

## NWA-AFA MEC Weekly Hotline Message March 06, 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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### **AN OSHA UPDATE FROM YOUR MEC ASHS COMMITTEE**

Recently, OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration) issued a ruling following an investigation by its Whistleblower Protection Program that Southern Air, Inc. (a Connecticut-based cargo airline) must pay more than \$400,000 in compensation to a crew member fired after raising safety concerns with management. The employee had complained twice to management about inadequate rest breaks and being required to work hours in excess of those allowed under FAA rules. In another Whistleblower ruling earlier this year, OSHA ordered American Airlines to reimburse two pilots for sick time, after finding that the airline retaliated against the employees for reporting that they were too sick to fly. Although there is no guarantee that these rulings will not be overturned on appeal and/or the fines lowered, it does show that OSHA takes our concerns seriously. According to Dinkar Mokadam, OSHA specialist for the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, "The question of being able to proactively refuse to work in unsafe conditions is theoretically protected, but this most recent case helps to convert this from theory to reality." As we know, the FAA has jurisdiction over the working conditions on board the aircraft, but crew members should always remember that there are other job-related areas over which OSHA may assert regulatory authority, such as employee parking lots or the buildings in which training is conducted.

Crew members wanting to report unsafe aviation situations or safety violations, or seeking information on how to file a whistleblower complaint, may contact the FAA Aviation Safety Hotline at 800-255-1111. Crew members wanting to report unsafe working conditions to OSHA can go to [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) for further information, or can contact their Safety Committee for assistance. -- Submitted by Gary Helton, MEC Vice Chair, Air Safety, Health & Security Committee

### **LETTER OF AGREEMENT 35 ARBITRATION UPDATE**

A grievance filed over Letter of Agreement 35 <http://www.nwaafa.org/contract/letter35/> -- Conditions and Covenants often known as the "me too" clause -- is scheduled for arbitration with Arbitrator Dana Eishen on March 31 - April 2, 2009. More information regarding this grievance can be found here:

<http://nwaafa.org/docs/grievance/LOA35GrievanceUpdate08JAN09.pdf>

### **36<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL AFA-CWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

As first posted in the February 6th MEC Hotline, your Master Executive Council has made available online all advance agenda items for this year's AFA-CWA Board of Directors Meeting. We have a password-protected area on our [MEC website](#) where these items can be viewed only by flight attendants. For a complete agenda for this year's BOD, please click here: <http://nwaafa.org/docs/BOD/BOD%20DOC019.PDF>. Advance agenda items include, among others: 1) a proposal to change our dues rate from \$43 to 1X hourly pay rate; 2) a proposal to eliminate any dues requirement for those on medical leave; 3) proposals that would change

how MEC and International Officers are elected; and 4) a proposal that would increase the percentage of dues that goes to all locals. You must register for access to this area of our site. All meetings of the BOD are open to all active members of the Union and invited guests.

### ***NEXT GENERATION COMMITTEE HOSTS FORUM***

The Next Generation Committee is hosting a one-hour-long Guest Forum on March 31, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin immediately following the 2009 AFA-CWA Board of Directors Meeting. The Next Generation Committee promotes education and total member involvement and strives in particular to enlighten young flight attendant about the value of a union. The invitation to this event can be found [HERE](#). Please clear your schedule and make plans to attend the 2009 Guest Forum.

### ***LETTER TO THE EDITOR***

**Q:** I talk to a lot of flight attendants. The most common question I hear from them is “\$43 is a lot to pay for our monthly due and where does all that money go?” -- MSP Flight Attendant K. Martin

**A:** Many of our members feel that \$43 a month is a lot of money, especially for a flight attendant making concessionary wages. However, seeing how your dues are divided among various support groups, you can actually see how far your dollar goes. Thirty-five percent (35%) of our dues come back to our local councils for representation in disciplinary and contractual matters. Twenty-two percent (22%) of our dues go to our International office and its departments that work on our behalf daily. One such department is Government Affairs, which lobbies for us on issues that uniquely affect flight attendants. Its advocacy efforts were instrumental in Congress’s recent passing of the Airline Crew FMLA Technical Corrections Act. Nine percent (9%) of our money go to local committees that coordinate with the international committees to address member concerns and help deliver positive changes. Twenty-eight percent (28%) pay for negotiations and legal services that bring us our legally binding contract and due process for resolution of grievances over injustice at our workplace. The remaining 6% is shared by AFA International Representative Support and the CWA Defense Fund, providing monetary relief available to us during times of need.

In the larger picture, the benefits provided by our dues are much like other necessities in life: *you often don’t appreciate a good thing until it’s gone*. Our union dues allow us a living wage, reasonable work rules, and a legal voice to work with our employer and participate in policy decisions that have a deep effect on our lives. Look [HERE](#) to view a pie chart breakdown of our dues.

### ***NETWORK PLANNING AND REDUCTION IN FORCE***

With the global recession, recent SEC filings, and the network planning memo from the SVPs of Inflight Services, the question of involuntary furlough has naturally crossed some of our minds. As stated in the memo, the Company looks at involuntary furlough as a last resort, but it is an integral tool available to the Network Planning Group. In [Section 14](#), Reduction in Force and Recall, our contract provides 24 pages of legally binding rights we can exercise should this unfortunate hardship occur. Section 14.B focuses on the steps the Company must

follow when it becomes necessary to furlough due to a system excess -- providing us the option to fill a vacancy at another base, exercise our seniority to “bump” a more junior flight attendant from his/her base, or accept involuntary furlough at our home base. Similar provisions are also outlined in 14.F for Base Closures. Section 14.D, Recall & Return to Base, describes the seniority-based process that the Company must follow for recalls.

