

the official publication of the association of professional flight attendants

**SKY**word

fall 2005

**A DIFFERENT PATH...  
CAN IT WORK?**



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**Tommie Hutto-Blake** President

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### APFA Headquarters

1004 West Eules Boulevard  
Eules, Texas 76040  
Toll-Free (800) 395-APFA  
or  
Local Metro (817) 540-0108  
Fax (817) 540-2077  
Office Hours  
0900 - 1700 Central Time

### Chicago Domestic Office

8700 West Byrn Mawr  
Suite 800-S  
Chicago, Illinois 60631  
(773) 714-7925  
Fax (773) 714-7926

### Los Angeles Office

8639 Lincoln Blvd.,  
Suite 200  
Los Angeles, California 90045  
(310) 649-2818

### Dallas/Ft. Worth Domestic Office

749 Port America Place  
Suite 500  
Grapevine, Texas 76051  
(817) 410-7227  
Fax (817) 251-1500

**Internet Address:** [www.apfa.org](http://www.apfa.org)

**E-Mail Address:** [apfa@apfa.org](mailto:apfa@apfa.org)

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Eules, Texas 76040  
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**Tommie Hutto-Blake**  
APFA President

president@apfa.org  
817-540-0108, ext. 8101

## MIXED SIGNALS

### How Do We "Read" Our Collective Future?

**D**ear APFA Member,

This month marks the fourth anniversary of an event that changed our collective path forever. On the day after this earth-shattering nightmare, September 12, 2001, the APFA membership overwhelmingly ratified a new Contract – an agreement that had finally been attained by standing together in a unified effort. Unfortunately, in light of the tragic and overwhelming losses of 9/11, our achievement was never celebrated as the success it represented.

Less than two years later we were called upon once again to ratify a different 'agreement.' It was the hardest decision of our careers – huge concessions or bankruptcy. This time we had to vote to gut our hard-won 2001 Contract. It was an impossible decision, but one we had to make. Now, with another 18 months behind us, we watch as Delta and Northwest exist on the edge of bankruptcy and United and US Airways struggle with their exit plans.

American is the only airline in the history of commercial aviation that has lost three aircraft within two month's time.

Nearly all AA employees are experiencing both professional and (let's say it out loud) personal struggles. After decades of what some might consider the worst labor relations record in the industry, including the 2003 restructuring challenge which remains fresh in our memories, many of us have lost hope in AA's very survival. And yet, AA is further from the bankruptcy court than most of the other legacy carriers. The leaders of the three unions on AA's property are cautiously optimistic in the hopes that AA might pull out of this downward spiral - not because of any single individual - but because of a new collective spirit brought about by a true attempt at a labor/management partnership.

What is staring us in the face is the fact that the labor/management model in our industry - and in this country for that matter - is broken, and new models must be introduced to break this current destructive cycle. We at AA have a chance to do just that. However, as I've often said, this is uncharted territory and our innovative approach is risky business in the current dog-eat-dog environment of our industry.

Senior management treating labor leaders as business partners and vice-versa is unheard of in this industry fraught with adversarial-style labor relations. Are the odds against us? You bet! Is it worth the risk? I believe so. Do we need to have a backup plan? Absolutely!

The good news is that in the second quarter of this year, AMR actually had an earnings record - the first true profit reported in five years. It's a slim margin indeed - but I'll take a \$58 million profit over the record losses of the past any day. Realistically, considering the size of AMR and the revenue produced, we need to be making a \$500M profit to recover. There is still a tremendous amount of improvement necessary.

Currently, there are several driving forces seemingly out of our control such as the continuing oil price crisis, constant security issues and labor disputes on other airline properties. AMR's current debt burden is immense. Ultimately these debts must be paid back

to the financial lenders who have provided the necessary funds for AA to continue its climb back to profitability. Often it seems much easier to just disengage from this mess. Trying to be part of the solution and to turn the destructive cycle around is much harder. However, facing the HUGE challenges still facing us together - labor and management - shows ownership has been taken for a positive outcome. I continue to believe that by accepting our collective challenge, AA and its unions may show the aviation industry that there is another way to do business.

The losses that we have personally experienced are painful for all of us and overwhelming for some. Is it possible to turn this crisis into a collective success? I'll admit that there are lots of unanswered questions. But, there are also many new solutions on the drawing board. Only one thing is certain - there is a lot of work ahead of us.

What I can assure you of is that

**"...The labor/management model in our industry - and in this country for that matter - is broken."**



right now, the labor and management leaders at AA have decided to take this risk and try this new approach. In my more than 35 years as an AA Flight Attendant, I have never before witnessed senior management willing to try such a different style of labor relations. And, believe me, this collaborative approach is much harder than just stepping back into our respective corners and fighting it out!

There are no guarantees that we'll be successful. We could still end up putting the gloves back on and 'duking it out' in Bankruptcy Court. But, unfortunately, there haven't been any labor 'wins' there lately. As we've clearly seen, the only profiteers in Bankruptcy Court are the lawyers, bankers and bankruptcy consultants. It is my goal to stay away from that process. It is also my goal to have a strong Union and a profitable Company once again in the not too distant future.

However, if our efforts fail and the Company takes us to

Bankruptcy Court, we must be prepared. Your leadership has a backup plan with labor consultants and strategies in place.

Now, what are some of the most critical issues facing us in the months ahead? One goal is to have a complete Collective Bargaining Agreement printed and distributed before year's end. This is long overdue and was one of my primary objectives when I took office in August 2004. Though we distributed our highly-popular On Duty Contract Guide several months ago, we each need a full and complete document showing all of the items agreed to by the parties in our 2001 and 2003 amended Agreement.

Another promise I made to you was to conduct a thorough review of the total value of our Restructured Agreement. Many of us questioned the valuation of our concessions by the Company. To that end, your APFA Officers hired one of the finest aviation labor economist in the airline industry to complete a financial analysis of our

current Contract. His review and report is being finalized and I intend to have this written analysis printed in the next *Skyword*. On the legislative front, APFA must con-

tinue to press elected representatives to give AA and its unions the opportunity to secure our pension funds within the guidelines of new pension laws which will likely be enacted before year's end. It is imperative that we have an informed membership ready to reach out to elected U.S. representatives on issues of collective concern. APFA will give you the guidance you need to become an activist on these subjects. All we ask is that you take advantage of all forms of APFA communications: weekly hotlines, our website, published mailings, base bulletin boards and InfoRep news.

We have a newly revitalized InfoRep Program comprised of individuals who are armed with lots of solid information to distribute in the field. When you meet an InfoRep, ask her or him to show you the new InfoRep packet. It is chock full of up-to-date and accurate information. Also, consider stepping forward to become an InfoRep yourself.

I assure you that your APFA leadership will continue to work toward solid solutions to both protect what we have and offer needed relief where we hurt the most. To meet that end without opening our Contract for other changes will be a challenge indeed. But your officers intend to do just that in the months ahead.

On a final note, as I begin my second year in office, I want to speak directly to our 4,138 furloughed Flight Attendants. Sadly, another of my goals when I took office is still out of reach - that is the extension of your recall rights. Many serious discussions have taken place between APFA and AA on this subject, yet management continues to reject any consideration of an extension beyond the current five-year mark. I realize that our junior-most furloughees will hit the five-year mark in just over one year. As disappointing as this is to date, I will continue every effort to engage the company in efforts to extend recall rights to our furloughed members. I believe the APFA membership deserves the honest facts from their leadership and I will not stop reporting them to you.

On a more positive note concerning furloughees, with upcoming new international routes and the combined number of retirements and higher than normal attrition rates, though no official notice has been given at press time, I am optimistic that by early 2006, or possibly even late 2005 there will be another round of furloughed AA Flight Attendants recalled to active status. It is my further hope that when this happens (again, I cannot give you an exact date at this time), our recalled members will be welcomed to active status as

APFA members in good standing. At a time in our aviation community when there exists so much active dissension on other properties, I ask and expect APFA members to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in solidarity, protecting and preserving the AA Flight Attendant career that we have worked so hard to establish together. ▲

With support and solidarity,

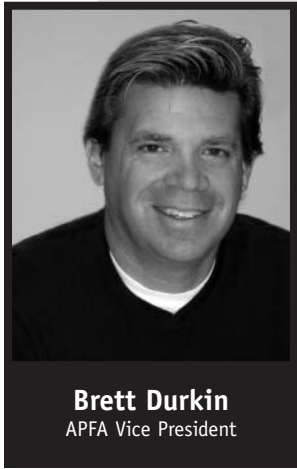


P.S. On a lighter note, I encourage you to read our first-ever APFA labor Intern's reflections on her volunteer internship at your Union's headquarters this summer. It was a pleasure to work with and observe closely a young woman like Kristine Edwards. During her time with us, Kristine gave me hope for the next generation with her interest in the future of labor relations in this country. As *Skyword* goes to press Kristine's last APFA activity was to accompany APFA members and representatives who were part of the Airline Ambassador's August mission to Thailand.

