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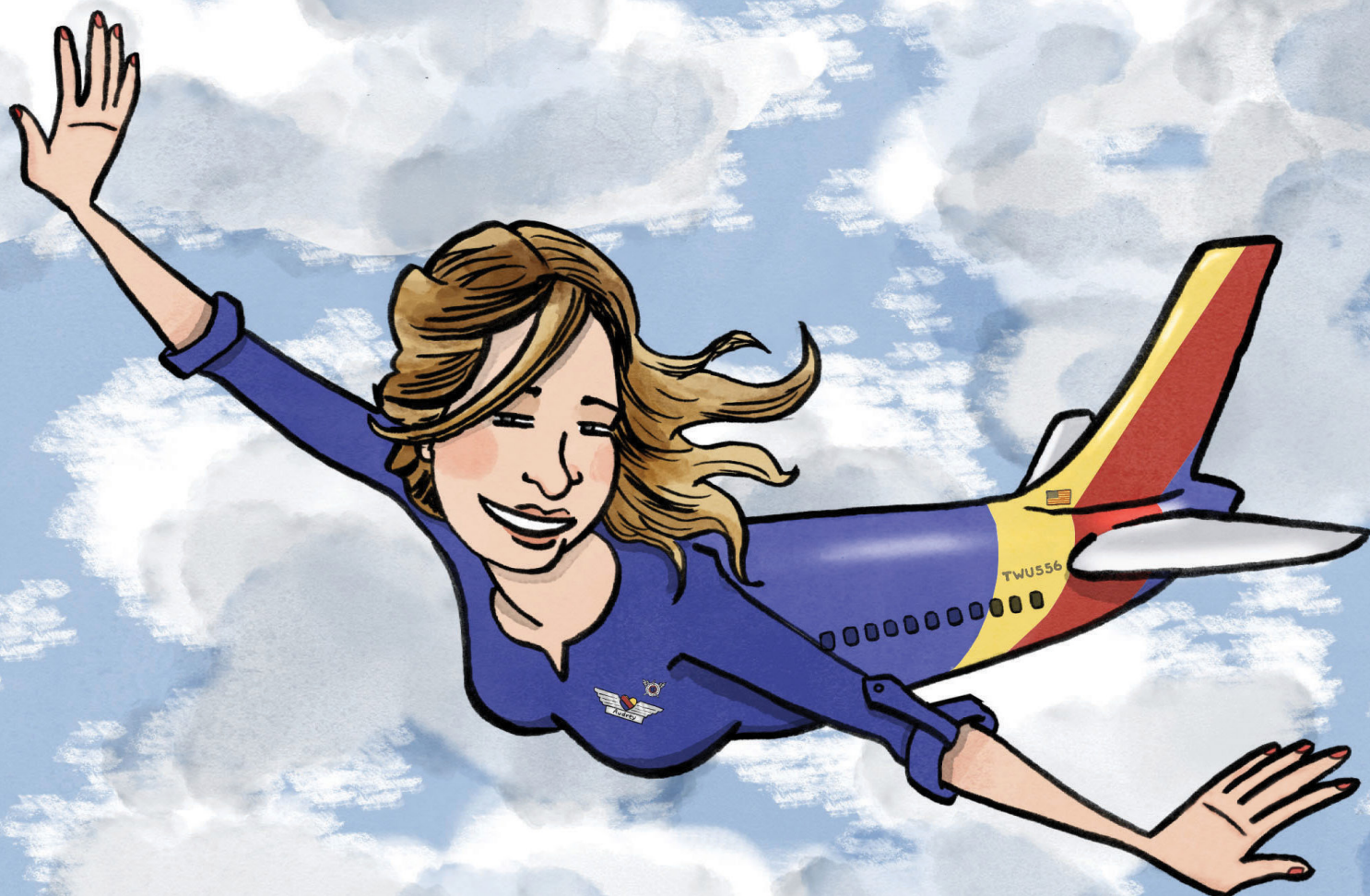
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# UNITY

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# UNITY

THE MAGAZINE OF  
TWU LOCAL 556

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

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I solemnly pledge on my honor to abide by the Constitution of the Transport Workers Union of America and the rules and Bylaws of Local 556; to discharge all my duties and obligations faithfully; not to make known any private business of the Union, and to conduct myself at all times as becomes a Member of the Transport Workers Union of America.

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# SISTERHOOD



Cuyler Thompson is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Editor of Unity Magazine and Chairperson of the Communications Committee.  
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*"I remember flying with you. You always look so nice."*

"Well, it's certainly challenging to be memorable in this uniform dress. But like Diane Von Furstenberg said, "It's the woman you should remember, not the dress." She attempted to finesse the fabric, "Dressed poorly, people remember the dress; dressed impeccably, people remember the woman. A woman should always dress to be remembered."

And I suppose the only time a woman is truly helpless is while her nail polish is drying." She assessed her nails. "They're finally dry. Forgive me." She reached to shake Ashley's hand, "Thank you for the sweet compliment. I'm Tina."



"I know who you are, and I will always remember you."

Tina responded, "You're nails are beautiful! A firm handshake with a stunning manicure is so sexy; I love you already."

Ashley chuckled.

"I hope to be remembered as a woman who did the best she could with the tools and talent she had. What do you remember about flying with me, Ashley?"

"We flew with a beautiful girl named Britney, and it was right after that first Contract Tentative Agreement (TA) failed. It was hot and humid, and Britney hadn't bothered to put on make-up or fix her hair. She took one look at you, impeccably dressed, and confessed that she was "just going to be ugly" that day, because of the heat. You said, "Honey, there are no ugly women—just lazy ones." But you were so kind to her. You fixed her hair with a bobby pin, and (eventually) convinced her to wear a Union Pin."

"She had to be convinced?"

"Well, she hated the Union and was a believer of all the silly social media gossip about President Audrey Stone, including the nasty jabs about her physical appearance and personal life. She said Audrey was a complete failure, and should just resign."

"Oh, dear. I hope I continued to be kind."

"Of course, Tina! But you reminded her that failure is an *event*, never a *person*. You said quitting certainly would have been the easiest thing for Audrey to do after the TA failed, but you thought it showed courage for Audrey to stick with it and get it right."

Tina responded, "I'll admit that for a moment I wondered if Audrey would recover. I know she is an intelligent, resourceful woman with more weapons than just cosmetics and tears in her handbag, but the sheer venom spewed towards her, especially from other women, was outrageous.

Real, empowered women encourage, support, and celebrate one another. Putting other women down tells the world you are more worried about your "competition" than your own progress.

Disempowered women judge, shame, and threaten each other. Confident women don't celebrate when a Sister stumbles. Real women want to see other women win. Real queens fix each other's crowns.

Some of my Sisters and Brothers wanted Audrey Stone to fail more than they wanted us to get a good Contract. And the louder they screamed about her, the more determined she became. These people don't like women they can't shame, control, scare, or stop. Audrey was unstoppable not because she did not have missteps or failures, but because she continued on despite them. Audrey let her past make her better, not bitter."

Attention turned to the handsome Captain sauntering wide-legged down the Jetway. As he approached, Tina straightened her posture, bent a knee to enhance her curves, and flipped her hair.

The Captain paused in front of Tina, his blue eyes twinkling, taking her in. He leaned in and asked Tina, "Didn't we go on a date once? Or was it twice?"

Leaning in even closer, Tina replied, "Maybe once, but I never make the same mistake twice." She gave the Captain a genuine smile and a sultry wink.

As Captain Blue Eyes sauntered along into the aircraft, Tina turned to her Co-Heart, "Actually, we dated for six months."

"Oh my goodness, girl. You're perfect."

"Real women aren't perfect. Perfect women aren't real. My life isn't perfect, Ashley, but my hair is. A strong woman looks a challenge in the eye, and gives it a wink."

"Anyway, I saw Britney recently and she was still wearing her Union Pin, Tina."

"Good! Women forget how much we can inspire one another."

"So, Tina. You've been supportive of Audrey Stone when other people weren't. How about the new President, Lyn Montgomery? Are you supportive of her?"

"Not only do my shoes match my bag, my actions match my words, Ashley. There are Flight Attendants out there that don't like or respect Lyn Montgomery, and they may have good reasons.

