

## **NWA-AFA MEC Weekly Hotline Message October 30, 2009**

### ***NW FLIGHT #188 OVERFLY - OCTOBER 21st***

On October 21st, Northwest Flight #188 from SAN to MSP was involved in the highly-publicized and unfortunate overfly incident that resulted in subsequent FAA and NTSB investigations which are currently ongoing. NWA AFA's Master Executive Council would like to commend the professionalism of our Flight Attendants involved in this incident and their cooperation in the investigation. – Submitted by MEC Air Safety, Health, and Security Committee

### ***DEAR COLLEAGUES – A MESSAGE ABOUT OUR SCOPE PROTECTION***

I feel compelled to respond publicly to Delta management's FAQ, which was put out yesterday regarding the 2010 Summer International Schedule.

It's regrettable that Delta would release such a document, given that we had a meeting with top Delta Labor Relations personnel late last week and they agreed to a subsequent meeting to discuss Scope and Successorship - the very provisions of the Northwest Flight Attendant Agreement that the company proposes to breach in their FAQ.

The FAQ clearly runs contrary to [Section 1](#) of the Northwest Flight Attendant Agreement and sets forth significant and unacceptable violations to the Scope and Successorship provisions of the Agreement. [Scope](#) protects our flying and prevents the company from assigning our work away.

The Company's cavalier attitude concerning legally binding contract provisions reinforces our need to stand strong. Scope protects jobs and AFA will take the appropriate action to enforce our contract. – MEC President Janette Rook

### ***LET'S WORK TOGETHER FOR BENEFITS TAX EQUITY FOR ALL***

While we enroll in our benefits this year, we must keep in mind the unfortunate reality that all of our colleagues do not have the same rights under the law. On top of increasing health care costs, flight attendants must pay taxes on their insurance benefits and that is not right or fair.

According to a December 2007 report by the Center for American Progress & the Williams Institute, employees with partner health benefits now pay on average \$1,069 per year more in taxes than would a married employee with the same coverage. Additionally, employees cannot use pre-tax dollars to pay for a non-dependent domestic partner's coverage, precluding them from the full benefits of a Flexible Spending Account, Health Reimbursement Account or Health Savings Account.

In a [letter](#) to Delta CEO Richard Anderson, MEC President Janette Rook and SEA FA Bryan Bennett outline how Delta can help right this wrong by leading our industry and joining a lot of other forward-thinking, equality-minded large business [members](#) of the Business Coalition For Benefits Tax Equity from across our country. Just as we have in the past, AFA and Management can move mountains when we work together. We sincerely hope to hear from Mr. Anderson soon about this timely and very important initiative.

### ***A MESSAGE FROM YOUR AFA EAP***

In addition to enjoying the Thanksgiving holiday next month, many of us will also be remembering November 26th as the anniversary of the Mumbai terrorist attacks, especially the bombing of the Oberoi Hotel. As the day approaches, many of us will find ourselves wanting to recognize it in some way. Anniversaries offer an opportunity to acknowledge our losses, to connect with others who share in them, and to pay tribute to those who are gone. They can also serve as a healthy milestone in the process from victim to survivor.

For many crew members, particularly those who were closely or directly involved in the attacks, the anniversary may trigger unsettling feelings and memories. It can prompt a re-experiencing of the acute stress we felt in the days following November 26<sup>th</sup>, or even the stress following a *prior* incident we went through. It is important to be aware of these possibilities, and to take special care of ourselves, our loved ones and our flying partners.

If you find yourself, or someone you know, feeling anxious as the anniversary approaches, please consider some of these suggestions:

- \* Acknowledge that we all heal at different rates, in different ways and with different outcomes.
- \* Give yourself permission and time to grieve.
- \* Though uncomfortable, anticipate and plan for having a stress reaction as the anniversary approaches. Trust that if you fall apart, it is temporary; you'll be able to pull yourself together later.
- \* Monitor your exposure to news coverage of the anniversary, which may add to your stress load. Limiting what you read and watch may be advisable.
- \* Try not to isolate yourself. Pre-plan now to be with people if you know you have this tendency.
- \* Ask for help, support and opportunities to talk. Rely on trusted family, friends and counselors, and don't forget your AFA EAP representatives! We are here to listen. Telephone numbers for your Local Executive Council EAP Committee

members are listed at [www.afanet.org](http://www.afanet.org) under the EAP section, as well as on your LEC and MEC websites. Or call toll free **AFA EAP: 1-800-424-2406**