*Editor's Note: Airline Ambassadors is a Flight Attendant-driven philanthropic organization with a mission to positively impact the lives of children and families around the world. For more information, visit [www.airlineamb.org](http://www.airlineamb.org).*



John Conley - TWU, Tommie Hutto-Blake, and APA President Ralph Hunter at the Pension Fly-In June 22, 2005



**Brett Durkin**  
APFA Vice President

vp@apfa.org  
817-540-0108, ext. 8111

*Please turn to the center section for a "Speaker Survey" to be filled out by ALL members in good standing.*

## THE SPEAKER TEST

**M**any questions have arisen recently concerning the six-month Speaker Reduction Test we have entered into with American. First of all, it is important to clarify that many aspects of being a Foreign Language-Qualified (FLQ) Flight Attendant have long been problematic. Efforts to resolve some of the ongoing difficulties faced by our speakers have been driven by complaints by speakers themselves coupled with the current freeze in both hiring and recalls, which has altered many facets of our job. We have a finite number of FLQ Flight Attendants and those numbers continue to decline through attrition. This, in itself, presents the problem of locking in a larger percentage of the speaker population to a specific language market.

Speaker problem areas include bid denials, reduced vacations as a result of bid denials, an inability to get PVD's, unstable

reserve rotations (being pulled onto reserve thus changing rotation), consistent denials for speakers of multiple languages, trip-trading restrictions and limited language reserve bid lines, to name a few. All of these difficulties translate into a lack of flexibility for Flight Attendants who possess a language qualification. Conversely, related problems have also arisen for non-speaking Flight Attendants in the form of bid denials off trips or out of positions that they would have held by right of seniority.

Prior to the test being implemented, APFA had a great deal of speaker input on these issues. It was clear that many problems might well be rectified through simple changes in the number of speakers required on various aircraft. The changes involved in this test are entirely within the scope of the language of our Collective Bargaining Agreement, Appendix I, Article 11, B.4.c.

**2001 Contract Appendix I – International Article 11 - LANGUAGE (Unchanged by 2003 Restructuring Agreement)**

### C. LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENT

4. The maximum number of required foreign language qualified Flight Attendants will be as follows:
  - a. On a single aisle aircraft the maximum number of required foreign language Flight Attendants will be one (1).
  - b. On dual aisle aircraft the maximum number of required foreign language qualified Flight Attendants will be one (1) per each cabin according to service (e.g., first class, business class, coach class), but in no event shall exceed the total of three (3) language qualified Flight Attendants, except that in the event the Company operates a 747 or other widebody

equipment bid with fourteen (14) or more Flight Attendants. The maximum number of required foreign language Flight Attendants will be four (4).

- c. Required foreign language qualified Flight Attendants are restricted from serving in a galley position. The Company may make exceptions to this restriction.
- d. Foreign language speakers above the maximum complement shall be awarded positions in accordance with the provisions of Article 13.C. of the Basic Agreement.

As you can see, the Company has the unilateral right to staff flights without any speakers if they so desire. Our Contract refers only to the **maximum** number of FLQ Flight Attendants that can be required by AA on board an aircraft.

It is important to recognize that this test is NOT a concession.

### Comparison Statistics on Bid Denials During June (pre-test), July and August 2005

In June, without the Speaker Test in place there were 50 speaker denials, and 27 purser/speaker denials.

In July, with the Speaker Test in place, there were 11 speaker denials (78% reduction in denials), and 18 purser/speaker denials (67% reduction in denials).

In August, with the Speaker Test in place, there were 20 speaker denials (60% reduction in denials), and 18 purser/speaker denials (67% reduction in denials).

*“As you can see, the Company has the unilateral right to staff flights without any speakers if they so desire.”*

\* In July, 71% of the A-300 flights requiring language speakers still had two or more speakers.

In July, 42% of the 777 flights requiring language speakers had three or more speakers.

In July, 48% of the 767 flights requiring language speakers had two or more speakers.

Overall, 58% of the flights that required speakers met the company's previous speaker requirements prior to the test.

\* This data was compiled by APFA and has a small margin of error. This data does not include the JFK-FCO or in which cabin the speakers were allocated. All language-destination speakers are paid regardless of the number of speakers on board.

**VACATION  
SETTLEMENT**

# American Airlines®

June 28, 2005

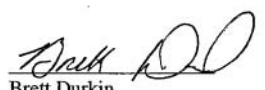
Brett Durkin  
Vice President  
Association of Professional  
Flight Attendants, Inc.  
1004 West Eules Blvd.  
Eules, Texas 76040

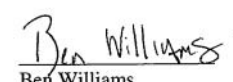
Re: Settlement Agreement - Presidential Grievance, SS-6-2004-APFA-1

This Letter of Agreement confirms our understanding of the full and final settlement of the above referenced dispute between the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) and American Airlines, Inc (the Company) regarding the calculation of the 2004 vacation award for Flight Attendants who reached a new Company Seniority threshold for vacation accrual in 2003.

1. The parties agree that Flight Attendants who reached 20 years of Company Seniority in 2003 will receive three (3) additional vacation days. Such Flight Attendants will have two (2) days added to their 2005 vacation accrual at the time of the 2006 vacation bidding period and one (1) day added to their 2006 vacation accrual at the time of the 2007 vacation bidding period.
2. The parties further agree that Flight Attendants who reached 5, 12, or 25 years of Company Seniority in 2003 will receive two (2) additional vacation days. Such Flight Attendants will have one (1) day added to their 2005 vacation accrual at the time of the 2006 vacation bidding period and one (1) day added to their 2006 vacation accrual at the time of the 2007 vacation bidding period.
3. The APFA will withdraw the above referenced grievance without prejudice.

The parties acknowledge that the discussions leading up to this settlement, and the settlement itself, represent a good-faith effort to collaboratively and cooperatively resolve this dispute in order to help further the working relationship between the parties.

  
Brett Durkin  
Vice President  
APFA

  
Ben Williams  
Senior Principal  
Employee Relations

Date: 6/30/05

Date: 6/30/05


P.O. BOX 619616, DALLAS/FORT WORTH AIRPORT, TEXAS 75261-9616

There has been no change to the way in which foreign language-speaking Flight Attendants are compensated. APFA's only objective is to resolve the many inequitable seniority breaches that occur as result of just one bid denial for speaker and non-speaker Flight Attendants alike. Further, in light of the stationary status of our workgroup (furloughs, no hiring, few transfers, etc.) and the concessions we have all been forced to endure, your APFA leadership believes that it is more important than ever to protect and preserve seniority in its purest form whenever possible

The fact is that due to the changes involved in this test, some speakers may lose some of their bidding advantage while others will benefit from the lack of speaker-driven bid denials. For every FLQ Flight Attendant who has in the past gained some degree of seniority advantage, many others have found themselves disadvantaged. If you are a speaker, I think you will find at the end of the day that your previous bidding advantage will ultimately be overshadowed by the additional flexibility that this test affords you, including greater opportunities for trip trading, more accessibility to PVD's, more vacation month bidding possibilities, more opportu-

nity to opt out of a speaker line and, most importantly, fewer denials of the bid line you want and the subsequent assignment to a bid line you don't want.

Please remember this is a six-month test and all of the information APFA receives regarding this test will be evaluated as it progresses. Try to remain open-minded until the results are in. Both APFA and AA will be watching closely for the positives and the negatives. We all know that change is difficult but it is our hope that this will turn out to be a change that is helpful to speakers and non-speakers alike. As always, your APFA leadership appreciates your feedback so continue to let us know your thoughts on this subject.

Before I close, I must add that personally I am very sensitive to speaker issues. As the former IMA Base Chairperson, I have repeatedly observed and been frustrated by some of the problems I have described above. It is my sincere wish to make positive changes for all of us that might help us to weather this exceptionally challenging phase of our careers. 

APFA is proud to have reached the following resolution on a Presidential Grievance filed in 2004 regarding the calculation of the 2004 vacation awards for those Flight Attendants who reached a new company seniority threshold for vacation accrual in 2003.

I would especially like to thank Laura Glading, JFK, and all the System Board advocates that were involved in reaching this favorable settlement, which will provide additional vacation time for 3,326 Flight Attendants.



## AMERICAN AIRLINES

and

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL  
FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

## ARBITRATION OPINION AND AWARD

### Quarterly System Board – April 2005

SS-45-2005-ORD-38, L. Mallon et al.

SS-44-2004-BOS-11, J. Carrigan et al.

#### STIPULATED ISSUES

Did the Company violate Article 9P6a and Article 9S1 and any and all related articles of the collective bargaining agreement under all the facts and circumstances of this case?

If so, what shall be the remedy?

#### PERTINENT CONTRACT PROVISIONS

##### ARTICLE 9 – SCHEDULING

##### P. MISCONNECTION, ILLEGALITY, CANCELLATION (MIC)

###### 1. Mid-sequence

A misconnection, illegality or cancellation (MIC) during the course of a trip sequence shall have no impact on a flight attendant's monthly guarantee and the flight attendant shall have no obligation following his/her return to base; provided, however, that prior to his/her return to base, s/he may be deadheaded or rescheduled as determined by Crew Schedule.

###### 6. Cancellation/Illegality Protection – Last Five (5) Days of the Month

a. A regularly scheduled flight attendant whose last trip sequence on his/her trip selection is scheduled to originate during the last five (5) days of the contractual month, and as a result of a cancellation/illegality of all or part of such sequence, does no flying, shall be paid and credited on a scheduled basis for such trip sequence, provided such flight attendant attempts to recover the time lost through make-up flying request. To qualify for this cancellation/illegality protection, a flight attendant should make an effort to fly any trip sequence for which s/he is legal and available that originates up to eight (8) hours after the scheduled termination time of the original trip sequence that was cancelled or from the trip sequence such flight attendant was removed due to illegality.