**However, you don't fight a war with the army you want; you fight a war with the army you have.**

It's going to take a strong President and Lead Negotiator to negotiate a mutually-beneficial multi-billion dollar Contract with one of the most successful and well-respected Companies in the world. Like it or not, Lyn and her team will begin negotiating our next Contract in a few months and the Membership must be united in support of them or we're all sunk.

Our Workgroup is seventy-seven percent women, yet Audrey Stone was our Union's first strong, successful female President since the late 1980's, and how was she treated by our Union's Members? How was she treated by the Sisterhood? Behind every successful woman should be a tribe of other successful women who have her back. It's time we all stop negatively judging one another and talking badly about other women. We're all simply doing the best we can. Respect from other women is priceless.

Somewhere along the way I think society taught us other women are our competition, but that's just not true. You are not my competition, just as I'm not yours. When another woman does an amazing job or receives a well-deserved recognition, we should congratulate her. Tell her when she's handled a situation well, or done something noteworthy or impressive. That little "well done" can have a big impact. I've always really loved the quote, "A flower does not think of competing with the flower next to it, it just blooms."

So, to answer your question, yes: I support our new President. Our Union's accomplishments will be based on our strengths as a team: the Union's Leadership and the Union Membership at large. Nothing will ever be accomplished with strengths our team doesn't have."

"Where's your Union Pin, girl?"

Ashley flipped her hair to reveal her Pin. "I knew I was flying with you, Tina. I wouldn't have shown up today without it. You've taught me well."

"Well done! You can always tell who the strong women are, Ashley: they're the ones building each other up, instead of tearing each other down. Now let's get on this jet and make Captain Blue Eyes sweat."

# BEING PRESIDENTIAL



Before I write this article about our outgoing President Audrey Stone, I need to introduce myself so maybe everyone will understand why I accepted this task. I know that for some, my reputation precedes me. However, due to the revisionist history of social media and the incredible growth of our Membership since I left office April 30, 2012, please indulge me.

I am an almost 26-year TWU Local 556 Member and Flight Attendant with Southwest Airlines, my only Union and airline. I began paying attention to our Union in 1996, during Contract Negotiations. After a Tentative Agreement (TA) failed by ninety-two percent in the summer of 1997, I began attending every Membership Meeting and did my best to educate my Co-workers on the importance of being informed and supporting our Union. When a slightly better Contract barely passed in December of the same year, I decided that in the next election I would run for office to try to do better.

I did run for office and was elected 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President with most of the “Clean Sweep” slate in 2000. Unfortunately, for several reasons, our Executive Board became highly dysfunctional. After months of chaos, a Member filed charges against our President, who I had run with, and she was removed from office. I became President and inherited the dysfunction. Regardless of what was going on within our Boardroom, I accepted the position, because when you are elected Vice President, it is your responsibility to take over when our President is unable to perform her or his duties. I had a divided Board, a more divided Membership, a depleted treasury, and Negotiations quickly approaching (for which we were not prepared), but I had sworn to do better for our Members. I even reached out to the former 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Dean Hervochon and asked him what to do. His reply was to, “Be Presidential” – now I had to figure out what that meant.

In the first Membership Meeting after I became President, one of our Members stood up and asked rightfully, “After a year of infighting on the Executive Board, how do we know that things are going to be any different now?” I told him that I could not answer that question right then, but I knew our Executive Board did not have the luxury of continuing the infighting that had begun to define us. I asked him to wait three months and then look for one thing – results. By working together and uniting our Membership, we went on to negotiate an industry-leading Contract when Flight Attendants at other airlines were taking pay cuts. We have remained in that enviable position ever since. Now that you have some idea of who I am, here is some idea of who I know President Audrey Stone to be.

I met Audrey when she was appointed as our Baltimore Domicile Executive Board Member (BWI DEBM) in June of 2008, taking over for another Board Member who resigned to spend more time with her young family. My only previous knowledge of her was when, on their own, she and another Flight Attendant developed and published “Contract Quickies,” an easy resource for common Contractual questions. Audrey was re-elected as BWI DEBM in March 2009, and became one of our most effective, productive, and respected Board Members.

**“Audrey can do it,” became a common phrase on our Executive Board when we wanted to make sure something got done and make sure it got done right. I especially remember her hard work for our newest Members by developing a series of short instructional videos called “Contract Live.”**

Audrey ran for election as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President in 2012, and neither she nor her slate won. While some people understandably took different things from that election, Audrey accepted the results of the election and moved on. She didn’t take to social media, she didn’t criticize our new Leadership, and she didn’t try to recall anyone. She went back to flying and travelling – which is her passion.

After less than a year, our new Executive Board became very divided and dysfunctional and removed our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, President and Treasurer. Because Audrey had run for 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, she was asked to step in as President, in accordance with our Local’s Bylaws. I know Audrey called many people for advice. When she called me, I gave her the only advice I knew. She had run for 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, so she needed to always be willing to step in as President and to “Be Presidential.” With a divided Board, a divided Membership, a depleted treasury, and Contract Negotiations quickly approaching, now she had to figure out what that was.

**While I know that our Membership is very divided, and there are strong believers on both sides of President Stone, I also know that most Members stand firmly in the middle, wanting only a good Contract, a strong Union, and a profitable Company.**

That being said, Audrey is leaving our Membership with a strong treasury, an industry-leading Contract, expanded Membership Services, electronic Membership Meetings that allow more participation, and a long-term, cost-saving lease for our Union. In addition, last year when our entire Executive Board could have coasted until the end of their term, Audrey led the Executive Board in decisions to replace and update our Grievance database, launch a Satellite Base Test, and conduct a comprehensive Membership Survey to leave our new Officers in the best possible condition to move our Union forward. Like it or not, Audrey Stone does not quit.

I hope it is clear now why I accepted the opportunity to write about Audrey Stone.

**She took over the leadership of our Union during very difficult times and whether she was “Being Presidential” or just trying to keep it all together from day to day, she is leaving on her own terms and is leaving our Union in a better place than it was when she got there.**

When you see her on line, if you don't thank her for all her other accomplishments for our Membership, at least thank her for that.

On one final note, any past Local 556 President can tell you that our Union is most effective when our Members are united, informed, and involved. As we welcome our new President and Leadership Team, I hope we are all prepared to do our part to move forward to be the strong, fighting Union that our Members deserve.

Thom McDaniel is a Houston-based Flight Attendant and serves as a TWU International Vice President and Local 556 International Representative.

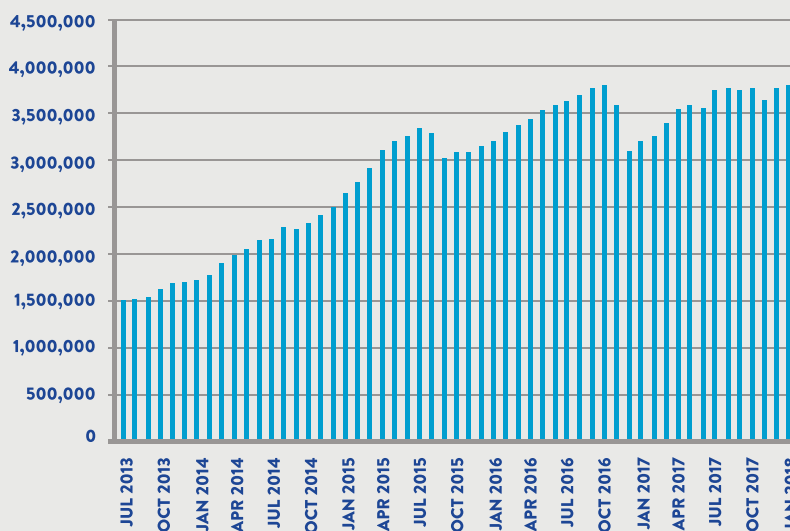
## OUR UNION'S FINANCIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

From a financial perspective, our current Executive Board has done quite a bit to prepare us for the future. From securing office space where our lease costs won't escalate over the ten-year agreement, to most recently, replacing an antiquated phone and Grievance handling system which haven't met the needs of our organization for some time now. Each of these decisions was made with a growing Membership in mind.

No matter how long the wish list was, a yearly balanced operating budget has always been the priority. Our Union's budget really is no different than each of our own household budgets. Both must spend less than we bring in and both should set aside a piece for saving for the future.

