

NWA-AFA MEC Weekly Hotline Message July 17, 2009

MEC HOTLINE: (888) 3-NWA-AFA or www.nwaafa.org

PURPLE RIBBON CAMPAIGN: Pro-Delta, Pro-AFA www.deltaafa.org

LABOR QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, government relief for the destitute and, above all, new wage levels that meant not mere survival but a tolerable life. The captains of industry did not lead this transformation; they resisted it until they were overcome. When in the thirties the wave of union organization crested over the nation, it carried to secure shores not only itself but the whole society." - Martin Luther King Jr.

PBS RE-RUN DUE TO LEGAL REST ERRORS

After reports from flight attendants, it was discovered that rest in the Master Pattern Files for BOS, DTW, HNL, MEM, MSP, NYC was not assigned pre contractual minimums. Unfortunately, PBS Central will need to re-run the August awards. Bases not affected by this error are: S-ATL, S-CHI, LAX, SEA, SFO, S-SLC. Please refer to the Whiteboard on ATLAS for your base award information and your new resolution deadline.

SLIP LEAVE AWARDS

SLIP Leave Awards are scheduled to be released at 1800 today. We are pleased to announce that approximately 500 of our members have bid for them. It is unknown whether this will address the complete flight attendant overage from September and beyond, but it does help our staffing overage immensely. With CCLs, patterns drops, shifting flying, and hopefully soon a new agreement on a [Split Line Program](#), we may just be able to stop any possible involuntary furloughs

SOLIDARITY MATTERS – THANK YOU AFT!

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), representing 1.4 million American workers, sent out a [press release](#) yesterday announcing their support for our

organizing efforts. *“The surest economic stimulus plan for American workers is membership in a union. Strong unions are the best watchdog of efforts by management and investors, who often push through mergers to reap profits at the expense of jobs, workers and the public.... The Northwest-Delta merged entity will be the world's largest airline. This distinction must not come at the expense of the workers it depends on for its success. It should be a model of labor relations, and its workers must have a voice.”* – Randi Weingarten, ATF President.

CALL TO ACTION!

We need you to help us keep passengers from using their cell phones during flight. Currently the Senate is debating a cell phone ban as part of the FAA Re-authorization bill. WE are losing the battle at present due to the massive efforts of lobbyists working for the cell phone companies. We need you to call your Senators and urge them to support an airline in-flight cell phone ban as part of the FAA Re-Authorization Bill. To contact your Senator go to www.senate.gov and find your Senator's phone number and just call their office using the following script. You may also call the Congressional Switchboard in Washington DC at 202-224-3121 and ask for your Senator's phone number. When you call the phone will be answered by a member of the Senator's staff. Introduce yourself and follow the script. It will only take a minute of your time and you will be helping tremendously!

Script: *“Hello, I’m a constituent and I live in (your city and state of residence). I’m calling to urge the Senator to support an airline in-flight cell phone ban as part of the FAA Re-authorization. The aircraft cabin is no place for cell phone conversations, and use of cell phones in-flight poses a risk to safety and security. The US House of Representatives has taken the first step by including a cell phone ban in the FAA Reauthorization Bill. As a constituent I urge the Senator to work to ensure that the FAA Re-authorization includes a ban on in-flight cell phone usage.”*

Every call made to the Senate will help us ensure that cell phones are banned from our aircraft - thank you! -- Submitted by MEC Government Affairs Chair Albert Garcia

DELTA CHANGES MEDICAL PLAN ADMINISTRATOR

AFA has learned that Delta has chosen to leave Blue Cross/Blue Shield in 2010 and has selected United Health Care as our 2010 plan administrator. While we have experienced plan administrator changes in the past, we are fortunate that [Section 29 – Insurance](#) of our contract requires a minimum of a typical indemnity medical plan, outlines who and what is covered, and limits cost increases for both active employees and our retirees. Over the past couple of years Delta flight attendants lost their typical indemnity medical plan, and instead were given

a choice of high deductible plans – an HRA or HSA. While the up-front payroll deductions for premiums for an HRA & HSA can be lower, the deductible and out-of-pocket costs of these types of plans can be onerous. For a comparison of current DL & NW medical plans, please click [HERE](#). Following a vote for union representation, DL & NW flight attendants will negotiate our benefit choices, based upon our own priorities.