##### S. ILLEGALITY

When a late arrival or overflying causes a flight attendant to be illegal for his/her next scheduled trip, s/he shall be subject to the provisions of paragraph P. of this Article. (JX 1)

#### BACKGROUND

The facts that gave rise to this case are generally not in dispute. Flight Attendant Debbie Dent is based in ORD. In August 2004, she was scheduled to fly her last trip of the month on the twenty-eighth at 6:57 a.m. with a sign-in time an hour earlier. Her prior trip was scheduled to arrive at ORD at 6:04 p.m. the previous evening, leaving her with sufficient time for her contractually-mandated 11 hours of rest before she was required to report for duty for the final trip.

In the event, Ms. Dent's flight from PDX landed at ORD 53 minutes late, so that fewer than 11 hours remained before her next scheduled flight. In her experience, when this happened on her last trip sequence during the last five days of the month, a code of LB (Legal Break) would immediately appear on her record, at which time she could pay-protect her last trip by putting herself on the make-up list. She checked her HI 1 record as soon as she got home and discovered that she had not been given the LB code. Because Ms. Dent tries to maximize her income, her inability to put herself on the make-up list concerned her.

## The Real Thing

APFA recently received the arbitrator's award on the system board case originally filed by ORD Chairperson Liz Mallon and former BOS-D Chairperson Julia Carrigan regarding Article 9.P.6. Patt A. Gibbs presented for the Union and Cindy Simpson was co-counsel. Brett Durkin represented APFA on the System Board of Adjustment. Arbitrator Susan Brown, the System Board's standing arbitrator heard the case and rendered the decision.

The schedule still showed her scheduled to work the next trip at the published departure time, a time for which she was illegal to fly.

Ms. Dent sent an email to Crew Scheduling regarding this situation and received a return voice-mail saying that she was not being removed from the schedule until she called them. This alarmed Ms. Dent because it was so out of the ordinary and she called her Base Chair, Liz Mallon, who in turn called the Senior on Duty in Crew Scheduling. Ms. Mallon told the Senior that because Ms. Dent's situation fell under Article 9P6a, she could protect the value of her trip on the make-up list. He in turn informed Ms. Mallon that they were in the process of changing schedules, i.e., delaying the departure of Ms. Dent's scheduled flight, in order to make her legal. Ms. Mallon disagreed, pointing out that a Flight Attendant cannot be forced to fly under 9P6. The manager responded that they were not forcing her to fly, she was now legal for her next trip. Ms. Mallon testified that when she asked him why they changed the flight's departure time, he responded "Because Dent was illegal."

Crew Scheduling called the entire crew at 11 p.m. to tell them that the 6 a.m. sign-in had been changed to 6:10 a.m. Ms. Dent was told to take the trip or be charged with a missed trip.

Robert Dansby, a Manager on Duty who rotates between Crew Tracking and Crew Allocation, testified that if a scheduling conflict arises when a flight comes in late, Crew Scheduling gets alerted. At the time Scheduling received an alert about Ms. Dent's potential conflict, there were already many staffing problems for the next day because of weather, high summer traffic and an unusually high sick list among Flight Attendants. Crew Scheduling spoke to the Senior on Duty and informed him that it was unlikely they could cover Dent's flight if she were illegal. A Manager on Duty, not Mr. Dansby, was involved in delaying the flight for 13 minutes in order to make Ms. Dent legal. Dansby testified that he believes that if the Manager had not done so, the flight would have been cancelled; according to him, all available

Continued on page 26

## Update on Board of Directors Convention



**Greg Hildreth**  
APFA Secretary

secretary@apfa.org  
817-540-0108, ext. 8121

“A complete account of the minutes of the meetings can be found on the APFA website at [www.apfa.org](http://www.apfa.org).”

The 12th Annual APFA Board of Directors Convention was held this year in Chicago and continued in Washington, D.C. In accordance with the APFA Policy Manual, below is a brief recap of all resolutions that were passed at those meetings. The complete account of the minutes of the meetings can be found on the APFA website at [www.apfa.org](http://www.apfa.org).

The Board of Directors met from March 14, 2005, through March 18, 2005, in Chicago. After a full week of meetings, briefings and updates, the Board was unable to complete the business necessary so the meeting was continued on May 10, 2005, and lasted through May 12, 2005. The second portion of the business meeting was held in the Washington, D.C., area to coincide with APFA's Lobby Day on May 11th on Capitol Hill.

After the March portion of the meeting, several new Base Chairpersons took office. As a result, some of the voting members of the Board changed between the March meeting and the May meeting.

During the combined seven-day meeting a total of 24 resolutions were voted upon by the APFA Board of Directors. Below is a short recap of those resolutions:

**March 14, 2005**  
**1100**  
Call to Order

**1124**  
**Resolution #1**, voted on and passed.  
Yes - 18, No - 01  
**Approve the agenda**

**1127**  
**Resolution #1a**, voted on and passed.  
Yes - 18, No - 0  
**Amend the agenda to include:**  
*Skyword, Skyword Advertising*  
Ad-Hoc Nominations  
Budget Presentation –  
Review and Q&A

**March 15, 2005**  
**1000**  
Call to Order  
Dr. Bette Myers (Parliamentarian) addresses Board  
Ad-Hoc Elections  
Budget Discussion  
New Ad-Hoc Members of Executive Committee Confirmed

**1625**  
**Resolution #2**, voted on and passed. Yes - 17, No - 0, Absent - 1  
Approve the annual budget  
President's Report and Base Updates

**March 16, 2005**  
**0845**  
Call to Order

**0848**  
Roll Call  
AA/Industry Update  
Legal Update  
Legislative Action Review  
Purser Test Team

**1137**  
**Resolution #3**, voted on and passed.  
Yes - 18, No - 0  
**Purser Flexibility Test**

**1159**  
**Resolution #4**, voted on and passed.  
Yes - 18, No - 0  
**Archives –**  
**University of Texas Arlington**  
Presentation by Professor Goldberg

**March 17, 2005**  
**0915**  
Call to Order

Discussion with Flight Service Representatives  
Each Base Chairperson addresses concerns of respective base  
Presentation by Accounting Firm  
Flight Attendant Presentation  
Overland Research Group  
Department Updates  
Health Department Update  
Hotel Department Update  
Communications Department Update  
Scheduling Department Update  
Safety Department Update

**March 18, 2005**  
**0910**  
Call to Order  
Contract Department Update  
Retirement Task Force Presentation

**0953**  
**Resolution #5**, voted on and passed.  
Yes - 18, No - 0  
**Retirement Specialist**  
Officer on Duty  
Election Procedure Task Force Report (See Summer '05 *Skyword*)

**1225**  
**Resolution #6**, voted on and passed.  
Yes - 18, No - 0  
(See Summer '05 *Skyword*)



**Election Procedure Task Force Report**

**1231**

**Resolution #7**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 18, No - 0

(See Summer '05 *Skyword*)

**National Ballot Committee - Declaration of Eligibility**

Fatigue Summit

APFA Negotiating Team

President Hutto-Blake Addresses

BOD (meeting will conclude at

the end of business and be con-

tinued in May to coincide with

APFA Lobby Day)

Vice President's Report

**May 10, 2005**

**1100**

Call to Order

**1136**

**Resolution #8**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 18, No - 0

**Approve the Agenda**

Treasurer's Report

Budget Committee Nominations

**1239**

**Resolution #9**, voted on and failed.

Yes - 6, No -10, Abstain - 2

**Budget Committee Appointment**

New Business

**1400**

**Resolution #10**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 17, No - 0, Absent - 1

**APFA Policy Manual - Cell Phones**

**1557**

**Resolution #11**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 13, No - 4, Abstain -1

**Reimbursement for LGA Vice**

**Chair**

**1651**

**Resolution #12**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 18, No - 0

**APFA Policy Manual - Trip**

**Removal Policy**

**May 11, 2005 LOBBY DAY IN**

**WASHINGTON, D.C**

**May 12, 2005**

**1025**

Call to Order

**1032**

**Resolution #13**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 18, No - 0

**Jose Chiu Award**

Old Business

**1053**

**Resolution #14**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 14, No - 0, Abstain - 4

**Martha W. Griffiths Award**

**1100**

**Resolution #15**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 18, No - 0

**Distinguished Service Award**

**1108**

**Resolution #16**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 18, No - 0

**Distinguished Service Award**

**1305**

**Resolution #17**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 18, No - 0

**APFA Policy Manual -**

**Vacation Pay Back**

**1410**

**Resolution #18**, postponed

*Skyword*

**1507**

**Resolution #19**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 16, No - 2

*Skyword*

**1535**

**Resolution #20**, voted on and passed

Yes - 18, No - 0

**Award of Merit**

**1637**

**Resolution #21**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 16, No - 1, Absent - 1

**APFA Policy Manual - Office Supplies**

**1649**

**Resolution #22**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 18, No - 0

**Honorary Membership**

National Officers' Update

Treasurer's Update

**1655**

**Resolution #23**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 17, No - 0, Abstain - 1

**Budget Committee**

**Appointments**

Secretary's Update

**1807**

**Resolution #24**, voted on and passed.

Yes - 14, No - 2, Abstain - 1,

Absent - 1

**National Ballot Committee**

**Appointments**

Vice President's Update

President's Update

Motion to adjourn 2005 APFA

Annual Convention.