Now that Executive Board elections are behind us, a new chapter in our Union's history begins and there is a lot of work ahead. After the 21 Board Members take office in May, we will hit the ground running as all Committee Chairpersons will be reviewed and appointed. Two Negotiators will be appointed by our Executive Board, and two additional Negotiators will be elected by our Membership. Shop Stewards will be elected at the next Membership Meeting and will also be trained. This will ALL occur prior to Contract Negotiations that begin in November. Although it is a long list, I feel very confident this newly elected Executive Board is up to the challenge.

In closing, below is a graph that shows a five-year monthly history on the overall assets of the Union. This is another view of the data that can be found on the LM-2 reports that are filed annually with the United States Department of Labor (DOL). Even through the last round of Negotiations that are behind us, we have been financially preparing to tackle what's in front of us. To be successful, we must find a way to come together. This new leadership will need every one of you.



John Parrott is a Dallas-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Financial Secretary/Treasurer of TWU Local 556.  
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# THANK YOU, MICHAEL MASSONI.



Michael Massoni is a 34-year veteran Flight Attendant and 24-year Phoenix-based Southwest Airlines Flight Attendant that has a passion for Union work. He has spent over twenty years representing our work group in various fashions. While we may be saying good-bye to him as he finishes up what is his 5<sup>th</sup> term (appointed or elected) as an Executive Board Member, it will not be the end of Michael's Union work. He will now have more time to pursue his real passion – providing Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants as well as all Members of Transport Workers Union, the safest, most secure work environment possible.

Michael has always had a passion for our Flight Attendants. He has been an Executive Board Member during five different terms, serving as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President in four of those terms, as well as a short stint as a Board Member-at-Large. He has been involved in various Contract Negotiations over the years, which has afforded our Flight Attendants industry-leading Contracts throughout his tenure.

Following September 11, 2001, Michael became very involved with government and other Labor Unions and Associations in initiating important security protocols and protections for Flight Attendants industry-wide. This initiative created the federalization of airport security, the revitalization of the Federal Air Marshal (FAM) program, creation of the Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program as well as the rewrite of the Common Strategy

and Threat Level Systems that are in place for Flight Attendants in order to help neutralize security threats within our work environment. Another result of Michael's efforts was the creation and implementation of formal Crew Member Self Defense Training (CMSDT) administered by the Department of Homeland Security through the TSA as well as the adaptive programs that are currently taught in Initial and Recurrent Trainings throughout the industry. Additionally, these efforts made advanced self-defense training classes available to all Flight Crew Member's (Flight Attendants and Pilots) on a voluntary basis annually.

Michael has also been a trailblazer on many safety initiatives throughout his years in office. He was instrumental in the implementation of the Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP), a program that gives Flight Attendants the ability to report safety issues in a confidential and non-punitive safe setting. He sits on the numerous industry committees charged with combating the real safety of flight and occupational risks associated with cabin fume events. He advocated and fought for the OSHA protections currently in place for all Flight Attendants as well as the federal law recognizing Flight Attendants as First Responders and safety professionals in the form of FAA Certification of Demonstrated Proficiency each of us receive when completing training. He also formed TWU Local 556's Accident Response Investigative Team or "Go Team" and was able to get seats

secured on Southwest Airlines Go Plane in the event of a serious aircraft accident or incident.

In addition to safety and security changes, there are other benefits our Flight Attendants enjoy as a result of Michael's hard work and determination. The ability to use Known Crew Member (KCM) was a long-fought fight that was first introduced during Michael's career. He worked on the program for years before its ultimate implementation in 2012. Additionally, the Reciprocal Cabin Seat Agreements (aka: Jumpseat Agreements) we enjoy when commuting/flying on other airlines were also originated and negotiated by Michael, culminating in the historic, first ever, ground-breaking agreement reached between Southwest Airlines, TWU Local 556, American Airlines/American Eagle (then known as AMR Corp.) and the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) on November 15, 2005.

All-in-all, Michael has had a phenomenal run as a Union Officer, Safety Advocate and consummate professional Flight Attendant...but in his own words:

**"This is not the end of my service to Southwest Flight Attendants or the Flight Attendant profession as a whole...not by a long shot!"**

I think the passion in that statement says it all, and we can only surmise that Michael's best contributions to our profession and our Union are still ahead.



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



CUYLER THOMPSON  
& AUDREY STONE

# THANK YOU, CUYLER THOMPSON.

are the other hats he's worn while he's been our Recording Secretary.

In 2006, Cuyler also became the Chairperson of our Shop Steward Committee and served in that role for six years. While our Shop Stewards were under Cuyler's care, the program was elevated to new heights. We had the most involved, engaged group of Stewards that I've witnessed in my career. It was when my own Union career began (as a Shop Steward), so I had a front row seat to watch our activists grow as Leaders.

Cuyler also spearheaded an expansion of our Union Office Hours that remains in place today. We expanded from a 0900-1700 M-F operation, to 365 days a year service for our Flight Attendants. He pushed for our office to expand to 0800-1800, and more importantly, to serve Members on weekends and holidays, too. It is because of Cuyler that we can proudly say a Union Rep is just a phone call away, every day.

However, Cuyler wasn't content with just serving as our Recording Secretary and leading our Shop Stewards – his Union heart demanded that he step up when there was a need. Cuyler was one of our Board Members who assisted with Project Redesign. Most only remember one controversial piece of this project, but Flight Attendants from all over the system came to Dallas to see if our Union's structure, policies, etc. could be more efficient to serve you better. Almost all of the recommendations of Project Redesign were implemented, and most remain in place today.

During this time period, Southwest Airlines announced the purchase of AirTran Airways. There was an enormous amount of work to be done as our Union negotiated an integration agreement, and of course, Cuyler stepped up again. He volunteered to coordinate the Flight Attendant Lounge Educators for the Seniority List Integration (SLI). It was a massive job at a time when emotions and stress were running high. I watched him calm people down, encourage them, and lend a shoulder to Flight Attendants in the difficult position of being the front line "face" of the SLI. If you were an Educator during this time, I know you appreciated his leadership.

**Few people know how hard Cuyler worked to stabilize our Union when he returned as Recording Secretary during the**

**dark days of 2013. It is a reality that our Local wouldn't have made it through the way we did without Cuyler. While it was a bumpy road, he helped us navigate around obstacles that threatened to knock us off course.**

In true Cuyler form, he stepped up again to chair our Communications Committee. As the Editor, he has published some of the most historic, memorable *Unity Magazines* our Local has seen (as evidenced by the display at the Southwest Airlines TOPS building).

I've listed just some of the hats Cuyler has worn throughout his involvement with TWU Local 556, but nothing can adequately describe the Leader he's been. If you haven't had the honor of working with him, you may not realize how creative, talented, passionate, dedicated, and driven he is, or the brilliance he displays if you give him a project and a whiteboard to write on. He's one of the few people you can count on – if he says he's going to take care of it, then it's as good as done. You may not know the compassion and kindness he displays in just the right moments (he keeps that more hidden). I've also fought, argued, and battled with him over the years, more than any other person I've worked with. He's stubborn, resistant to change, snarky (funny, when it's not directed at you!), and unyielding in his beliefs. There are both positives and negatives in all of us, but they combine to make us the Leader that we are, and our Local has never had a Leader like Cuyler – he's truly one of a kind and is irreplaceable.

Cuyler, thank you for starting my Union journey, and for being with me through the end. There's no one else I would've wanted next to me, and I'm proud to have been part of the "Audrey and Cuyler Show." Thank you for the good and the bad, and for making me a better Leader. Thank you for being a great son, brother, uncle, friend, and advocate for our Flight Attendants. On behalf of everyone, thank you for your decades of service to our Membership, our Union, and our Company.

Audrey Stone is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant and serves as Madam President of TWU Local 556.

While I'm happy this is the last time I'm racing to meet a deadline for him (believe me, no one wants to face him when you're late), it is bittersweet that my last article for *Unity Magazine* is about Cuyler Thompson. I am emotional as I write about Cuyler's road as a Union Leader because he's who got my road started. He's travelled every step of the way with me, and as we prepare to exit, I want to give you a glimpse of the amazing Leader, fierce advocate, and principled representative he's been for our Flight Attendants and our Union.

Cuyler has worn many Union hats over the years, going back before I even worked at Southwest Airlines. He first began representing Flight Attendants in Oakland in Fact-Finding Meetings. Back in those days, people who stepped up had to have a strong passion in their belly for helping their Co-workers, as all of this Union work was on a volunteer basis. That was just the start of thousands of volunteer hours Cuyler would give of himself to our Union.