- Submitted by MEC EAP Chair Rosemary Miller

### **CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR A CHANGE IN NMB VOTING RULES**

This week George Miller (D-CA), Chairman of the House Committee on Health and Labor along with James Oberstar (D-MN), Chairman of the House Committee on Aviation and Infrastructure sent a letter to the three member National Mediation Board (NMB), in support of a change in the current election procedures. "Elections across our country are based on recognizing the choice of a majority of voters who participate in the election. Non-votes are not counted as favoring one outcome or another". In reference to the Railway Labor Act and the rules, the letter continues by expressing that ... "The Board is granted broad discretion in setting its Representational Manual, which governs election policies and procedures. the Board is free to amend the Manual, as it has done previously." Both Chairman Miller and Chairman Oberstar see "... no convincing reason to require an absolute majority of all eligible voters in a unit to cast a "yes" vote for representation; and see no reason to continue to subject aviation and rail workers to this undemocratic process".

The sentiments expressed in this letter coincides with what we have been expressing all along and we are very pleased that two of the most influential members of Congress have expressed their support for this rules change. To read the full letter please go to [www.nwaafa.org/committees/govaffairs](http://www.nwaafa.org/committees/govaffairs)

-Submitted by MEC Government Affairs Chair Albert Garcia

### **M2 ROLL OUT PROBLEMS REVIEWED**

Hearing your angst over the messy roll out of the M2 device at NWA, AFA representatives brought your concerns to NW management. To management's credit, they have responded swiftly to address some of the issues with the M2 device, which are unique to NWA due to catering and service differences with the Delta operation. Continued flight attendant feedback is very important – keep up the great work!

### **2010 BENEFITS CONFUSION AND MISINFORMATION**

It's important for to recognize that AFA is not in the insurance business. Whether they intended to or it was due to carelessness, Delta management has launched a 2010 Benefits theme of "*Confusion and Misinformation*". Despite that reality, we must all compare our coverage options for 2010 and make a decision. That decision will vary depending upon our age, location and health. By now you probably know that PPO Option B is our contractual medical plan option, and that

PPO Option B is the only medical plan which must abide by all the legally binding provisions in [Section 29](#) of our contract.

AFA representatives around the system are busy gathering fellow flight attendants' concerns regarding the new insurance options and enrollment process, to present them to Delta management. The latest compilation of our issues and questions that was sent to the company can be found [HERE](#). We'll push hard for answers and resolutions to these concerns, as well as continue to examine reports about possible violations of [Section 29 - Insurance](#) of our collective bargaining agreement. Visit the new [MEC Medical Enrollment](#) page at [www.nwaafa.org](http://www.nwaafa.org) for more information.

### ***BENEFITS PROTECTED FOR UNION MEMBERS, OTHERS LEFT IN THE COLD***

You may recall the recent decision made by American Airlines announcing that retirees who were **not** part of a union would be left high and dry as the airline reneged on its promises of certain retirement benefits. Those retirees, however, that **did belong to a union** would still realize their retirement benefits because they were protected by legal binding agreements which are all part of collective bargaining process. American Airlines is not the only company backing out on promises made to retirees, The New York Times reports Delphi has been threatening to do the very same thing to non-union employees. To read the article in its entirety visit, click [HERE](#).

A legal binding contract is valuable in our everyday working lives, but is also beneficial even when we are no longer actively working. Even if retirement is a long way down the road for some, it still behooves us to notice the actions of large corporations and their impact on individual employees. Many workers have often given many years of their lives to a company under the assumption that they would enjoy or more likely depend upon their pensions after they retired. Some are sadly discovering this may not be the case.

The only way to make certain another party will uphold any sort of promise, whether it is retirement, insurance, sick time, work rules, base closures, seniority or wages, is to have a legally binding agreement - which we proudly call our contract. - Submitted by MEC Communications Chair Rene Foss