Motion passed unanimously.



**Cathy Lukenmeyer**  
APFA Treasurer

treasurer@apfa.org  
817-540-0108, ext. 8131

Let's take a look at how APFA compensates those Flight Attendants who have chosen to make a commitment to become APFA representatives. Some APFA representatives are authorized by the Policy Manual for a full-month's trip removal. These reps include National Coordinators, Division Representatives, some Base Chairs and Vice Chairs depending upon the number of Flight Attendants at their base, members of the Negotiating Team when appropriate, and other individuals with the approval of a National Officer. Representa-

## SAF, MEA, the LM-2's and Other Mysteries of APFA Salaries ... Solved

tives who are removed from a full month of flying assignments are considered "obligated" to perform work for APFA for a minimum of 18 days that month, regardless of the number of days they are scheduled to work on their bid line.

Some representatives are removed from flying on a trip-by-trip basis. They are obligated to perform APFA work for a minimum of the number of days encompassed by the trip removal; but most actually end up working more than just the days from which they were removed.

To fully understand the trip-removal policy of APFA, it is important to understand "Union Leave." In reality a three-day trip removal may actually result in five, six or seven days of work.

The trip removal policy works fine for the days on which a union rep would normally be flying, but what about the "days off" that are also spent working for APFA? You could make the argument that senior

Flight Attendants flying nine days a month to Tokyo earn the same hours per month as more junior Flight Attendants flying 18 days a month to the Caribbean. Your days off, in other words, are a benefit of seniority. But within APFA, there is no seniority with respect to work performed. A representative at any seniority, that might normally fly 12 days a month, may instead routinely work 18, 22 or even 25 days a month for APFA. Although Union representatives can never really be repaid the full value of those lost "days off," the expense policy endeavors to provide some sort of financial offset for this loss.

In redesigning the APFA expense policy in 1992, APFA borrowed the concept of "Special Assignment" pay from our Contract with American Airlines. We applied it to the work that representatives do for the Union on days they were not scheduled to fly. Consequently, APFA pays its representatives between \$10 and \$40 per day (not per hour), for those additional days on which they perform APFA work. For example, if a Flight Attendant is removed from a normal monthly schedule of 15 days, but actually performs work for APFA for 20 days, she or he will receive five days of APFA "special assignment fee." The "SAF" varies, depending on the number of hours worked, from \$10 per day for 1-2 hours

of work to \$40 per day for more than 11 hours of work. The maximum weekly SAF is \$125. This money is taxable and is reported by APFA to the IRS.

In addition to trip removal and SAF, APFA representatives are reimbursed for direct out-of-pocket expenses such as photocopying, transportation and telephone. They are also reimbursed taxable per-diem while working at home base and non-taxable per diem when working away from home base. The Per Diem is \$1.50 per hour - the same as the F/A contractual Per Diem.

Now let's take a look at how our National Officers are compensated. In accordance with the APFA Policy Manual, these positions are handled differently than those of other Union representatives. The Flight Attendants filling these positions are actually considered "employees" of APFA and, as such, are paid an annual salary by APFA instead of being trip removed and paid by AAL. Salaries are set by the APFA Board of Directors. Currently they are as follows:

All four National Officers are compensated at the 15-year International Purser rate of pay as of the 2003 concessionary Agreement. The President makes the equivalent of 110 hours - \$69,370 per year. The Vice-President makes 105 hours - \$66,128 per year, and the

Secretary and Treasurer make 100 hours - \$62,886 per year. These rates include the recent 1% increase received by all Flight Attendants in May 2005 in accordance with the 2003 RPA.

It is a federal requirement under the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act to report annually to the Secretary of Labor the amount of union funds paid out to representatives. This information is public record and is reported on the LM-2. The amount shown on this form includes salaries, benefits and reimbursed out-of-pocket expenses - in short, any check issued by the Union to that particular representative. This means that when the Base Chair of a large base has a monthly telephone bill of \$300 to \$400 (which is reimbursed by APFA), that amount will show on the LM-2 as funds paid out to the Rep. This is why the amounts on the LM-2 are much higher than actual salaries. Often a good portion of the amount shown is attributable to reimbursed expenses and things other than salary.

While union work may seem a thankless endeavor to many, in truth my co-workers at APFA appreciate that with each learning experience comes a step forward towards personal growth. ▲

"...when the Base Chair of a large base... has a monthly telephone bill of \$300 to \$400 (which is reimbursed by APFA), that amount will show on the LM-2 as funds paid out to the Rep. This is why the amounts on the LM-2 are much higher than actual salaries."





**Leslie Mayo**

APFA Communications  
Coordinator

communications@apfa.org  
817-540-0108, ext. 8308

While another anniversary of 9/11 is staring us down, we are watching the aftermath of a whole new disaster unfold in the Gulf Coast four Septembers later. It certainly puts your priorities in perspective, doesn't it?

Watching this devastation has inspired hundreds of Flight Attendants to help in so many ways including donating money, providing food, clothing or housing to families without, and volunteering to work relief missions into and out of New Orleans. I am proud to see this response by our workgroup and I know it reaffirms for all of us just how exceptional we are when faced with a crisis. Our Company has also stepped up to the plate and donated aircraft to help evacuate people from the flooding. AA was the first flight to arrive in New Orleans landing at an airport with no power, manned with volunteer Flight Attendants and pilots and

## REGAINING CONTROL!

deadheading mechanics *just in case*. That plane carried water and non-perishable food into the flooded region and brought stranded employees and passengers back to safety. At the time of this writing, AA is still volunteering its aircraft and our members are still volunteering to crew these missions on their days off. While it's always nice to be paid for a job well done, when the chips are down, each of us recognizes the emotional rewards of helping each other.

Just in case 9/11 wasn't enough to try to get our arms around, now with a new disaster to deal with and recover from, whether you were one of those who lost a loved one, a pet or your personal property, or if your heart breaks every time you see the relief efforts and the stories emerging, it is more important than it ever has been to stay connected with each other.

It seems like we've lost so much the past few years and looking back, most of us consider pre-9/11 the good ole' days. Gas was \$1.50 a gallon, we had a great new contract about to be ratified, and the MD-11 and 777 were really great planes to fly to all the new destinations AA was announcing. We could transfer bases, proffer International and know that even though our names showed up on the reserve list, it was only temporary because the new-hires just kept on coming. We could carry our wine openers and scissors on board, wear our shoes through security and not worry about

"profiling without appearing to be profiling" while working our trips.

Today, we're paying more than \$3.00 a gallon for fuel and our paycuts have gone to the oil companies instead of our own company. Some of us who haven't been able to transfer bases in years have had to literally buy our way into another base through mutual laterals. Reserve is the slowest form of torture and we're flat out exhausted. And just a footnote: who cared about celebrating our great contract the day it ratified on September 12, 2001, considering what happened the day before.

So where's the relief? Is there any in sight? Does it make sense to do things the same way and expect a different outcome at this point? We are not living in a period of 'business as usual.' We've got to find our footing and reestablish our focus on gaining control over the things we can. It's critical to moving forward. Remaining bitter about the things we can't control is a waste of time and energy and will slow our progress. It's hard to bust out of one's comfort zone and try something new. But focusing on what's really important is the key – getting distracted is just that – distracting.

Last quarter, AA actually made a profit – the first one in years without any special exemptions. While we probably won't see that again for a little while due to exorbitant fuel prices exacerbated

by Hurricane Katrina, it says something for the different environment of labor/management relations between the three unions and AA.

It's taken me awhile to get used to this way of relating to our employer, and I'm still a bit hesitant. But right now, it's the one labor/management path that seems to be working. Look at Northwest and the bad-faith bargaining with their mechanics and flight attendants. Hiring replacement mechanics more than a year before a Strike was even possible. Contract proposals that included cutting over 50% of the workforce, making ratification nearly impossible. Other proposals include refusing to transport deceased Flight Attendants' bodies home from overseas, and halting pay at the moment of FIRST impact in the event of a crash. Take a look at United managements' complete lack of regard for its workers' pensions and the way that has affected the possibility for them to retire while they're still able to walk!

And then look at us. What's different at APFA, APA and TWU? Could we be doing something right? Time will tell, I suppose. But I will always be a skeptic and am glad that our Union has a backup plan. The company must know that we will fight if we are forced to. And we are prepared to do just that if things go south. It's what we're used to and heaven knows we've proved we can 'outperform' when the time is right.

Tommie has used the term "cautiously optimistic" over and over in the past year. I hope we are able to continue on that path and be productive. But if not, the Flight Attendants of American Airlines must be ready to come together like we did in '93 and again in '01 and show the Company that we are not willing to be discounted.

Moving on is no simple matter. Gaining back some of the control over the things you can control is critical. I'm not talking about trying to manage fuel prices, hurricanes, or other people. I'm talking about not allowing ourselves to get sidetracked or our focus shifted from what matters the most.