After serving as our Oakland Domicile Executive Board Member, Cuyler moved east to Baltimore. He was elected as our TWU Local 556 Recording Secretary in 2006 and served from 2006-2012, and again from 2013-2018. He's done the job for so long that he makes it look effortless, and I can tell you from personal experience, it's anything but that! There have been a handful of Union Leaders over the years who have needed to step in to act as "Rec Sec" for Cuyler from time-to-time, and they've walked away from the experience having more respect for him. The skills that a good Recording Secretary needs – organization, multi-tasking, ability to keep things moving – have helped Cuyler excel at his job. What's most amazing, though,



“Ohana” is the Hawaiian word for family, though it means much more than that. Ohana represents the people you depend on for every life event, that there will be no judgement passed and the door will never be closed. Brett Nevarez has been our TWU Ohana for twenty years. He will never speak to you about his accomplishments; he is always looking ahead to the next task. I have been given the honor to write about my friend and Brother Brett.

The turmoil of the late 1990's within our Local found Brett in a not unusual circumstance for a Unionized and caring Flight Attendant. He realized that questioning Leadership without getting involved wasn't productive, and he soon began to engage his Co-workers, gaining ideas and a platform to take on the challenge of Union work. During this time, I had been asked by our Local to investigate a program to help Flight Attendants in need of assistance with drug and alcohol issues. I soon found myself in an office with the Vice President of Inflight at the time, Bill Miller, Director of Inflight Dennis Lardon, Local 556 Executive Board Member Mary Longobardi, and Brett. Brett and I had been selected as representatives of a small but growing group of clean and sober Flight Attendants. That day also coincided with a Ratification Meeting during which our Negotiating Team (NT) was explaining the first Tentative Agreement for the “Green” Contract. Brett was upset with the offer and did not see enough gains from our lackluster position of the TFP rates and multiple pay scales that we were, at the time, working under after the concessions made in the “Red” Contract. Wrongly, Brett decided that an attempt at decertification was the answer. With passionate impatience, Brett began to secretly contact other Flight Attendants attempting to force the issue to decertify. I was one of them. My history of the same troubles

## THANK YOU, BRETT NEVAREZ.

at my former carrier Northwest Airlines brought me to one conclusion: I had no choice but to bring Brett up on charges. Brett was put on trial and was placed as a Member of Bad Standing for a period of time.

Brett spent his time on line gathering knowledge of the inner workings within TWU Local 556 and TWU International with the help of former legal counsel Art Luby. He discovered he was gifted with the ability to understand and convey the meaning of somewhat arcane legalese used in day-to-day Union Business. Reinstatement as a Member in Good Standing brought the true Brett Nevarez to our Membership. He was appointed to fill a vacancy on our Negotiating Team in November 2001, and became the vibrant, impassioned leader we have become accustomed to, bringing about a foundational agreement with leading TFP rates, RIGs and working conditions we enjoy to this day. He has walked picket lines with thousands of Union Members nationally, successfully working with TWU Local 556, TWU Local 555, SWAPA, and various MEC's within AFA, AMFA, IAM and APFA.

Brett Nevarez then set his focus on his Sisters and Brothers suffering from drug and alcohol addictions. He gathered a dozen fellow Flight Attendants in recovery and revamped a struggling peer assistance program that became the Flight Attendant Alcohol and Drug Program (FADAP). He and his team accomplished a confidential and lifesaving resource that has saved dozens of lives. A continuing, successful and improving FADAP alone is a lifelong legacy for one person.

Recently I had the honor to work closely with Brett from 2012 until 2016 on our NT. These years proved tumultuous and could have taken a toll on lesser men and women. Brett Nevarez, NT Member Brandon Hillhouse, NT Member Paul Sweetin, NT Member Don Shipman, NT Member Trish Krider and President and Lead Negotiator Audrey Stone worked tirelessly along with our amazing Grievance Team Members and Executive Board to protect you and our Contract. There were days and some entire weeks that seemed futile; through it all, Brett never once missed reaching out for an evening conversation with his wife Trudy and his son Nico, the light of his life.

**That is the true example of honor and love of service.  
That is Brett Nevarez.**

You may notice some similarities to the late 90's and now within our Local. Brett and I's story of lifelong friendship grew from opposing views of how to accomplish work within our Local into a mutual admiration and respect for each other's abilities. Let our story be a prologue to continued growth and understanding between seemingly opposing points of view within our Membership.

On April 30, 2018 Brett Nevarez will spend his last day as an elected Union Leader after more than two decades of serving us. He has done so with a fearless grace. He has kept his promises and our confidences all this time. It is known in this industry that we stand on the shoulders of giants, from Ellen Church, the founder of the first Flight Attendant Union, on to the ladies and gentlemen who have fought for our safety and health against all odds. Lifesaving and firefighting equipment on board? Thank your Union. RIG's and rest rules? Thank your Union. The ability to work as little or as much as you want? Thank your Union. Maternity leave, FMLA, sick bank accrual and progressive discipline? Thank your Union. No weight checks, no restrictive rules regarding marital status, age, sex, weight or height? Thank your Union.

Our work and personal lives are better because of Brett Nevarez. Should you ever run into him out there on line, tell him thank you for being part of our Ohana and ask him how you can get involved. We stand and thrive on his strong shoulders. There is always room for another Union Member like Brett Nevarez, maybe it's you!!



Bill Holcomb is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and served as a Member of the TWU Local 556 Negotiating Team.



# THANK YOU, SAM WILKINS.

Dedicated. Knowledgeable. Passionate. Reliable. When you look up any of these words in our TWU Local 556 dictionary, they are defined simply with a picture of Sam Wilkins. For the last three years, Sam has selflessly and tirelessly supported our Executive Board, Grievance Team, Committees, our Membership, and Labor as a whole, with heart and compassion. I am beyond proud to call her my Sister, and even more, my dear friend.

When you ask Sam what her biggest accomplishments have been during her time as Board Member at Large, she will first blush and try to talk about something else, but when pressed, she'll say it's the behind the scenes stuff that she's most proud of. Things such as fighting against unjust discipline and getting Members their jobs back. She doesn't have a running tally (other than the one in her heart) documenting the number of Sisters and Brothers who had discipline removed/reduced or are still employed because she worked so hard to make that happen... but they are MANY. From panicked phone calls to locate a suicidal Crew Member, to tearful pleas from Flight Attendants whose world was rocked by sudden death, to hysterical phone calls of a Flight Attendant who is being terminated for a Class 1, Section 17 violation, our Membership could always rely on Sam to provide personalized assistance, any time, day or night... regardless of whether she was the Emergency Officer On-Call or on vacation in Italy.

You'd be hard pressed to find a Contract question on Facebook that either doesn't have Sam tagged in it, or in which she has already provided a thorough answer and guidance. And I bet if we did a poll asking Flight Attendants who their Contract "phone a friend" is, a significant percentage would say "Sam Wilkins" (I know she's one of mine!). It's because of our joint passion for education that I first met and worked with Sam... and I couldn't have had a better teacher, mentor, and friend in that journey! I was privileged to work side-by-side with her on the Contract Action Network (CAN) Team, Precinct Captain Program and on numerous other projects for the Education Committee, including her baby, the Official TWU Local 556 Facebook Group. There are many things to admire about Sam, but on top of that list is her drive to see ideas come to fruition. She doesn't just come up with brilliant, creative concepts... she works (usually with minimal sleep and multiple hours-long phone calls!) until that idea has taken form. She always said, "We have to go where our Members are!" while she fought to provide one more resource for our Membership. Sam has gifted greater Contract knowledge to the entire Membership through multiple projects and avenues, and we are all stronger for it.

**When Sam discovers a passion (and she has many), she doesn't just stick her toe in the water to judge the temperature, she looks over her shoulder at you (because she's already running full speed ahead) and shouts "Let's jump in TOGETHER!"**

She was definitely this way when it came to working with our Grievance Team. Sam is rarely found without her computer, a stack of file folders



and her phone to one ear, organizing and planning a case to fight for a Flight Attendant... her eyes sparkling with excitement and determination. Working with our Grievance Team brought with it immense pride and joy (not to mention heartbreak and stress), and Sam loved every second of it. Flying to Dallas from Oakland most weeks is not a typical duty of the Board Member at Large position but Sam took on this challenge because she is passionate about fighting for Members.