A stark contrast between our contractual rights and Delta policy exists in the furlough process. The Delta Furlough and Recall process is system-operational and base necessity driven. For example at Delta, a base could be dramatically reduced or closed, resulting in layoffs, with no right to exercise their seniority to bump into another base. Due to language skills or other management-controlled criteria, some flight attendants may be bypassed in the furlough process or even recalled out of seniority order. Regardless of which system a flight attendant works under, it is always wise to examine our contract and the policies on DeltaNet to learn as much as possible. AFA will continue to investigate current Delta policies, but unfortunately there isn't much information available in print about their furlough and recall process. The Company recently stated that a comparison document is being produced.

As in the past, your union representatives will advocate strongly for voluntary programs like Company Convenience Leaves, SLIP leaves, and other contractual remedies that are available should there be a need for a reduction in our workforce.

### ***SLC SATELLITE BASE IS NOW OPEN FOR BIDDING***

On the heels of the ATL satellite base bidding deadline, the Company has now opened the bidding process for the SLC satellite base. Information on satellite base bidding can be found in ATLAS under Satellite Base and Satellite Base Communications. There are still ongoing negotiations between our union and the Company on provisions afforded in our contract [Side Letter 20](#) (Satellite Bases). At the request of our union, the Company will twice make public the list of employees who have placed bids for the satellite base. Flight attendants will be able to view Seniority System Numbers, LOD qualifications, PQ qualifications, and Home bases. This measure was secured by the union in an effort to give flight attendants with as much information as possible when submitting the bid. Please note that the union will be providing satellite base negotiation details as soon as they are finalized.

### ***EARLY OUT PROGRAM PARTICIPANT LIST***

Several weeks ago, AFA requested the list of flight attendants taking Early Out retirement be posted on the secure Northwest Company website, so that proper farewells could be given to them. Many of these flight attendants wanted the list published so they could say their good-byes. Originally the request appeared to be granted, but has now been reversed by Delta management and this information will not be posted by the Company. If you would like to view the Early Out list, please go to the secure page on the [NWA-AFA website](#). To all of our brothers and sisters whom we have known like family, we wish you all the best in your future endeavors. -- Submitted by MEC President Kevin Griffin

### ***A WEEK IN REVIEW -- NEWS THAT AFFECTS US***

Are you up-to-date on the latest airline news? The following are some of this week's more notable media communications regarding Northwest/Delta Airlines. [The Street.com](#) featured

the article "How Northwest Took Over Delta," that outlined how the more aggressive executives and business culture that came from Northwest appear to have brought a new "brass knuckled corporate culture" to the new Delta. This is true from their aggressive dealings with competitors and government agencies to its questionable termination of contracts with other companies. Like the old Northwest, the new Delta plays hardball with any entity that affects bottom-line profit numbers. [The Atlanta Business Chronicle](#) examined Delta's SEC filing on March 2. As expected, due to the weak economy and soft demand for air travel, Delta is expecting significant financial losses for Q1, 2009. Besides the usual lull in travel after the holiday season, Delta is claiming large losses due to their fuel-hedge contract, a one-time merger payout to all employees, and restructuring costs from early retirement buyouts. Aviation Week reports that based on Delta's SEC filings, [Delta appears to be walking away](#) from being the first in North America to launch the Boeing 787. Delta inherited a firm order of 18 Boeing 787s from its merger with Northwest. Industry insiders have been expecting Delta to either revise or cancel the Boeing order.

### **UNIFORM COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The AFA Uniform Committee would like to provide you with an update from our meeting with the Company on March 2. Many concerns were forwarded to us by your union representatives and individual members and we addressed those concerns during our meeting. As of today, 98% of the uniform ensembles have been shipped. Those who have not received their uniform will be contacted by base management.

If you need to return an item, please call Lion at 1-800-921-1317 to request an exchange authorization and send the item back in order to receive your new item. New items will not be sent until the original item has been received by Lion. At this time, exchanges are only authorized for the same garment in a different size. Optional items ordered are not guaranteed to be delivered prior to the roll-out date.

[Section 19 – Uniforms](#) of our contract provides that the "Company shall bear the cost of all alterations required to properly fit a Flight Attendant in a new uniform. Such alterations must be requested by the flight attendant within one month of the uniform's first use by the Flight Attendant..." The Company is aware of problems finding approved alteration locations and suggests that Flight Attendants check the Lion Uniform website for updated approved alteration locations. If no approved alteration location is within a reasonable distance from your home, please contact your local Inflight base management for assistance.

The Company will provide additional specific information with regard to uniforms and transition in the coming weeks.

Your AFA Uniform Committee is here to advocate for you. If you have comments or concerns, please forward them to the AFA Uniform Committee at [tslope@nwaafa.org](mailto:tslope@nwaafa.org). -- Submitted by MEC Uniform Committee Chair Timothy Slope

### **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 Chair of this newly-formed committee. The Vice Chair will assist the LOD Committee Chair in carrying out committee goals and extending 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 Chair 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. The appointment will take place at the MEC Meeting from March 28-30, preceding the AFA Board of Directors meeting.