Let's do all we can to protect what we have left. Personally it's our families, our friends, our relationships. Professionally it's committing ourselves to making this a better place to work. But first things first: stay connected to your Union and help your leadership in its efforts toward bringing this Company back to profitability. Then let's focus on getting back some of what we lost. Don't you think it's about time? ▲

## APFA INFOREP PROGRAM



# Falling Into Place...

By Denise Pointer, DFW

Since 1991, when the InfoRep Program was created, many dedicated APFA members have been a part of this communication program. Over the years, InfoReps were given the charge of assisting their union in carrying accurate information into the field. The nature of that information has changed over time but the dedication of our InfoReps has not.

Since its inception, the InfoRep program has grown, literally by thousands. With each important passage in our profession, the need for communication to our members has forced the program to grow. From negotiations and the Strike in the early 90's to never-before-experienced acts of terrorism in 2001 - the need for information never stopped. Now, as we enter into the Fall of 2005, our communication needs are different, but they are just as important as ever before.

Issues that are affecting us today include the cost of crude oil, pension reform, bankruptcy laws, and legislative action, which continues to change almost every day. Our fight to keep the Wright Amendment intact has now been coupled with the need to convince the TSA that knives and ice picks should never be allowed on board our aircraft. The fact that we even have to take a stand on this last issue is incomprehensible. I know that with time

“When the need for a rejuvenated InfoRep program became apparent earlier this year, we decided to ask our former InfoReps to renew their commitment to this program.”

comes healing, but the horrible events of September 11th will always remain in our hearts and souls. As InfoReps we are activists and our roles continue to evolve. Truly, there has never been a more important time to be involved.

When the need for a rejuvenated InfoRep program became apparent earlier this year, we decided to ask our former InfoReps to renew their commitment to this program. Since January, APFA has been accepting those renewed commitments from many of our members. My sincere thanks go to all of you who have stepped up to the plate – once again. Your decision to remain an integral part of this vital effort is the single most important aspect of the InfoRep program. Without your hard work, the program would not survive.

As Flight Attendants, you see InfoReps on your flights regularly. Some wear their InfoRep Circle pins, some wear their new APFA InfoRep bracelets and some wear both. These dedicated individuals are there for you – tap their knowledge. If you want to know how to contact your Senator or Representative, ask an InfoRep. If you want to know the facts surrounding the Wright Amendment, ask an InfoRep. If you want to know how to send a letter or email to the TSA, again, ask an InfoRep. If you want to know the truth about a rumor, ask an InfoRep. These Flight Attendants have the facts - directly from APFA.

Please consider helping yourself, your co-workers and your Union by becoming an InfoRep. Decide to become a part of the solution. Turn to the center section and fill out the APFA InfoRep card, drop it in the mail or any APFA lockbox, and we'll do the rest!

Email me at [infoforep@apfa.org](mailto:infoforep@apfa.org) - I'm waiting to hear from you.







# Flying with MiMi

By Trice Johnson, IMA

mood and how little sleep I have gotten on my restructured layover, I have felt over-projected in my emotional monthly max and need more than a few scheduled field breaks for recovery. APFA and AA have recently entered a kind of Employee/Management Assistance Recovery Program for battered employees and borderline abusive employers. Now, each group is allegedly trying to think in terms of "WE" instead of "ME."

Undoubtedly, this could be challenging as AA and APFA have traditionally engaged in a sumo-wrestling contest for years. Both groups have generally done business from a "ME" rather than a "WE" point of view. I suppose it is no coincidence that the second and third letters in the word American are ME. Even our little Flight Attendant Union is located in the city of Eules (pronounced U-less), Texas. And you know what that means? Less of U equals more of ME!

## TRUE CONFESSIONS:

I was really ticked off when I read about the new AA/APFA Foreign Language Qualified (FLQ) speaker test. If you've not heard, the Union entered into a six-month agreement with AA whereby the number of FLQ speakers on wide-body

flights will be effectively reduced on most flights in order to help alleviate bid denials and enhance seniority bidding for non-speakers. I felt "shafted" for obvious ME interests in that I have been a fairly senior language speaker since date of hire. And now I am most likely not going to be able to hold my favorite "primo" trip here at IMA. Hey, what about ME?

But in the spirit of WE, the APFA is going to be conducting a Test (kinda like that annoying beep of the Emergency Broadcasting Network on radio and television) whereby for the next few months the Union will be surveying the effects of speaker changes and bidding.

And furthermore, I did not even vote in the last APFA election for some of these people holding office. And now look what THEY have done? But, here I am writing in *Skyword* so you have to give someone credit at APFA for thinking a bit about WE instead of just ME.

It would be nice if American Airlines, in the spirit of WE rather than ME, would be so gracious as to do something about not having decent rest periods or food provisions on specific trip selections that most certainly could qualify as "cruel and unusual punishment" in certain judicial jurisdictions. I mean, must I really

depend on the kindness of strangers or hotel restaurant employees who choose to open the hotel restaurant for us a few minutes early in order that we may grab a to-go bag since we don't have food provisioned for us on the airplane? A few months ago, my crew in San Jose, Costa Rica actually had to plead with the hotel restaurant hostess to do such in order to have something to eat before our flight and subsequent connection in Miami. AA is not even feeding a dog a bone here in this respect.

We as individual Flight Attendants can also do something in order to contribute to the WE cause rather than the ME clause of this new AA/APFA agreement of sorts. How about periodically skipping that three-dollar *Starbucks* decaf mocha skim latte and have a regular "drip" instead. Then, contribute the difference to the APFA Political Action Committee (PAC) fund for our lobbying efforts in D.C? Or what if we take turns buying copies of *People Magazine* - leaving them in the jumpseat for the next Flight Attendant? We could take that extra cash and contribute that to the APFA PAC fund. Hey, I am too tired to read Charles Dickens at work anyway so this way I can keep laughing at J. Lo and Britney all in the name of a worthy cause like the APFA PAC fund. I don't think the same idea of foregoing coffee all together would work for the Starbucks idea, but passing on the savings from ordering regular old drip to the

APFA PAC fund would definitely help.

AA and APFA have taken a step forward in terms of "WE" as both groups are advocating for pension reform while attempting to retain our defined pension benefits. Coming up with some creative solutions to do so may prove challenging. How can we protect the pensions of everyone, while not affecting the future work lives of the most junior workers who are increasingly angry after living through furloughs, B-scale and "restructuring"?

Ultimately, the "WE" culture of APFA/AA comes down to one of mutual interest in a time of continued upheaval and financial losses within the airline industry. For the APFA, the driving issue will be to continue to press AA to meet its moral and employee-bargained obligations instead of just trying to meet strictly utilitarian considerations within the marketplace. AA will attempt to remain competitive without sacrificing market share. Instead of flying with MiMi, it looks like we may have to start buddy bidding with WeWe.

Enough about my perspectives and me. Let's talk about you. What do you think about MiMi?



**Editor's Note:** Please see Vice President Brett Durkin's article on the Speaker Test, page 5. Also, tell APFA what you think by filling out the "Speaker Survey" in the center section.

When I recently flew a leg out of Chicago, I ran into an old friend I hadn't seen in awhile. I asked him who he was flying with that month. He replied, "Oh, I am flying with MiMi." I responded curiously by asking, "Hmm.... I don't think I know her. Who is she?" "Oh, you know her," he answered, "It's all about Me, Me, and Me."

It seems lately that I have flown with a few MiMIs as well.

Let me start by saying that I can be guilty of being a selfish pig at times both at work and at play. Depending on my

"I was really ticked off when I read about the new AA/APFA Foreign Language Qualified (FLQ) speaker test."

*AA Flight 11*

*Barbara "Bobbi" Arestegui*

*Jeffrey Callman*

*Sara Low*

*Karin Ann Martin*

*Kathy Nicosia*

*Betty Ong*

*Jean Roger*

*Diane Bullis Snyder*

*Madeline Amy Sweeney*

*Captain John Ogonowski*

*First Officer Thomas McGuinness, Jr.*

*AA Flight 77*

*Michele Heidenberger*

*Jennifer Lewis*

*Ken Lewis*

*Renee May*

*Captain Charles "Chic" Burlingame*

*First Officer David Charlebois*

*AA Flight 587*

*Deborah Fontakis*

*Barbara Giannasea*

*Wilmer Gonzales*

*Joe Lopes*

*Michele Mills*

*Carol Palm*

*William Valdespino*

*First Officer Sten Molin*

*Captain Ed States*

# HEROES WHO PASS OUT SNACKS

By Meghan Daum

**Editor's Note:** *This article was published following the Air France crash of Flight 358 on August 2, 2005, in honor of the cabin crew that saved 297 lives from a burning airplane.*

*Today, we publish this in honor of the friends we lost on flights 191, TWA 800, 11, 77 and 587 who never had a chance to show the world how they would have evacuated an airplane.*

TO ANYONE WHO'S ever smirked, snapped, whined, yelled or (you know who you are) thrown things at a flight attendant, let's consider this: Last Tuesday, the cabin crew of Air France Flight 358 evacuated all 297 passengers after a crash landing in Toronto. They did this in less than two minutes. Moments later, the plane burst into flames.

I know what you're thinking: "If they can get 300 people off in under two minutes, why does it take 45 minutes to board a plane?" As in all things air travel-related, the lame jokes abound.

("I tried to jump down the slide, but they stopped me because the seat-belt sign was on!")

But maybe seeing 10 flight attendants save about 300 lives in less time than it took to watch the safety demonstration will put an end to the jokes. It's been a long time coming. Somehow, passengers have been lulled into thinking that flight attendants are there primarily to serve as waiters and arbiters of luggage space. But accidents have a way of reducing inconveniences like pillow shortages and paltry snacks to shamefully petty concerns.

