

## NWA-AFA MEC Weekly Hotline Message February 27, 2009

**MEC HOTLINE:** (888) 3-NWA-AFA or [www.nwaafa.org](http://www.nwaafa.org)

**PURPLE RIBBON CAMPAIGN:** Pro-Delta, Pro-AFA [www.deltaafa.org](http://www.deltaafa.org)

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### **CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW SECRETARY OF LABOR**

Hilda Solis was confirmed as the 25<sup>th</sup> U.S. Secretary of Labor by the Senate this week with a bi-partisan vote of 80-17. For the first time in years, American workers will have a Labor Secretary who will work to protect and promote the interests of workers; someone who will represent the working people, not the wealthy or the corporations. Secretary Solis grew up in a middle-class working family where both of her parents were proud union members. From her [statements to the Senate Committee](#), then Secretary-designee Solis expressed her commitment to help hard working families realize the American Dream despite the fact that the current economy is in a severe recession and is shedding jobs at an alarming rate. Secretary Solis learned early about the opportunities provided by unions, and government programs - such as Federal Student Loan program – that gave her the opportunity to be the first in her family to graduate from college. The Department of Labor under the leadership of Secretary Solis will once again be an advocate for American working families and ensure that the door of opportunity is open to every working American regardless of race, sex, veteran status, or disability. As a fierce advocate of unionized labor, we look forward to Solis' continued support of the Employee Free Choice Act that will allow workers to form unions without harassment from employers, and will in turn allow the rebuilding of a strong American middle class.

### **AMFA FILES FOR DECERTIFICATION OF THEIR UNION**

It's a sad day for airline mechanics at the new Delta, who have [lost the opportunity to bargain](#), to grieve, to raise their unified voice for their rights and protections. Without a written agreement, mechanics will have no job or seniority protections. Any improvements in pay or benefits could be taken away unilaterally by Delta management at any time, as has often happened in the past to flight attendants and other non-union employees.

The loss of the mechanics' union leaves flight attendants more determined than ever to band together to protect our right to representation, which would allow us to negotiate a new and improved joint contract – just like our pilots have. Fortunately, the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA has the resources and the determination to help us win these improvements.

It's important to recall that Richard Anderson, now the CEO at Delta, engineered the outsourcing of thousands of Northwest Airlines mechanics jobs, and set in motion a plan to outsource 75 percent of the flight attendant jobs on international flights before he left. He tried to bust the mechanics' union at Northwest, but was only successful when he joined other former Northwest executives who are now at the helm at Delta.

Delta's skewering of AMFA is an object lesson for flight attendants. We vow to stick together, to fight for representation. Join us now at [www.deltaafa.org](http://www.deltaafa.org).

### **MEC GRIEVANCE – WHO DETERMINES THE DESIGN OF OUR UNION INSIGNIA?**

Management has announced that they will tell flight attendants to remove the optional purple ribbon portion of our newly designed union insignia. We have asserted that we believe the contract language is clear and that we are contractually entitled to wear our "union insignia" -- in whatever form we decide to fashion it. Of course, we have handled this minor contractual dispute over a small

purple ribbon through the normal grievance process, and not by calling the airport police, as management did last week in Detroit. Click [HERE](#) to view the police report. If told to remove your purple ribbon or pin, you should comply with a supervisor's direct order, and then notify your Local union officers in order to add your name to the [MEC grievance document](#) that was filed Wednesday.

### ***NORTHWEST FLIGHT ATTENDANTS IN CHARGE OF OUR OWN SENIORITY LIST***

This week your Merger Representatives, MSP Flight Attendant Barbara Schlosser and DTW Flight Attendant Raymond Cox, met in Minneapolis to work on the contractual seniority list challenges. Raymond and Barbara work with NWA Contract Administrator SuzAnne Balzer to make sure all challenges are investigated and resolved. Barbara was hired in 1969 by North Central and this will be her fourth merger representing her fellow flight attendants as a Merger Rep. Raymond was hired in 1985 at Northwest Orient and experienced the merger with Republic.

For more information about our seniority integration and timeline, please click [HERE](#). As in our pilots' case and historically the norm - we plan to first resolve our representation in our union election. After we choose union representation, we will survey all members regarding their preferred priorities for pay, work rules, and benefits. At that point we'll negotiate an industry-leading contract based upon member feedback and carry out a contract ratification vote for all new Delta flight attendants. Then we will merge our respective seniority lists, pursuant to the [AFA Merger Policy](#) (which now appears to be the Delta's SIC's recommendation also) by date-of-hire.