Sam Wilkins achieved A LOT in just three years as an elected Board Member at Large. Sometimes I wonder if she ever slept. She gave freely of herself to better our Membership and asked for no recognition in return. I, for one, know without a shadow of a doubt, that I am a better Union Member, and a better human being, because of Samantha Wilkins. Her passion and dedication are inspirational, and her love for her Sisters and Brothers is unmatched.



ANGIE KILBOURNE  
& SAM WILKINS

“ Goodbyes are not forever.  
Goodbyes are not the end.  
They simply mean I'll miss  
you, Until we meet again. ”

- ANONYMOUS

Angie Kilbourne is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Co-Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Education Committee.



# THE STATE OF OUR UNION

## WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED GREAT THINGS

Since I took office as our President in June 2013, our Union Leadership has accomplished so much on behalf of our Flight Attendants. We have continued to raise the bar in the industry, as I'm continually reminded when I speak to other Leaders in the airline industry. Below isn't an exhaustive list of all that we have accomplished together, but highlights some of the work we can be most proud of that has been accomplished by many people working together for you.

### OUR TWU LOCAL 556 TEAM ACCOMPLISHED:

- Began Contract Negotiations on time, as scheduled, despite the changeover of the Lead Negotiator and Union turmoil;
- Turned the Union's finances around and replenished the Treasury, making it the strongest in our Local's history;
- Launched the first test of Satellite Bases, after almost twelve years of discussions with Southwest Airlines;
- Maintained and further improved the industry's best Flight Attendant Contract, including a raise following the amendable date that will put our top out pay at \$63.30 per TFP/\$73.43 per hour;
- Negotiated for important language in *Southwest: The Magazine* regarding unauthorized photos and/or videos of Crew Members onboard the aircraft;
- Obtained additional pay above what is in the Contract for Recurrent Training when the FAA increased our hours;
- Worked through years' worth of grievances, eliminating backlogs and brought our grievances to the most current place we've been in decades;
- Negotiated and secured dozens of contractual, precedent setting settlements that were real victories for our Flight Attendants;
- Pushed back against the Hospitality Flyer Program (HFP), which resulted in both a delay of the launch and a rewrite of the program for our Flight Attendants;
- Negotiated an increase in the new uniform allotment dollar amount for all uniformed Employees;
- Secured a long-term, cost savings lease for our Union Office and outfitted it through the purchase of TWU International furniture negotiated at a steep discount;
- Brought back Union-sponsored dinners for our New Hire Flight Attendants that includes SWA-donated beverages and transportation;
- Renegotiated the Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) to remove the ability for SWA to discipline a Flight Attendant if the report is accepted into the program;
- Launched the first ever "Official" TWU Local 556 Facebook Group to give our Flight Attendants an additional forum to communicate and have their questions answered;
- Worked with AFA-Council 57 on the final transition terms for the AirTran Flight Attendants and completed the single carrier certification;
- Brought back the Local's Procedures and Guidelines to keep the Executive Board on track and accountable;
- Created a Mobilization/Organizing Committee that moved our Union forward;
- Modernized our Grievance Database to take us into the future;



- Incorporated a new phone system that integrates with the new Grievance Database;
- Increased our Union Office Staff from one to five non-Flight Attendant Employees to provide better service for our Members;
- Rebuilt a working relationship with SWA Leadership to better advocate for our Flight Attendants, while still holding Management accountable;
- Rebuilt the relationships with the other Unions on Southwest Airlines property with quarterly Labor and Negotiation Summits;
- Fought hard for Flight Attendants who had received discipline, resulting in a record number of settlements reached at the earlier Step 2 level;
- Expanded Union communication channels to bring more news to you, including the return of Live Broadcast and then Facebook Live;
- Modernized the dues collection process to catch up on past dues owed;
- Provided assistance to TWU International in helping to organize Virgin America and JetBlue Flight Attendants to strengthen our profession;
- Improved Emergency Sick Call Procedures (ESCP) protocols to address your concerns, including an enhanced joint Q&A document with Southwest Airlines;
- Created Irregular Operations (IROPS) procedures both within our Union and with Southwest Airlines;
- Pushed for Southwest Airlines to develop Crew Ops Support Desk to address hotel room accommodations and transportation during sold out situations;
- Held Grievance Summits where resolutions are reached quickly on your grievances in a more timely manner;
- Took our Flight Attendants to Wall Street to share the personal stories of our Members who are the *People Behind the Profits*;
- Introduced first Electronic Membership Meeting, allowing for one simulcast meeting in all ten domiciles;
- Created a comprehensive contractual Q&A document with Southwest Airlines that includes Letters of Agreement and Understanding.

Of course there are goals we didn't reach. Our biggest unfulfilled challenge is to bring greater Unity to our workgroup.

**I pledge to fully support our newly elected Officers and Board Members in uniting all of our Members, and ask that you will, too.**

Thank you for taking time to read what's just a glimpse of the work that our Union has been done on your behalf. I will forever be proud of this list and the countless others not found here.

**YIPPEE KI-YAY AND I'LL SEE YOU ON LINE!**



Audrey Stone is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant and serves as Madam President of TWU Local 556.  
[astone@twu556.org](mailto:astone@twu556.org)



# THANK YOU, MATT HETTICH.

As this term comes to an end, I would like to recognize Matt Hettich, the Domicile Executive Board Member for the Oakland Base, and the work he has accomplished not only this past term but in the years prior as well. I have had the pleasure to work alongside Matt for the past six years and would consider him not only a Co-worker but a friend. I have watched Matt's passion for legislation grow and fighting for the improvement of ALL Workers' lives. Matt has been involved not only on the local level, but also at a national level. He is through and through the heart of what it means to be a Union Member. He brings important issues forward and tries to make changes that effect all of us in the Labor Movement.

Matt's work as Co-Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Committee of Political Education (COPE) has increased over his years of service, and he has also served as the Chairperson of the California TWU State Conference. Last year, Matt attended the "Fighting Right to Work Summit" hosted by the California Labor Federation that brought together Unions from across the country to share best practices and develop strategies aimed at combating the growing scourge of Right to Work Laws which weaken Unions.

In the Oakland Base, Matt has taken on the Oakland Sick Leave/California Kin Care (OSCK) fight. Through the years, Southwest Airlines Management's interpretation of the use of this sick leave has changed several times. Matt continued to meet with TWU Local 555, Grievance Team Members, and legal counsel on updates for our Members. Matt has always made protecting our Members in Oakland his priority.

I also offer a special thank you to Leslie Hettich, the "First Lady of Oakland," for the sacrifices that come along with sharing your significant other with an entire Membership, as well as Jack and Harper, Matt's son and daughter. It's never an easy task to share, but like my son, Matt and Leslie's children will grow up in a Union Activist's household, fiercely advocating for the rights of others, learning to put others first and the true meaning of sacrifice.

**Thank you Matt Hettich for your years of service and the heart and soul that you put into your role.**



Thank you for being there not only for our Members but your fellow Executive Board Members and the entire Labor Movement. I can guarantee we have not seen the last of Matt Hettich; I believe his activism is only beginning. I see a future where Matt is fighting for his Union Brothers and Sisters across the country.

Stacey Vavakas is a Baltimore-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Baltimore Domicile Executive Board Member.



# THANK YOU, STACEY VAVAKAS.



Stepping forward and running for Union Office is never easy. You must be able to balance the demands of our Members and the rigors of Union work, while maintaining the obligations of home and family life. For the past six years, my Union Sister and friend Stacey Vavakas has done just that: honorably serving the Members of TWU Local 556 with wonderful intellect and matchless

courage, all the while maintaining her wonderful spirit, great sense of humor and style. Stacey concludes her second term as Baltimore Domicile Executive Board (DEBM), choosing to step back from her Union Leadership position to focus on her friends, family, and amazing son Tyler. While serving as DEBM, Stacey also served as Co-Chairperson of the Shop Steward Committee, and worked to provide curriculum, training, and guidance to our frontline Union Activists, ensuring they were equipped with the tools necessary to represent Members in meetings with Southwest Airlines Management.