Several years ago, while researching a magazine article about the "secret world of flight attendants," I spent a week at the flight attendant training school of a major airline. Granted, this was three years before 9/11, back when the combination of dreary mundanely and diminishing leg room had left people with about as much respect for air travel as they had for pre-owned Yugos. "Air rage" was the coinage of the day, and incidents of violence against airline personnel had risen dramatically.

I visited the school because I was a smug young journalist working for a smug glossy magazine and I

was hoping for some salacious details about a profession that had fascinated the public since the early days of commercial flight. Since airline industry deregulation in 1978, the archetypal sex-kitten stewardess made famous by books such as the 1960s-era "Coffee, Tea or Me" had devolved into a haggard assortment of short-tempered corporate drones. The heyday of air travel, when flight attendants were required to be female, slim, unmarried and possessed of the uncanny ability to cook eggs to order during turbulence, was long gone.



*TWA Flight 800*

*Jacques Charbonnier*

*Constance Charbonnier*

*Dan Callas*

*Janet Christopher*

*Deb DiLuccio*

*Ray Lang*

*Maureen Lockhart*

*Sandra Meade*

*Grace Melotin*

*Marit Rhoads*

*Mike Schuldt*

*Melinda Torche*

*Jill Ziemkiewicz*

*Aikens-Bellamy*

*Rosie Braman*

*Warren Dodge*

*Daryl Edwards*

*Joanne Griffith*

*Eric Harkness*

*James Hull*

*Lonnie Ingenhuett*

*Elaine Loffredo*

*Eli Luevano*

*Pamela McPherson*

*Olivia Simmons*

*Lani Warren*

*Captain Steven E. Snyder*

*Captain Ralph G. Kevoorkian*

*F.E. Richard G. Campbell*

*F.E. Oliver Krick*

*Captain Gid Miller*

*F.O. R.L. Verhaeghe*

*F.E. D.A. Eshleman*

*AA Flight 191*

*Capt. Walter Lux*

*F.O. James R. Dillard*

*F.E. Alfred Udovich*

*F.O. Robert Aeschbacher*

*Linda Bundens*

*Pauline (Pat) Burns*

*James DeHart*

*Carmen Fowler*

*Katherine Hiebert*

*Carol Ohm*

*Linda Princee*

*Michael Schassburger*

*Nancy Sullivan*

*Sally Jo Titterington*

“But maybe seeing 10 flight attendants save about 300 lives in less time than it took to watch the safety demonstration will put an end to the jokes.”

But my assignment was doomed. The courses I observed had less to do with applying makeup and charming businessmen than with something far less sensational: safety.

The drills went on and on and on. We practiced verbal instructions until we could recite them like Beatles lyrics. We rehearsed procedures until every exit door and window, every inflatable slide and alarm bell felt as familiar as the dashboard controls on a car we'd owned for a decade. I can still remember the sensation of opening the hatch of the exit window in the cabin simula-

tor. I can still hear the siren and the exact wording of the evacuation commands for the slides. "Keep your feet together; jump into the slide," the students yelled until they were hoarse. I watched as they learned how to inflate rafts. I ran around the simulator with them as they enacted crash after crash, knowing full well that no matter how intensive the training, nothing but focus and sheer guts would see them through the real thing.

Among the other things I learned about flight attendants was that their starting salaries could be as low as \$15,000 a year. They regu-

larly have to work 14-hour days but are often paid for only eight hours. Most have to buy their own uniforms for hundreds of dollars. That means they often have only one, which they have to wash out in hotel sinks.

Air France rightfully praised the crew of Flight 358 for its professionalism. But it's the flying public that needs to recognize such contributions. Airline deregulation, which slashed prices along with amenities, legroom and salaries, caused many of us to forget our manners. Then Sept. 11 introduced a narrative that suggested the fates of airliners lay

in the hands of passengers, whether terrorists or heroes.

But, as we learned on Tuesday, accidents still occur and we still rely on those who are trained to protect us from potentially tragic outcomes. On airplanes, it so happens that these are the same people who pass out the inedible food and tell us when our bags won't fit overhead. But we've seen they can do a lot more than that. Let's be polite.

Reprinted with permission from, and many thanks to Megan Daum.

# Save Room For Your Sick Time and Other 401(k) Considerations

By Jill Frank, APFA Retirement Specialist

In 1978 Congress passed the Employee Retirement Income Security Act – commonly known as ERISA. This act dealt with numerous aspects of retirement planning, one of which was a savings vehicle known as a 401(k) plan (cleverly named after the section of the law that created it).

These retirement plans are available from thousands of employers. There is a set of federal rules that covers all 401(k) plans allowing limited flexibility to the “Plan Sponsor” (in our case, for the Super Saver 401(k), American Airlines). Once a plan document is on file with the government, no exceptions can be made; the plan sponsor must adhere to the plan document. (Similar to our recurrent training, AA writes it, the FAA approves it and AA cannot change it). The Summary Plan Description (38 pages of information) can be found on Jetnet by logging onto the Super Saver site.

“...unused sick time has a ‘cash out’ value at retirement.”

You probably won’t be surprised to learn that the Flight Attendant group has the largest number of participants in the 401(k) plans at American Airlines! You might be interested in some of our statistics (effective 7/15/2005):

1. We have 19,215 members, 13,000 of whom are currently active (meaning they are deferring income into their accounts).
2. The average before-tax contribution is 12.5%.
3. The average after-tax contribution is 6.4%.
4. We have over 300 Flight Attendants who make both types of contributions.
5. The average value of a Flight Attendant account is \$60,000.
6. The highest balance is over \$400,000.

7. Over 2,530 Flight Attendants have between \$100,000 and \$200,000.

You’re probably aware that we have a contractual provision allowing us to put unused sick time into a 401(k) plan at retirement – but do you know the rules governing this contribution? (There are always rules!)

## Article 36 - Flight Attendant Retirement Benefit Program

### M. Amendments to the Super Saver - A 401(k) Capital Accumulation Plan for Employees of Participating Subsidiaries of AMR Corporation

**3. Contributions - Sick Pay Accruals. Subject to the limitations imposed on tax-qualified plans, and as soon as administratively practicable after a Flight Attendant retires with the Company, the Company will make a contribution to the Flight Attendant’s account in the amount of \$3.75 multiplied by the number of hours in the Flight Attendant’s sick leave bank as of the date**

**that the Flight Attendant terminates service, up to a maximum contribution of three thousand seven hundred and fifty (\$3,750.00) dollars.**

The intent of this language is to make sure that unused sick time has a “cash out” value at retirement. The reality is that due to the federal regulations that apply to 401(k) plans, you must plan properly to take advantage of this provision or you will lose the money.

By law, a 401(k) plan has limits on how much money may be contributed during a calendar year. So, the first thing you need to understand is what those limits are for the year 2005.

Employee Pre-Tax Limits for 2005:

1. An employee may contribute “pre-tax” contributions up to \$14,000.
2. An employee over 50 may participate in “catch-up” contributions, limited to an additional \$4,000.

What does this mean? If you are 50 or older you can put up to \$18,000 in your 401(k) this year as long as you have income from American Airlines (the sponsor of the 401(k)) of \$18,000.00 or more.

### Other Plan Limits for 2005

Some good news - the sick pay conversion is not an employee contribution; it’s a Qualified Non-Elective Contribution (QNEC). That means there is another set of rules that govern this contribution.

The annual limit that may be put into a 401(k) plan is \$42,000, or 100% of your compensation, whichever is less. This includes the “pre-tax” employee contributions (\$14,000), employee after-tax contributions and any employer contributions. There are other types of contributions included in this maximum, some of which are AIP awards, vacation accruals and your sick pay at retirement. The “catch up” is not subject to the limitation. But, again, in order to apply any of these maximums you must have income from the employer that sponsors the

## “If you are fortunate enough to be eligible to retire and have no medical issues, then count your blessings and plan your exit strategy properly.”

plan equal to the amount of the contribution.

So, what are we to do? The answer is simple: Plan ahead!

The first consideration is to make sure you take care of any legitimate medical issues before you retire. There are two reasons why this is a good idea. The first is that your active medical insurance (\$5 million) is higher than your retiree (\$300,000 or \$1 million depending on the plan you select) and the second is that your sick time is more valuable when you use it as intended, to pay you when you are ill.

If you are fortunate enough to be eligible to retire and have no medical issues, then count your blessings and plan your exit strategy properly:

1. Open a 401(k) Plan Account if you don't already have one.
2. Plan retirement to be in a year where you will have enough income to absorb your sick payout
3. Make sure you aren't having so much taken from your paycheck that you reach the ceiling on your account.

**Example 1:** A Flight Attendant retires January 1, having 1000 hours of unused sick time. The only pay that is going to be received in January is the amount of incentive earned in December and any unused accrued vacation. This is probably NOT \$3750.00 (1000 hours x \$3.75 per hour), which means some of the sick pay out will be forfeited. There is not an option to take this money any

other way; this person might be better off retiring December 31st as that would have the entire year's earnings to cushion the accrual.

