

## President's Note

Every year, around this time, I look toward to the following year, hopeful that the worst is well behind us. As 2012 draws to a close, I think we will all look back and agree that this was the most challenging year of our careers. After a decade of cuts and abuse, 2012 turned out to be the company's pièce de résistance.

The fact that we have sustained countless beatings yet continue to function successfully is an amazing accomplishment. As individuals, we show up to work day after day and, regardless of the latest crisis, we maintain the highest standards of professionalism. We wear our mismatched uniforms with pride as we maintain order on the aircraft and serve our passengers with aplomb. As an organization, we continue to stand up with one strong voice, maintaining what is arguably the strongest labor union in our industry.

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Our workforce is an extraordinary society. We band together to achieve the most basic element of a stable society and one that has been missing for as long as most of us can remember: **fairness**. What makes us a society is our collective drive to achieve

fair and equitable treatment from the public, under the law, and most of all, from our company.

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A stable society is a group of people that are willing to communicate, coordinate, sacrifice and contribute for the betterment of all. The supposition is that when each member of a society practices each of these elements, everyone is treated fairly. Our society constantly moves to advance that goal and I think this makes us extraordinary. It demonstrates our strength and resiliency. But we cannot give up.

American Airlines' bankruptcy exposed the very worst of this industry, particularly the treatment of airline employees. Unfortunately, the bankruptcy process only begets more inequity. It prompts us to choose between bad and worse and it has pressed us to take unprecedented action.

Our profession has come a very long way since the early days of flying and that is because of the work our society has done to advance itself. Unfortunately, the bankruptcy has forced us to divert some of that energy to protection and self-preservation. Over the past decade, our brothers and sisters throughout the

industry grappled with the challenges of bankruptcy and the opportunities of consolidation. Just as we stood by them then, they stand by us today.

Fortunately, we were well prepared for this challenge because of the global society of flight attendants. Our common cause is achieving fair treatment. In pursuit of that cause, we subscribe to a democracy that allows for debate, disagreement, balloting, elections, and reform. Most importantly, our society is capable of unification.

When our pensions and benefits were under attack, we united to protect them and our voice was heard. As a society, we understand the importance of caring for our old and sick. Someday we will all be old, and once in a while everyone falls ill. When we were faced with thousands of furloughs, we came together and said, "No," and again we were heard. A threat to one flight attendant's livelihood is a threat to us all. When it became clear that the best prospect for our careers was a merger, we came together to help make it a reality. Now, as management struggles to maintain control, flight attendants are showing them the door. We are able to do these things because we have built into our society a way to share information, think, reason, communicate, and grow.

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The path is not always clear. There have been disagreements in the past and there will be many more in the future. Some have tried to exploit these challenges to tear down our society. Managers have tried to leverage differences to drive a wedge between us, to break our unions and our spirits. Our unity prevails because our goal is never muddled: achieving fair treatment.

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As I look ahead to 2013 and the challenges and opportunities it will bring, I realize that what I initially thought were our darkest days may have turned out to be our finest hour. While we may not yet have achieved the fairness we have been working towards for decades, our society still stands strong and our fight is not over.

I look forward to another year of service as APFA President and to taking another step towards fairness together. **A**

With Respect,