Over the years, Stacey has worked with the Baltimore Base Management to foster a relationship that enabled her and her team of Shop Stewards to best represent our Members. Stacey has helped Members in Fact-Finding Meetings, assisted Members in navigating Medical Leave and FMLA, and educated Members on their contractual rights. Stacey performed this work with a prideful sense of duty and obligation. However, it's the work she did out of the spotlight

and out of the public eye that has had the greatest impact for the Members she served.

Stacey has an unwavering duty to assist her fellow Co-workers and has helped countless Members dealing with personal issues or during times of personal crisis. Stacey's work of always being there for her Members, no matter the time of day, has in my opinion, changed lives for the better. She has done this work not for praise, not for gratitude, but because it's the right thing to do, and because deep down, Stacey wants only the best for her Co-workers and friends. Stacey is and always will be an amazing advocate for Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants and the Members of TWU Local 556. Thank you, Stacey, for all the work you have done for our Members, our Union, and for the cause of the Labor Movement.

Matt Hettich is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Oakland Domicile Executive Board Member.

# TWU LOCAL 556 FLIGHT ATTENDANTS MAINTAIN & IMPROVE THE INDUSTRY-LEADING CONTRACT

TWU Local 556 Flight Attendants have worked for industry-leading wages, RIGs & benefits since July 2004, when the Blue Contract was ratified! True Membership Unity resulted in our first industry-leading Contract.

Our current (Teal) Contract with Southwest Airlines becomes amendable later this year, on November 1, 2018.

Based on the amendable dates of other Flight Attendants' Contracts, we remain the industry leader even after our own Contract's amendable date: we receive another three percent increase on November 1, 2018 for all TFP rates, and another increase in per diem on January 1, 2019.

**2002 BLUE CONTRACT** - average annual value increase of \$189 million per year\*

**2008 PURPLE CONTRACT** - average annual value increase of \$199 million per year\*

**2013 CONTRACT EXTENSION** - average annual value increase of \$256 million per year\*

**2016 TEAL CONTRACT** - average annual value increase of \$392 million per year\*

\*These annual average value increases are on top of the value of the previous Contract, and are not adjusted for growth in Flight Attendant headcount.

Everyone is entitled to their own individual opinion but not their own individual facts. We must remember that we don't have to see eye to eye to stand shoulder to shoulder.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you.  
You're welcome!



Brett Nevarez is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant and serves as the 2nd Vice President at TWU Local 556. Brett also served as a member of the Negotiating Team.



## ANNOUNCING THE TWU LOCAL 556 GWEN YORK SCHOLARSHIP

TWU Local 556 is pleased to announce a new scholarship available to Members honoring Flight Attendant and long-time TWU advocate Gwen York, who passed away on February 14. Gwen was hired at Southwest in 1980, and was a Dallas-based Flight Attendant. She was a Union advocate to her core, serving on our TWU Local 556 Executive Board as Dallas Domicile Executive Board Member, chairing our Local's Working Women's Committee, serving as a Legislative Representative with TWU International on the Committee on Political Education (COPE), and chairing the International Working Women's Committee.

Gwen valued education and always worked on self-improvement so she could better advocate for working people. In 2006, at the age of 49, Gwen graduated from the National Labor College and used that knowledge to better represent the Members of TWU Local 556 and TWU International.

**When Gwen's daughter Alyson was asked how best her mom could be honored through our Local's scholarship program, she said it would be an honor "if the scholarship could include women who are continuing education or going back to school later in life like my mom did."**

To honor Gwen's memory and her contributions to our Local and International, TWU Local 556 is pleased to announce the Gwen York Scholarship. This scholarship is available to TWU Members who want to continue their education at an accredited College, University, Technical School, Trade School, or Vocational School. The scholarship will be in the amount of \$2,500 and will be paid directly to the school. In Gwen's honor, special consideration will be given to women aged 40 and higher, but applications will be accepted from TWU Local 556 Members of all genders and ages. For more information on this and other scholarships offered by TWU Local 556, please visit [TWU556.org](http://TWU556.org).

We hope this scholarship inspires other women to pursue their passions and fight for what is right. The world was a better place because of Gwen York and those who knew her are better people for it.



Jessica Parker is a Denver-based Flight Attendant and serves as Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Scholarship and Women's Issues, Service, and Education Committees (W.I.S.E.).



Lori Lochelt in an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Civil and Human Rights Committee (CHRC).

## THANK YOU, HEATHER KELLY-GRAY.

I can't really remember when I met Heather Kelly-Gray, but I do remember the impression she made on me almost immediately. I've said it before and I'll say it again and again:

**Heather is simply a badass advocate and activist.**

Her professionalism, integrity, and authenticity are second to none.

In 2015, I had just been appointed as the Chairperson of the Civil & Human Rights Committee and wanted to send out an e-newsletter for Gay Pride Month. I asked Heather if she would be willing to share her own personal story, and she didn't hesitate to say yes. She wrote an amazing piece about her life with her wife Tiffany and daughter Mattie Simone. The willingness to share her story is just one part of Heather's authenticity.

When Southwest Airlines rolled out the new uniform designs in the spring of 2017, Heather contacted me about some concerns she and other Flight Attendants had about the women's pieces. She has been dogged in her determination to bring those concerns to Management and find solutions. Although it's not the only issue

Heather feels strongly about, her advocacy and willingness to stand up for the LGBTQ community of Flight Attendants is so needed and appreciated by our Members.

Heather was one of the Flight Attendants who attended the historic 2017 Women's March in Washington, D.C., accompanied by twenty other TWU Local 556 Flight Attendants who walked with labor that day. I don't know if I've ever seen someone so much in her element. Heather is a person with thoughtful and well informed opinions and beliefs. She also considers others opinions and will consider adjusting her position if offered new information. This skill and her aptitude for advocacy makes Heather a dynamic and valuable Union Leader.

In 2017, when a Board Member at Large position became open, I immediately reached out to Heather to ask if she had considered submitting a letter of interest. I couldn't have been happier that she was chosen for the position.

I am honored and humbled to call Heather a friend and fellow Union Advocate and Activist. Keep being you Heather! I predict great things to come.

## THANK YOU, BRIAN "BR" RICKS.



B.R. I really enjoyed being on our Board with you. I briefly met B.R. when he was out in Phoenix but didn't really know him until he got on our Board as the Dallas Domicile Executive Board Member. Over the course of our term, I witnessed his passion for the Membership.

B.R., I will always cherish the time we spent together on our Board and will miss our very passionate conversations about issues affecting the Membership.

I know you will go out and continue to be a fierce advocate for our Union and will do your best to unite the Membership.

I love you buddy and wish you and Sara all the best!

John DiPippa is a Phoenix-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Phoenix Domicile Executive Board Member.



# EDUCATION COMMITTEE EXPANSION

Three years ago, Angie Kilbourne, Josh Rosenberg and myself put in letters of interest to chair the Education Committee. We met the year before as Members of the Contract Action Network (CAN) doing Lounge Mobilizations about Negotiations, educating our Members in our respective domiciles (Josh and Angie in Oakland, and me in Las Vegas). We are all at different seniorities, live in different cities, have different life experiences, but we all share a passion to educate our Membership.

**In the last three years, our Education Committee has grown in purpose and numbers.**

Our top priority was and continues to be increasing our Membership's Contractual and Work Rule knowledge. An educated Membership is a powerful Membership. The question we faced was: "What is the best way to reach the most Members?" We formed a strategic plan, and were ready to execute it.

Before we were able to get to work on our strategic plan, we were tasked with assisting our Negotiating Team to create materials for the Tentative Agreement (TA) that was presented to the Membership in 2015. Our Education Committee also created the educational materials for the second TA that was presented to the Membership in 2016. As part of the TA 2.0 Education, the Official TWU 556 Facebook Group was created. The purpose was to provide accurate information in a "question and answer" format. After the ratification of TA 2.0, the Facebook Group continued to be available to answer questions from our Members. Questions were answered on a voluntary basis by a group of Members who are well versed in our Contract and Work Rules.

Because of how many Members the Official TWU 556 Facebook Group reached during the TA 2.0 rollout, our Education Committee received budgetary approval to staff the Group daily with one Admin to answer questions from 1500 to 2400 Central time, seven days a week. A 90-day trial period was approved by our Executive Board to evaluate how effective the Group was. After the trial period was complete, we presented a proposal to our Executive Board, which included funding the group for the year. Our Executive Board unanimously approved the budget. This resource has provided a platform to get answers to questions with no back and forth. The Group has grown to over 7,000 Members, with many requests to join daily. The Team continues to volunteer their time by answering questions outside of the hours that an Admin is on duty. Feedback has been positive—our Members appreciate a place they can go to and get their questions answered quickly and accurately.