UNIFORM VEST BLUES – USE EXTREME CARE & CAUTION?

Q- *“After sending my vest back as management suggested, and waiting 2 months to get anything from Lion, I received this [form letter](#) that said I was not eligible for a replacement, and my original vest returned & rolled up in a ball. Please note I have only worn the vest to commute to DTW. I am really curious what they mean when they say the vest is made of “delicate fabric requiring extreme care and caution when wearing”. If I had purchased this item at a department store for personal use any reputable company would have refunded my money or I would have reported them to the Better Business Bureau. What is the process for flight attendants like me to get a refund of our \$47.00”? – DTW Flight Attendant*

A- You are not the first to share your frustration with vest issues. Delta continues to maintain the garment is dependable. We suggest you involve your base manager again, to ask for reimbursement or replacement. They have reportedly been given the ability to deal with these issues on a one-on-one basis, while your AFA Uniform Committee and Grievance Committee also continues to push for an resolution for all Flight Attendants. Please continue to document these uniform issues/grievances with Local AFA reps for our grievance file.

DELTA-NORTHWEST NEGOTIATIONS INFORMATION

Click [HERE](#) for a synopsis of what happens to the Northwest contract covering the Northwest Flight Attendants, as well as the subsequent negotiations at Delta for a single agreement covering both groups, dependent on the outcome of the representation election for the Northwest and Delta flight attendants. This election represents the only way to negotiate a world-class contract covering the combined group. For the Northwest Flight Attendants, it is an opportunity to negotiate years earlier than the amendable date of the current contract. For the Delta Flight Attendants, it is an opportunity to negotiate a first collective bargaining agreement.

UNITED WE BARGAIN, DIVIDED WE BEG

Your Member Engagement Committee is asking your assistance to help our drive for the election. At this point in our campaign we are in need of more of our members to get involved. This is our union after all, and if we would like to keep collective bargaining rights and a contract, we all need to participate. We can do

this together. If you are in support of keeping collective bargaining rights, we need to know. If you have not responded yet to calls from your fellow flight attendant campaign volunteers, we're asking you to call our "voice line" to let us know if you support a contract. Simply call the number, state your name, the state you live in, and if you support or don't support union representation going forward. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please let us know and we'll get back to you as soon as possible. The number to call is 952-241-4108.

Many of you are asking "*when is the vote*"? We cannot risk losing our contract by rushing this vote. There is no need to rush, just because management wants it done. They have nothing to lose, but we however, have a lot to lose. We can't fly together until our training is complete in 2010, so I ask, what is *their* rush? We'll get one shot to save our contract. It's *our* contract, not theirs. Let's make sure we talk to Delta and Northwest flight attendants every chance we get, to share with them the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement. Please be respectful of each flight attendant's position and don't be "pushy". If you want to know what topics to talk about, please call Jarrod (952-241-4138) or me, or visit www.deltaafa.org for information to help you have these conversations. Remember - we ALL have to be involved and we need to hear from all of you. -- Submitted by MEC Member Engagement Chair Angela Brewer 517-990-5655

THE PEGASUS PROJECT – MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

The Pegasus Project's Mission is to provide short-term emergency grants for the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) members in need of financial assistance due to a critical or life-threatening illness or injury. The Pegasus Project assists with life threatening illness or disabling injuries like lupus, cancer, degenerative disk disease, AIDS/HIV, hepatitis and chemical dependency just to name a few. These efforts are accomplished with compassion, confidentiality and the preservation of dignity and respect for the individuals concerned. For a grant application, please click [HERE](#). For the 2008 Annual Report, please click [HERE](#).

ATL LOCAL 90 ELECTIONS UNDERWAY

To visit the Local 90 election page, click [HERE](#). In accordance with the AFA-CWA Constitution & Bylaws the members of Council 90 are electing an LEC President, Vice President, & Secretary. Click [HERE](#) for a copy of the voting instructions. Write-in candidates may also be running for office, please make yourself and your Member ID known if you would like to be included in election updates as a write-in.

