately in a jet bridge (gate services/preconditioned air), please report this in the form of an IR and ASAP so that Management can resolve the problem at the affected station.

In addition to the changes to when the PA is delivered, several other Southwest Airlines departments are implementing changes as well. Ground Operations and Flight Operations have a new procedure that will alleviate the lag time between the APU being turned off upon arrival at the gate and the connection of ground air. Last year, the procedure was to have the ground air hooked up within 90 seconds of the APU being turned off. This year, the switch over to ground air should be immediate. Additionally, Ground Operations and Flight Operations



are adding a series of audits to help monitor any issues that could be occurring with this new transition procedure.

Southwest Airlines Maintenance is also adding several items to their procedures that specifically focus on the cooling of the aircraft.

Southwest Airlines Corporate Facilities is sending out a weekly report concerning equipment issues pertaining to gate services, hose issues and preconditioned air. This allows Southwest Airlines Management to see what has been reported and what the status is on the “fix”.

Customer Relations will be sending a weekly report concerning passenger complaints involving hot aircraft issues as well.

If you have any issues regarding hot aircraft, please report them via ASAP and/or an IR. In order for an issue to be addressed and resolved, Management has to be aware of it. It isn’t a matter of getting anyone in trouble; it’s about getting a bad situation resolved.



*Michael Massoni is a Phoenix-based Flight Attendant and serves as the TWU Local 556 Operational Safety Chairman*

*Michele Moore is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and serves as the TWU Local 556 Occupational Safety and Health Coordinator.*



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**TWU Local 556**

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