There is no need to rush this important process. Our pilots negotiated an agreement in 7 months, then integrated their seniority, and they still don't plan to fly together until at least 2010 when the new Delta hopes to attain a Single Operating Certificate from the FAA. Once we have representation, our contract negotiations can move just as quickly. We deserve similar improvements and the same legal rights that our pilots have at what will be the world's largest airline, and we can do it together.

In accordance with [Section 20](#) of our Agreement, the revised seniority list was posted on ATLAS. If you believe there is an error, omission or incorrect posting which affected your seniority, you have sixty (60) days to submit a written inquiry. The deadline for submitting a protest will be March 20, 2008. Please submit written inquiries to:

SuzAnne Balzer  
Director - Contract Administration  
Mailstop F 5800  
7200 34th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55450

### ***HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON US AIR FLIGHT 1549***

A subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing this week (click [HERE](#) for the Committee Hearing Statements) regarding the January 15 ditching into the Hudson River of U.S. Airways flight 1549. Present at the hearing were the cockpit and cabin crew of flight 1549, the air traffic controller that handled the U.S. Air flight, and various aviation experts including Candace Kolander, AFA-CWA Air Safety Health and Security (ASHS) Coordinator. An FAA Associate Administrator was also present at the hearing to share various FAA regulations such as training of airlines crews, testing standards for aircraft engine bird ingestion, and aircraft design standards to maximize crash survivability.

The most notable aspect of the hearing was regarding how cost-cutting measures in the airline industry have adversely affected the welfare and safety of the American public. Deregulation has reduced salaries and benefits and has made it more difficult to attract and retain qualified professionals. Captain Chesley Sullenberger of Flight 1549 told the subcommittee that he has taken a forty percent (40%) pay cut in recent years while his pension has dwindled down to “pennies on the dollar”. Co-Pilot Jeffrey Skiles stated that he has had to hold down two jobs, working seven days a week, over the past six years just to maintain a middle-class standard of living. Ms. Kolander reminded the subcommittee that cuts in funding for training have adversely affected flight attendants, who as safety professionals need proper training in order to handle emergency situations.

The main point made by crewmembers and Ms. Kolander is that with reduced funding for compensation and training, it will be more difficult to retain highly qualified crew members, and the welfare of the flying public will be adversely affected in the future.

Click [HERE](#) for the AFA-CWA press release. To view NBC Nightly News coverage of the Hearing and of Captain Sullenberger’s testimony go [HERE](#) or go to [C-SPAN](#) for the complete Congressional Testimony.

### ***FENCE AGREEMENT – WHAT IS IT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?***

Northwest flight attendants have been through some of the most bitter and divisive mergers in history. We have the power, along with our Delta colleagues, to make sure this won’t happen again. In [Section 1 – Recognition, Scope & Job Security](#), our contract provides the provisions of our collective bargaining agreement to stay in place while we work together to negotiate a new contract for the combined group. It also contains a requirement that both flight attendant groups be kept separate until a combined joint contract is negotiated and our seniority is integrated per the requirements of the contract and our union Constitution. We call this a “fence” or transition agreement and it provides security during bargaining, as well as leverage. Please refer to the [Republic and Northwest fence agreement](#) from 1986 and [U.S. Airways and America West Airlines fence agreement](#) from 2006 for specific examples.

### ***LETTER TO THE EDITOR – MEDICAL BENEFIT OVERVIEW***

Q: I just read the "new" health plans that Delta intends to offer us. As I look at them, they are clearly trying to steer us away from the PPO we currently have. They offer no details about our plan, but are full of glowing reviews about their plans. - SEA Flight Attendant Liz Morris

A: An updated medical comparison chart is now posted on the Insurance & Retirement Committee page of [www.nwaafa.org](http://www.nwaafa.org). This flyer highlights both NWA’s traditional indemnity plan - PPO and Delta Airlines’ Health Reimbursement Account and Health Savings Account offerings. It gives a quick and informative side-by-side comparison of the various NWA and DAL health plan features. View the flyer [HERE](#). Notice that the NW health plan terms are negotiated and are locked in and cannot be changed during the term of the contract. DAL’s health plan can be changed every year. The chart shows the high deductibles and out-of-pocket costs that DAL flight attendants have.