ATL Local 90 Election Timeline:

Polls open: July 6, 2009 12pm EDT

Poll close: July 27, 2009 12pm EDT

Candidates so far are as follows:

PRESIDENT: David Carter (43205667) or Jacqueline Ross (43120342)

VICE PRESIDENT: Anne Odenwald (43174163) write-in or Jacqueline Richards (43205979)

SECRETARY: Joseph Mendoza (43238392) write-in or Sandra Strait (43101447) write-in

PURSER COMMITTEE CHAIR OPENING

The Master Executive Council would like to thank SEA FA Kim Cook for her outstanding service to our members in the Purser Committee. Following Kim's departure, we have an opening for the position of Purser Committee Chair and we invite all interested member applicants to email MEC Office Manager Karen Chapdeleine at kchapdelaine@nwaafa.org, to submit a letter of interest and resume. The application deadline is August 1, 2009 at 5:00 CT. The Purser Committee, in coordination with other AFA Committees and the elected Master Executive Council, addresses concerns pertaining to Flight Attendants on Purser status. We are committed to ensuring the company's full compliance with [Section 9 - Purser](#) of our collective bargaining agreement.

PRE-MERGER DELTA FLIGHT ATTENDANT LAWSUIT AGAINST DELTA AIR LINES OVER PENSION PLAN AMENDMENT

On June 29, 2009, a single Delta flight attendant filed a class action lawsuit in US District Court (Northern District of Georgia) claiming violations of fiduciary duties under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 ([ERISA](#)). The lawsuit claims that the 8th amendment to the Delta Pension Plan, which was implemented by DAL on March 31, 2007, will reduce pension benefits by millions of dollars because of a change in the calculation of the Plan's Social Security offset that affects some plan participants. You can read the DAL flight attendant's claim against DAL [HERE](#).

This case highlights several important points:

The NWA Pension Plan does not have a Social Security Offset. Any action by DAL management to unilaterally change the Delta Pension Plan does not affect benefits under the NWA Pension Plan. As long as we have a contract, no change can be made to our pension plan without our consent.

NWA flight attendants have a union to fight for us. We do not have to rely on one tenacious flight attendant to hire a lawyer to protect every flight attendant's rights. Our dues provide us with a legal department and the

means to hire outside experts when needed to assure that our rights are enforced and our benefits assured.

Without a union, a legal voice at the bargaining table, we will be subject to “executive decisions” and will have no legal department to fight for us. Our right to negotiate better pension benefits will vanish and any chance to eliminate the Social Security offset in the Delta pension plan in the future will be lost.

While [ERISA](#) secures benefits already accrued under a company’s retirement plan, it does nothing to help improve retiree benefits as the costs of retirement rise. That’s one huge advantage of maintaining a voice during future contract negotiations – having the right to negotiate benefits such as increased employer contributions to our Retirement Savings Plan ([Section 30 – Retirement Plan Agreement](#)) and continuation of and even improvements to retiree healthcare ([Section 29 – Insurance](#)).

These issues are critical to DAL and NWA flight attendants, many of whom retire before Medicare eligibility. Only a contract secures these benefits. *IF YOU ARE NOT SITTING AT THE BARGAINING TABLE, YOU ARE ON THE MENU.* - Submitted by Cheryl Magyar, Retired NWA DTW FA

2009 EARLY OUT PARTICIPANTS – COBRA SUBSIDY UPDATE

Pre-merger Delta and Northwest flight attendants participating in the 2009 Early Out/55 Point Programs may be eligible to receive a 65% tax-free government subsidy to their premiums under COBRA. The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) has ruled that they would consider employees who elected to participate in our voluntary programs eligible for the [ARRA COBRA](#) subsidy, as long as they also meet the other eligibility requirements. The subsidy can be provided retroactively for those who have already left the company under the 2009 voluntary program.

According to the Northwest Benefits Department, they are working on letters to employees who have already left under the voluntary programs, who did not apply for the ARRA subsidy. They are currently processing and mailing letters to anyone who applied for the ARRA subsidy, but was previously denied.