**Example 2:** A Flight Attendant has opted to place 100% of her pay into her 401(k) and plans to retire on March 30th. Her annual income through March 30th is \$12,000, all of which has been deferred into the 401(k). Since one of the limits is that you cannot contribute more than 100% of your earned income in a year, there is no room for any additional contribution. She has 1000 hours of unused sick time (value \$3,750). Although the sick time contribution is a Company contribution, and therefore subject to the \$42,000 annual limit, it is also subject to the "100% of earned income limit." Even though this person is not even close to the \$42,000 annual ceiling that would include the Company contribution, there is no room for any contribution because it would exceed 100% of the income for the year (\$12,000). This person would need to reduce the percentage of contributions prior to retire-

ment to ensure that there would be room for \$3,750 upon retirement.


Remember, there are no alternate methods to receiving this payout. You must be retiring – therefore, at least age 55 with at least ten (10) years of company seniority. Flight Attendants who take Article 30, resign for any reason or use the 50 – 55 rule do not qualify for this payout.

The best advice we can give you is to plan for your retirement. It is a good idea to meet with a financial planner to determine what actions you should take – each person's financial picture and needs are unique and should be evaluated individually.

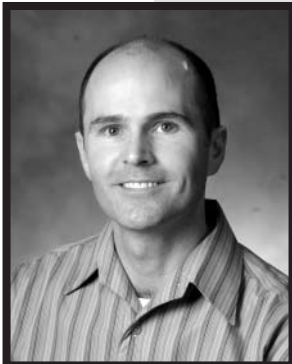
Distributions are another topic for another article but one thing you should keep in the back of your mind: when you retire, the access to your funds is restricted for 60 days – so plan your finances accordingly.

Financial Planning is available for free from the AA Credit Union. I strongly urge you to take advantage of this benefit

or find a Financial Planner with whom you are comfortable. The one very real benefit of using the Credit Union as a resource is that the personnel there understand all of the nuances of our retirement plan and our Super Saver 401(k) Plan.

It doesn't matter who you decide to contact for assistance; the important point is to make sure you obtain good advice in plenty of time so you can maximize your benefits. 





**Brent Peterson**  
APFA  
Contract Coordinator

contract@apfa.org  
817-540-0108, ext. 8271

**M**ost of the calls we receive concerning vacation and sick accrual come either very late in the year or once the previous year's accrual is posted. Generally, the end of the year is too late to have an impact on your accrual. I thought now would be a good time to address this topic while you can still have an effect on 2005 accruals. In addition, I am hopeful we can prevent or limit the number of Flight Attendants who find themselves in an overpayment situation because they did not accrue enough vacation to account for the number of PVD's they took in the prior year.

**“If you have fewer than 15 days, then you are not eligible to accrue vacation for that month.”**

When it comes to vacation and sick accrual many of us have become so concerned with the requirement of having a minimum of 420 paid hours during the calendar year (or an average of 35 hours per active month) we have forgotten there are actually two requirements, or thresholds, that must be met in order to accrue vacation or sick time.

The first threshold determines whether or not you are eligible to accrue vacation or sick time for a given month. In order to be eligible to accrue vacation for a particular month you must have 15 days or more of active service with the Company in that month. If you have fewer than 15 days, then you are not eligible to accrue vacation for that month. For purposes of vacation accrual an active month is defined as “15 days or more of paid status in a month.” Eligibility for sick time is similar. For purposes of computing sick leave accrual, “15 days or more of service in a calendar month shall be considered a full month and less than 15 days shall not be considered.” If you do not meet these thresholds for a given month then it is not possible to accrue

vacation or sick for that month. The difference between the two eligibility thresholds is that paid sick time (SK) is not considered service in order to accrue sick time. In other words, if you are on a paid sick absence for a majority of the month, you will not accrue sick time for that month. Paid sick is considered active service to be eligible to accrue vacation.

You can refer to your HISK (current year) or HISK/L (last year) in DECS to determine if a particular month is eligible or not for accrual. Your HISK is updated each month and will reflect either a Y or N under the columns labeled ACC SK/VC. The Y indicates you are eligible to accrue for that month; an N indicates that you are not eligible to accrue for that month. For example, if you took a 20-day Bid Leave in January, you would have an N for both SK and VC. If you were then on paid sick for 18 days in February you would have an N for SK and a Y for VC. Once the year is over, the total number of full-time months and non-accrue months will be reflected in the Final Summary of what has now become an HISK/L. Assuming you flew the remainder of the year, your HISK/L would indicate 11 Full-Time Months and 1 Non-Accrue Month as eligible for vacation accrual. You would also show

10 Full-Time Months and 2 Non-Accrue Months as eligible for sick accrual.

The 420-hour requirement for vacation and sick accrual comes into play at this point. Keep in mind there is a separate 420-hour requirement in order to have Company-subsidized health benefits. That requirement is looked at every month on a rolling year look-back basis. Refer to the Second Quarter 2004 *Skyword* for more information.

In order to accrue full vacation or sick time you must be paid a minimum of 420 hours during the calendar year, or an average of 35 hours per active month. At the end of the calendar year, the number of full-time months will be multiplied by 35 hours to determine your personal threshold. This number will be reflected as your Eligibility Hours under the Final Summary of your HISK/L. Most Flight Attendants who fly full schedules will show 12 Full-Time months and 420 for their Eligibility Hours.

In the above example, you would see 385 for your Vacation Eligibility Hours (11 months x 35 hours) and 350 for your Sick Eligibility Hours (10 months x 35 hours). As long as the total full-time paid hours (TTL FT PAID HOURS) during

the active months were equal to or greater than Eligibility Hours then you would accrue vacation and sick time for the months eligible to accrue. Vacation and Sick pay are included in the total full-time paid hours. In the example, as long the paid hours from February through December equaled or exceeded 385 hours, then you would accrue 11 months worth of vacation. If the paid hours from March through December equaled or exceeded 350 hours, then you would accrue 10 months worth of sick time.

It is important to remember that if you are not paid the minimum number of hours reflected in your Eligibility Hours then you will accrue no vacation or sick time for the year. Only the hours paid during your active months will be included in your TTL FT PAID HOURS. You do not need to be paid 35 hours during each active month; rather you must be paid an average of 35 hours for each active month.

I hope this review has helped you better understand your vacation and sick accrual. Every year a few Flight Attendants miss their Eligibility Hours threshold by just a few hours. By planning ahead you can avoid the stress at the end of the year.

# Letters of Agreement



**Jaimie McNeice**  
APFA  
Scheduling Coordinator

[scheduling@apfa.org](mailto:scheduling@apfa.org)  
817-540-0108, ext. 8261

**A** number of APFA Flight Attendants have expressed concern over APFA's recent Letters of Agreement with American. Some of you question why the Union seems to be agreeing with the Company so much.

For the record, APFA has one objective and one objective only – that is to improve our work life within the parameters of our existing contract. The Company has agreed to work with us in creative ways that do not cost a great deal of money to program, both because there's not a lot of money to spend right now and because the antiquated computer system we are currently using will need to be replaced in the next few years. In other words, money spent now will be wasted when AA moves on to the next computer system. One issue on which APFA was given an opportunity to partic-

ipate was the Purser Program. As a purser, my immediate response was, "Give us our money back and you won't have so many resignations!" However, given the state of our Company that wasn't an option. After considering some creative responses to chronic problems, the result was the Purser Flexibility Test. This innovative program addresses many of our working pursers' concerns and extends a carrot to current pursers to remain in the program and possibly bring others back. The test allows Crew Schedule to move up a purser already on a trip without having to offer it first to those on Make-Up. It also allows a purser to turn the "Volunteer" indicator on and off on individual trips, a very inexpensive fix which allows pursers to decide exactly when they will agree to fly the position perhaps enabling the regular purser on a particular trip to be awarded a PVD or mini-leave. The Volunteer Purser Pick-Up portion of the test rewards pursers who want to fly MU/Option II by honoring their requests for purser flying prior to running the 1600 round of Make-Up.

We even went a little further and cooked up something called "faux" Flight Attendants to be awarded non-IFS flying that went un-bid at a base. This helps relieve a few bid

denials, two per base at most, and allows flying to go into Open Time, thus driving additional flexibility in Trip Trading with Open Time. We also expanded the TTOT buffer to two hours, which benefits all Flight Attendants who trade with Open Time.


The next big scheduling effort we made is related to holiday staffing. Both APFA and AA recognized that holiday flying would always be an issue; we struggled to come up with ways to encourage Flight Attendants not scheduled to work to support those scheduled to work during the holiday period. With that in mind, APFA agreed to allow International and Domestic Flight Attendants (who have maintained their International qualification) to fly Option II in the opposite operation at their adjacent base after the MU/Option II list has been run for the base.

Additionally, we implemented the PU code. This indicator refers to a PO and although a PO is still considered an occurrence, it is now un-credited so Flight Attendants may choose to fly MU to recoup the lost time. In order to facilitate more trips being placed into Open Time at the beginning of the month, APFA agreed to allow the computer to relieve month-to-month schedule con-

flicts at 72 hours prior to the beginning of the month rather than the 48 hours it has been. The intent was to provide additional trips to be picked up by AVBL Flight Attendants, as well as providing more time to TTOT.

The most exciting part of the recent Holiday Staffing Initiatives was the ability for Reserves to trip trade. The short duration of this test was not a plot; the goal was to improve flexibility during the holiday when we thought demand would be the highest. Also, since trades were being manually processed, covering the desk was an expensive proposition.