In addition to the Official TWU 556 Facebook Group, our Education Committee has worked on many initiatives to assist our Members with understanding our Contract, Work Rules and how our Local operates.

## THOSE INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

### REVAMPING THE NEW HIRE HANDBOOK FOR OUR NEWEST MEMBERS:

We revamped the original New Hire Handbook and recreated it, adding an overview of how our Local Union operates, as well as the basics a new Flight Attendant needs to know (Article 8—Hours of Service, Article 11—Reserve, Article 32—Attendance Policy, to name a few). This handbook is a great tool for all Members. You can find it on [www.twu556.org](http://www.twu556.org) > The Contract > Contract Resources and download it to your phone, tablet or computer.

### CREATED THE CONTRACT 101 SERIES:

The original concept was to reach our Members through digital communication (Contract 101 handouts), face to face interaction (Lounge Education) and social media (the "Official" TWU 556 Facebook Group and Facebook Live).

The Contract 101 Handouts were created to break down our Contractual language and make it understandable for our Members. This was a priority to our Education Committee. The Contract 101s help answer the frequently asked questions from the most utilized Articles in our Contract. The 101s are available on [www.twu556.org](http://www.twu556.org) > The Contract > Contract Resources.

Taking the Contract 101s into the bases to speak with Members face to face, our Education Committee held monthly Lounge Education during the summer and fall of 2017. The 101s were available in printed form for those Members who prefer to have a paper copy. Although Lounge Education was successful, it has been suspended due to current budgetary constraints.

Utilizing Facebook Live to cover a different Contractual article which coincided with the 101s that are sent out monthly, our Education Committee hosts Facebook Live to answer frequently asked questions from the Official TWU 556 Facebook Group, questions e-mailed from Members, as well as Members asking their questions during the Facebook Live. These monthly sessions have lasted anywhere from ten minutes to almost an hour. Archived Facebook Live events are available to watch through the Official TWU 556 Facebook Group.

We have plans for a Contract 201 series to cover certain topics more in depth, such as Overlap and RIGS, for Members who are looking for more information on these complex areas of our Contract.

### CONTRIBUTED TO UNITY MAGAZINE:

Our Education Committee has written articles for Unity Magazine (and Unity Update before it was discontinued) to highlight hot topic items such as Overlap, Attendance Points and the Attendance Policy, Reserve, Hours of Service. This was another way to reach Members through another medium besides digital or social media.

### CREATED A UNION IRREGULAR OPERATIONS PLAN:

As a means to create a protocol for how Union Leadership responds to any sort of extreme Irregular Operations issues, our Education Committee created a plan. This plan was presented to our Executive Board for approval to be used in future Irregular Operations situations. Our Executive Board unanimously approved the plan.

### ATTENDED THE TWU INTERNATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:

During the Convention, our Education Committee hosted multiple Facebook Live sessions and spoke with Delegates who shared their experiences at the Convention with the Membership.

### ASSISTED OTHER COMMITTEES AND DOMICILE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS:

Our Education Committee reached out to all Committees at the beginning of our tenure to offer assistance with educational materials. During our term, we assisted the Shop Steward, Civil and Human Rights, Women's Issues, Service and Education (W.I.S.E), Signature Verification

Committees, and our Board of Election with training, flyers, graphics and/or videos. The team also created materials for the Oakland Base to explain Oakland Sick Leave and for the Baltimore Base to explain Maryland Family Leave, as well as a Basics of Bidding handout for the Houston Domicile Executive Board Member.

### REINTRODUCED BASE ORIENTATION:

Because Oakland receives the most New Hires, our Education Committee brought back a Base Orientation to welcome our newest Members and assist in navigating the Oakland Airport and Lounge. Base Orientation has since been expanded to other domiciles to foster a smooth transition for New Hires in other bases.

Through all the projects the Education Committee has completed over the past three years, we are proud to have helped our Sisters and Brothers understand their Contract and Work Rules. For those Members who have stepped up to educate in the Lounges and to our Official TWU 556 Facebook Group Admin Team, we would like to say "Thank You" for your steadfast efforts to help us reach our goal of

increasing our Membership's knowledge of their Contract and Work Rules.

**It has been a pleasure to serve our Membership over the last three years on our Education Committee, working towards a more educated Membership. Education never ends, and we look forward to continuing in the process.**



Amanda Gauger is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Education Committee.

## GRIEVANCE TEAM

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

At the beginning of the 2015-2018 Executive Board term, the Union had 144 total Grievances on file. At the time, our oldest was a Group Grievance filed on December 12, 2008. Of those 144 Grievances, we had 18 Group Grievances and 60 Contractual Grievances, the oldest of which was filed on November 6, 2009. In May of 2015, we had 12,356 Members.

Fast-forward to today, and our Membership is now 15,577 strong – a 21% increase.

Currently, we have 127 total Grievances – a reduction of 12%. Of those 127 Grievances, we have 21 Contract Grievances and four Group Grievances. Currently, our oldest Grievance was filed on September 15, 2015.

### There are several reasons for the drastic decrease in the amount of Contract and Group Grievances.

After ratification of the current Contract, we were able to allocate the resources necessary to implement a strategy to streamline Grievance handling. Our Executive Board appointed Brandon Hillhouse in the spring of 2017 as the Co-Chairperson of the Grievance Committee to oversee all Contract and Group Grievances. This allowed for Grievance Co-Chairperson Becky Parker to focus on and oversee all Disciplinary Grievances, both non-termination and termination.

## CONTRACTUAL GRIEVANCES:

Our Executive Board has proceeded on many of Contractual Grievances in this three-year term, and the following Letters of Understanding (LOU) have been procured:

- **9/18/2015** LOU Unscheduled/Stranded RON into a day(s) where a pairing(s) is already scheduled.
- **3/16/2016** LOU Occupational Seniority Pay
- **3/22/2016** LOU Domicile Closure – Covered Commuter Policy Protection
- **4/18/2016** LOU Employee file request via email
- **8/17/2016** LOU Piece Back Pairings
- **4/10/2017** LOU Commuter Policy Pay Protection if assigned different pairing
- **4/28/2017** LOU Charter Reschedule
- **5/03/2017** LOU Job Share Pick Up, Trade and Give Away
- **5/24/2017** LOU Open Time pairings with a non-paying deadhead
- **8/07/2017** LOU Reduced rest options for Reserves returning to base
- **8/16/2017** LOU Holiday Paid for Non-Paid Deadheads
- **9/13/2017** LOU Two Pairings in one day – check-in procedures for 2<sup>nd</sup> pairing

## TERMINATION DISCIPLINE GRIEVANCES:

During the last year of this term, we have aggressively sought settlements for our Members and were able to favorably settle many of them. Once our Executive Board proceeds on a Disciplinary Grievance, we meet with Management in General Counsel to negotiate settlements. We have an excellent record the past few years reinstating Flight Attendants prior to Arbitration, where precedent-setting cases may harm the Union or Management. We have also been able to achieve resolution at the Step 2 level with Flight Attendants being reinstated before they have to go through a lengthy Grievance Process. While we do still have some cases that proceed on to Arbitration, we fiercely advocate for our Members and will continue to fight against unjust discipline.

## GRIEVANCE MEETINGS:

While our Contract only speaks to the Fact Finding, Step-2, Board of Adjustment, Arbitration, and monthly meetings with Scheduling, our Union also works hard to ensure the lines of communication stay open on all paths possible. While there are plenty of situations where an issue is resolved at one of these negotiated levels, there are many times additional non-contractual meetings create resolve for Members. Each month, after our Executive Board votes to proceed on cases, our Grievance Team has a meeting with General Counsel to discuss these cases in hopes of finding resolve prior to Arbitration.

Our Union's success rate resolving cases is high, especially compared to other Unions at Southwest Airlines. While it might take multiple meetings to find resolution, our Grievance Team continues to discuss open cases each month until either the Contract dictates, or the parties decide a neutral third party Arbitrator is needed. We also have meetings with Inflight Operations, Attendance and Leave, and Inflight Scheduling to discuss issues that might not be a Grievance, but are still of concern to you. While only the Scheduling meeting is contractual, our additional monthly meetings continue to show great improvements for our Membership, keeping open communication channels between the Union and Management. Our Grievance Team also sets up meetings with any other departments, which might be stakeholders on issues that become a concern for our Membership.

