

## LG Opening Remarks – APFA Fall Board of Directors Meeting – October 11, 2011

### APFA Board of Directors Meeting – Fall 2011

#### Laura Glading Opening Remarks

Good morning.

Welcome everyone to the Fall 2011 APFA Board of Directors Meeting. It seems just a short time ago that I was addressing a full assembly of our Union's governing body. But it was over seven months ago that we all gathered for the Annual Convention. I know that since then, we have spent a very busy summer representing the APFA membership. The STL representatives have been busy with rebuilding after a devastating tornado.

Before we get into the tasks at hand this time around, I think we should all recognize that the number of seats at our table has been reduced by two. With the closing of the International bases at DCA-I and SFO-I, the number of Board Members now stands at 16. On behalf of the entire Board, I would like to thank the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the two closed bases, Bob and Kim Ross and Lena Gayle and Juanita Seibert, as well as their Base Councils and other local Representatives for the work they performed on behalf of their members. They are strong unionists and though we may not have their voices here at this table, I know they will persevere in their strong support for their fellow Flight Attendants.

Perseverance is a hallmark of APFA. From the very beginnings of our Union – and through some very trying times – APFA's membership and leadership have shown a level of dedication, determination and perseverance that sustains us all, to this day. I addressed this theme in my State of the Union message to our members and it forms the basic message of the Skyword Express that Jeff Pharr recently compiled and mailed.

The negotiation over a new contract has rightfully been the main focus of our members, and our Union, for some time now. For three years, management has used the system - abused the system even – to forestall the improvements we need and deserve. Despite this, our primary goal remains: that of bettering the lives of our membership and protecting and improving this profession.

Management's cavalier approach to employee relations has only encouraged us to forge new relationships and to strengthen old: with the APA and TWU at American, with our counterparts at other carriers through the Coalition of Flight Attendant Unions and the International Transport Workers' Federation, with committees and industry groups in area of Safety and Security, Health, Hotels, Communications and perhaps especially, Legislative Affairs. I cannot think of any time in our history that we have gone so far "outside the box" so to speak, in seeking solutions to our challenges.

As stated in our Constitution, APFA is called on *"to establish and to exercise the right of collective bargaining for the purpose of making and maintaining employment agreements covering rates of pay, rules and working conditions for the [membership]."*

LG Opening Remarks – APFA Fall Board of Directors Meeting – October 11, 2011

American's coldshouldered response to the spirit of the Railway Labor Act, and the government reaction which has been ... well ... less than effective, have driven us to seek new paths and ways to establish and exercise our right of collective bargaining.

The Press is increasingly full of stories of what Wall Street analysts and industry pundits think American Airlines is doing wrong. Management continually portrays us and our fellow front-line workers as the root of all the problems. This is a clearly orchestrated attempt to deflect the blame from management. AMR corporate communications is skilled at framing the debate in their terms. They are masters at spin and misdirection, and just the kind of well-placed innuendo that can shock and divert – and can suck the oxygen right out of the room.

Our discussions during this Board Meeting will surely touch on some of the rumors and predictions over American's future path. All of us – in the Bases and at Headquarters – hear daily the concerns of the membership. We must be confident that we will be prepared to face whatever the future brings our way and we must encourage that confidence in our members. They will look to us. They should look to us; and I know APFA's leadership and membership alike have the collective strength, the skills and the perseverance to face and shape our future