Another important element worth noting is the Subsidized Northwest Retiree Medical cost. An individual NWA retiree pays \$181.32 a month and pays \$391.42 if with a spouse. Our contractual medical plan provides a subsidized rate for our retirees. In contrast, the Delta retiree medical plan is non-subsidized. Under Delta’s Gold plan, retirees pay \$582.10 a month, per person. Under Delta’s Silver plan, it costs \$507.90 a month, per person.

### **ASA CREW MAKES IMPRINT IN BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

February is Black History Month, and Atlantic Southeast Airlines, an Atlanta-based Delta Connection carrier, made some Black aviation history of their own on February 12. A round trip flight between Atlanta and Nashville had an all African-American and all female cockpit and cabin crew. The crewmembers were: Captain Rachelle Jones, First Officer Stephanie Grant and flight attendants Robin Rogers and Diana Galloway. The success of these capable crewmembers demonstrates the tangible gains that have been made in recent decades to give opportunities to everyone in the American workforce regardless of race and gender.

### **UNIONS REPRESENTING FLIGHT ATTENDANTS OFFER CONDOLENCES**

The United Steelworkers Union representing Colgan Air flight attendants, its International Union, and AFA-CWA have each sent out messages this week offering condolences to the colleagues and loved ones of the flight attendants who died in the February 12 crash of Continental Connection/Colgan Flight 3407, as it was on approach to land in Buffalo, New York. The USW and its Local 9535, representing the flight attendants who serviced Flight 3407, are working with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) in the investigation. To view AFA-CWA's condolences in full click [HERE](#). Please go to [USW website](#) for more information regarding their tragic loss.

### **NEW MEC LOD COMMITTEE SEEKS VICE-CHAIR**

During the last NWA-AFA Master Executive Council meeting, our MEC voted unanimously to form a Language of Destination Committee in recognition of the growing program and the increasing need of members who participate in the LOD program. Detroit flight attendant Jeffrey Ferrer has been selected by the MEC as the Chair of the LOD Committee to serve our membership. Currently, the LOD committee is seeking interested, qualified applicants to serve as the Vice-Chairperson of this newly formed committee. The Vice-Chairperson will assist the LOD Committee Chair in carrying out the committee goals and extending the LOD resources and benefits to all flight attendants. For the complete LOD Committee Policy please click [HERE](#). If you are interested in applying for the Vice-Chairperson position, please submit a resume and letter of interest to Karen Chapdelaine, Association of Flight Attendants, Master Executive Council, 8011 34th Avenue South, Suite 220, Bloomington, MN 55425, or email to [kchapdelaine@nwaafa.org](mailto:kchapdelaine@nwaafa.org). The application deadline is March 20<sup>th</sup>. The appointment will take place at the MEC Meeting from March 28-30, preceding the AFA Board of Directors meeting.

### **NWA-AFA MASTER EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SEEKS SECRETARY-TREASURER**

The MEC is currently seeking candidates to serve as its Secretary-Treasurer. The qualified candidate will review and maintain the monthly budget expenditures provided by the AFA International Office and assist the President in the administration of MEC funds. Additional duties include, but are not limited to: maintaining MEC records, keeping meeting minutes, monitoring membership rosters and seniority lists, maintaining files of Base monthly scheduling information, and administrating MEC Committees.

If you are interested in being considered for MEC Secretary-Treasurer, please send a letter of interest with a resume to Karen Chapdelaine, Association of Flight Attendants, Master Executive Council, 8011 34th Avenue South, Suite 220, Bloomington, MN 55425, or email to [kchapdelaine@nwaafa.org](mailto:kchapdelaine@nwaafa.org). For a complete description of the duties of MEC Secretary-Treasurer, please refer to the [AFA-CWA Constitution and Bylaws Article VII, 2\(c\)](#) or go to the [Committees tab](#) on NWA-AFA website for the

open job announcement. In order to allow more notice to our members and a larger window for applicants, the new deadline is March 20<sup>th</sup>. The appointment will take place at the MEC Meeting from March 28-30, preceding the AFA Board of Directors meeting.

***WRITERS NEEDED***

Do you like to write? Is there something on your mind regarding your base, the merger, the change of flying, or anything in between that you would like to share with your flying partners? Are you on reserve and would like to share a reserve perspective? Please submit your article at your earliest opportunity for a March publication in our upcoming MEC quarterly newsletter *ALL CALL*. Please email your submittal to MEC Communications Chair Rhonda Taylor at [rtaylor@nwaafa.org](mailto:rtaylor@nwaafa.org).