## NEW IDEAS:

During this term, our Executive Board and Grievance Team have focused on Member education. We created the "Trends in Terminations" communications to bring awareness to and give an overview of the reasons Members are being terminated. In 2016, we published several articles regarding Class 1, Section 17 violations, after which we saw Disciplinary Grievances trend down. In 2017, we highlighted our terminations related to Attendance Points and also saw a decrease in those Grievances. Although this still remains at the top

of the reasons why our Members are terminated, we wanted to educate Members on every available tool in our Contract to reduce overall point totals. In 2018, we have highlighted the disciplinary trend that started in 2017 with cases related to violating the 3.0.0 work rule related to off-duty conduct. Earlier this year, we also started a monthly Grievance Newsletter with four topics: Overall Grievances, Contract, Discipline and Hot Topics--to keep our Membership informed.

## SALESFORCE – PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE:

Our Union Leadership has spent over a year integrating the Salesforce platform into our Union to create a multifunctional system that integrates all aspects of our Union's operations. For the Grievance Team, Salesforce has integrated online emails and questions, Grievance handling and data, as well as email and even our phone systems. Our previous Grievance operating system had been utilized for many years, and our Membership had long outgrown its usefulness. This new system interconnected all aspects of Grievance handling, as well as automated many processes, allowing your Grievance Team to spend more time where it matters....assisting and researching matters on behalf of the Members.

In closing, while we have faced many challenges during this term, we have reached our goals regarding our overall Grievance strategy. I offer special thanks to our hard-working Shop Stewards, Grievance and Office Teams as well as our Executive Board. Our collective success would not be possible without their dedication and commitment to serve our Members.



Sam Wilkins is an Oakland-based Flight Attendant and serves as a TWU Local 556 Board Member at Large and the Executive Board Liaison to the TWU Local 556 Grievance Team.



# VOTER PARTICIPATION IMPROVES

## WITH PAPER BALLOTS!

I am pleased to report that the Membership responded to the challenge of paper balloting in HIGHER numbers than in the last two Executive Board Elections.

### FOR COMPARISON:

- **2018:** 58.14% of eligible voters
- **2015:** 49.76% of eligible voters
- **2012:** 39.42% of eligible voters

Our Board of Election (BOE) took several calls during the voting period regarding the switch to paper and mailed ballots, and why it was necessary. As we communicated last November, the United States Department of Labor won a court decision v. The Association of Professional Flight Attendants (American Airlines Flight Attendants) that effectively removed electronic voting as an option.

In light of this decision and to ensure Members had an opportunity to vote, our BOE extended the voting timeframe by a week compared to prior elections. This change was to account for the time necessary to deliver, replace and mail paper ballots. The BOE handled 1,076 calls from February 20 through March 9, 2018, answering Member questions, concerns, and working to make sure Member votes

counted. From these calls, we sent 249 replacement ballots to Members for reasons as varied as spills of red wine, coffee, or pasta sauce, husbands and/or kids tossing, drawing, or coloring ballots, Members not being home to receive, inability to follow enclosed directions, and the U. S. Post Office delivering wet mail or none at all. As with electronic balloting where we saw a large spike in votes during the last few hours, the Post Office reported acceptance of approximately 500 ballots on March 12, prior to the scheduled noon Central pickup.

No process is perfect, and our BOE was frustrated with the variety of delivery speeds around the country, however, the numbers speak for themselves. Our Members **absolutely** rose to the challenge and made their voices heard. For a Board of Election devoted to counting the representation of your voice, a higher return number is gratifying.

The following is a breakdown of total votes and eligible voters by base for the 2018 Executive Board Election which closed on Monday, March 12, 2018. Members based in Austin are included in the Houston totals and Ft. Lauderdale-based Members are included in the Orlando totals.

BASE	TOTAL PARTICIPATING VOTERS	TOTAL ELIGIBLE VOTERS	OVERALL PARTICIPATION PERCENTAGE
ATLANTA	509	806	63.15%
BALTIMORE	1057	1898	55.69%
DALLAS	1149	1674	68.64%
DENVER	783	1564	50.06%
HOUSTON	873	1504	58.05%
LAS VEGAS	856	1583	54.07%
ORLANDO	732	1228	59.61%
CHICAGO	1070	1901	56.29%
OAKLAND	614	1152	53.30%
PHOENIX	941	1454	64.72%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8584</b>	<b>14764</b>	<b>58.14%</b>



Will Browne is a Chicago-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Board of Election (BOE).

# THE ROLE OF THE SHOP STEWARD



During the upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Membership Meeting, those in attendance will nominate and elect TWU Local 556 Shop Stewards to serve during the 2018-2021 term.

Our Shop Stewards are the elected Union Members who work alongside and interact with our Flight Attendants most frequently. Our Shop Stewards are elected by their peers to aid them in enforcing the Contract and to protect their rights as Members of TWU Local 556. The Shop Steward is not alone in the Local, they are part of a Committee that gives us strength and helps put the Union on an equal level with Management.

Our Shop Stewards act as a liaison between our Executive Board and our Membership. It is our job to ensure the Union Leadership knows how the Members you represent feel on any subject. We ensure our Union is strong, represented and help to protect the Members' rights. We are the "face of the Union" and will interact with Members on a daily basis.

## WHAT SHOP STEWARDS DO?

### BE AN ORGANIZER

1. Get Members to become actively involved in the Union.
2. Encourage attendance at Membership Meetings.
3. Introduce others to Union-affiliated committees.
4. Encourage others with Union volunteerism and participation.
5. Explain what the Union is and how it operates.

### BE AN EDUCATOR

1. Answer questions regarding the Contract and how it impacts our Members.
2. Talk about what our Local Leadership is doing and explain why they are doing it.
3. Discuss Union issues with our Members.
4. Educate Members with resources available to them.
5. Inform Members of upcoming events.
6. Be a part of the Grievance process.
7. Represent Members in Fact-Finding Meetings.
8. Be a problem solver.
9. Be resourceful.
10. Set a good example as a Flight Attendant.
11. Be a role model Employee.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- *The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)* is also referred to as "the Contract." Read the Contract from cover to cover, understand it and ask for clarification if necessary.
- Know the *Flight Attendant Handbook* and *Work Rules and Expectations* that govern Flight Attendants and other policies or directions given by Management such as current Read Before Fly memos, Bulletins and Revisions.
- *Labor Legislation*: Have a basic understanding of the Labor Legislation that applies to our Members.
- *Present working conditions*: Know your work area and how things should be working, including violations

of clauses by Management or safety regulations.

- *Know the Supervisors in the base.* Try to understand their style of Management.
- *Get to know our Members* as individuals.
- *Local Union Activities and Bylaws*: attend Membership Meetings and Shop Steward Committee Meetings. Listen to what is being said. Know your Local's Bylaws and know you have a voice.

## EXPECTATIONS OF SHOP STEWARD:

Accepting the position of Shop Steward means you are choosing to represent our Members in a way that most never will. It means that your peers elected and entrusted you with their futures. By accepting the role as a Shop Steward, you have made a commitment to the success of our Local on behalf of the Flight Attendants. It requires integrity and an unbiased commitment to every Member. We are looked upon as professionals and were elected to treat ALL Members of TWU Local 556 with professionalism and respect. The expectations are higher than those of your Co-workers. Shop Stewards are always expected to always uphold a professional attitude and ethics whether on the aircraft, on an overnight, in the lounge or on social media sites. As Shop Stewards, we must frequently remind ourselves of the importance to lead by example. Because we are seen as part of "The Union," it is important to follow the rules and regulations set forth by Southwest Airlines Management. Remember, people are watching you, listening to what you say and reading what you write. You are the "face of the Union" and you are always expected to lead by example.



Mark Anthony Reyes is a Las Vegas-based Flight Attendant and serves as the Chairperson of the TWU Local 556 Shop Steward Committee.

# DO YOU NEED A UNION PIN?



REQUEST ONE HERE:  
[TWU556.ORG/UNIONPIN](https://TWU556.ORG/UNIONPIN)