Some of the tests we've agreed to have not been well received by the membership. Part of the problem could be a lack of understanding of the various tests. It's often difficult to communicate the genesis of innovations to our membership. Flight Attendants hear rumors and have an idea that something is going on, but often aren't sure of all the details. Although it's tough to keep up with all of the changes right now, it doesn't mean that these changes are not valuable. APFA wants you to understand and make use the new options that have been created. As your Scheduling Coordinator, I'll continue to try

to educate you as to the benefits of what's now available to you. Please, watch the website and listen to, or read, the Hotline. In order to enjoy the benefits of the options on which we have worked so hard, you must stay informed. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact your Base Chair, the Scheduling Desk or me to discuss them. Rest assured that we will continue to work toward improving our collective work lives, and that means there may be other Letters of Agreement in the future. 

## Examples of Previous Letters of Agreement Still in Effect:

- **Optional Exchange Flexibility** – allows F/A to drop and trade OE trips
- **Crew Rest Exceptions** – allows for crew rest on flights that just miss 8 hours of scheduled flying time such as DFW-OGG, BOS-CDG, ORD-GLA, etc. . .
- **Language Drop**
- **Additional Deadhead Flexibility** – allows F/A's to waive DHD or to DHD from commuter city
- **Option II**
- **All Weather-Exception Letters** – protects guarantee in the event of a hurricane, fire, etc. . .
- **Short-Call Makeup** – enabling F/A's to pick up M/U trip with less than three hours notice
- **Availability Self Plot**
- **Increased Flexibility for Domestic Mutual Transfers** – allowing quals to be acquired after the transfer is granted in order to allow more F/A's to transfer



**Patty French**  
APFA Health Coordinator

health@apfa.org  
817-540-0108, ext. 8290

# Introduction to Trauma

It is difficult to summarize what is known about trauma without seeming overly simplistic. Extensive research has been conducted about trauma since September 11, 2001. Experts have recognized from this research the importance of building resiliency into one's life in order to avoid the layering of traumatic experiences on top of one another. With this layering comes the depletion of physical and emotional resources that normally help us to withstand stress. The layering of traumatic experiences causes a chronic condition of low-level anxiety, which is a by-product of the "fight or flight" syndrome in humans. Imagine what it would feel like and how you would behave if you believed that the world was no longer a safe place to live.

Your limbic system would be in the on position all of the time in readiness for the next stress or terror. You would eventually feel physically worn down and your behavior would reflect a "come near me at your own risk" stance. Everything you did would keep people at bay so

that you could defend against the next attack. You would be in a constant state of hyper-vigilance. This is a state that cannot be physically and emotionally maintained for very long without severe physical, emotional, social and occupational consequences.

The first line of defense against such a state is to educate yourself about the symptoms of chronic trauma. The second defense is to understand what resiliency is, how to build it into your life and how to keep it an active part of your everyday life. The following trauma flier was put together to help you recognize symptoms of chronic trauma and how to build resiliency into your life. I have also included resources for help and further research.

Hope and renewal can be reborn out of the ashes of tragedy. My hope is that you will find this flier helpful in your life.



## TRAUMA

*Traumatic experiences shake the foundation of our beliefs about safety and shatter our assumptions of trust. Because they are so far outside what we would expect, these events provoke reactions that feel strange and crazy. Even though these reactions are unusual and disturbing, they are typical and acceptable. They are normal responses to abnormal events.*

*Trauma symptoms are adaptive, and originally evolved to help us recognize and avoid other dangerous situations. In the purest sense, trauma involves exposure to a life-threatening experience. Yet, many individuals exposed to violations by people or institutions they depend on or trust, also show traumatic response symptoms, even if their experience was not life threatening. As you might expect, risk for developing traumatic response symptoms increases when chronic or multiple traumatic experiences occur.*

### Things To Remember About Trauma

Everyone responds differently to trauma. Try not to judge yourself or others. This is an important time to honor your own feelings as well as those of others.

Trauma in the workplace is serious. We may not realize how much a part of our lives our co-workers have become until something happens to one of them. While we may question the appropriateness of "grieving" at work, it is necessary in order to put closure on the incident. People grieve in different ways and those differences need to be supported and respected.

Given that we in the airline industry have suffered multiple traumas in the past several years, it would be expected that some of us will suffer from unresolved trauma. Research shows that approximately 20 percent of the general population who experience a traumatic event will go on to suffer from unresolved trauma.

“Given that we in the airline industry have suffered multiple traumas in the past several years, it would be expected that some of us will suffer from unresolved trauma.”



## Common Signs Of Chronic Unresolved Trauma

Do you feel a constant low level of irritability?

Do you have a loss of energy or chronic fatigue?

Are you impatient with others, especially family members or friends?

Do you overreact to perceived slights?

Do you often feel put upon or taken advantage of by others?

Do you have turbulent relations with friends or co-workers?

Have you lost the ability to feel happy and carefree?

Do you have fewer friends now than you had in the past?

Have the content of your dreams changed?

## Building Resilience

The American Psychological Association defines resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, or significant stress. Studies show that relationships that create love and trust, and

offer encouragement and reassurance, help bolster resilience. *Additional factors that are associated with resilience include:*

- The capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out
- A positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities
- Skill in communicating and problem solving
- The capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses

*You will also find the following helpful:*

- Exercise and get plenty of rest.
- Eat well-balanced meals and avoid caffeine, alcohol, and drugs.
- Make as many small daily decisions as possible to reassert your sense of control.
- Talk with people you trust.
- Structure your time and set priorities.
- Accept change as a part of living.
- Look for opportunities for self-discovery and insight as to how you have grown as a result of your experience.

## Places To Look For Help

Getting help when you need it is crucial to building your resilience. Beyond caring family members and friends, people find it helpful to seek out:

**Professional Counseling:**  
For a counseling referral, call the American Airlines EAP department at 1-800-555-8810.

Information from the APFA Health Department at 1-800-395-2723 ext. 8290  
Peer Support Program  
Counsel from your Clergy

Interesting readings include:  
*Coping with Trauma: Hope Through Understanding,*  
by Jon G. Allen

*Unattended Sorrow: Recovering From Loss and Reviving the Heart,*  
by Stephen Levine

*Restoring Hope and Trust: An Illustrated Guide to Mastering Trauma,*  
by Lisa Lewis and Kay Kelly

On-line resources:  
[www.ncptsd.org](http://www.ncptsd.org)  
[www.trauma-pages.com](http://www.trauma-pages.com)  
[www.helping.apa.org](http://www.helping.apa.org)  
[www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov)

## APFA Voluntary Insurance Program

APFA recently terminated the program that permitted APFA members the opportunity to enroll in one or more of six voluntary insurance products and pay for them through payroll deduction. Despite widespread notification of this offer, only 719 APFA members chose to enroll in one or more of the six (6) products offered. More than one program failed to meet the minimum participation requirements mandated by the insurance provider. Due to the low participation, the overall maintenance of the program became cost prohibitive to the APFA. A notification letter was sent to all participants. This letter contained a contact name and number to assist the participants in procuring alternate insurance.



**Lonny Glover**  
APFA Safety Coordinator

[safety@apfa.org](mailto:safety@apfa.org)  
817.540.0108, ext. 8302

Once in awhile, it is important to reflect on where we were and what we have become.

For years the general public's perception of our occupation has been less than ideal. Those perceptions were only given more validity and credit when television commercials depicted a female stewardess in a mini skirt and go-go boots seductively touting, "Fly me." As a work group, it has been a struggle to change that public perception and be recognized for the safety aspect of our job rather than a marketing tool to promote the customer's impression of Flight Attendants as eye candy.

In our long battle to be recognized as safety professionals, we have, unfortunately, paid the ultimate price. We have

## Once in Awhile...

lost many Flight Attendants, friends and colleagues along the way. Many have lost their lives performing their duties in heroic proportions while demonstrating they were truly worthy of being identified as Safety Professionals.

Needless to say, things have changed greatly in our daily work lives. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, the PBE (protective breathing equipment) was added to our on-board emergency equipment. The PBE allows crewmembers to have a protected breathing atmosphere while fighting fire onboard an aircraft. In addition, fire extinguishers have improved dramatically in performance, thus allowing you, the on-board fire fighter, to prevent a possible catastrophe.

In the late 1990's and the early 2000's, the introduction of defibrillators (AED's) and required protective breathing masks evolved. American, with the help and support of APFA, lead the industry in supplying these tools on our aircraft. These items are designed to both protect and assist you as the first responder in performing life-saving support during a medical emergency. The addition of these tools has assisted in the transition from Stewardess to Safety Professional.

The terrorist attacks that occurred September 11, 2001, had a tremendous impact on our lives and our careers. The

horrible events that unfolded that September day may have single-handedly forced each of us, as well as the flying public, into the realization that we should be identified as a safety professional.

No one imagined that we would have to deal with a group of terrorists who would try to commandeer an aircraft and use it as a weapon of mass destruction. Since that horrific day we have become much more vigilant of what transpires on our aircraft. No one expected that a terrorist would conceal explosives in a shoe. But the quick, decisive action taken by the safety professionals working Flight 63 in December '01 saved the lives of everyone onboard that aircraft.

Our in-flight role has now been expanded to include acting as an on-board security guard. The flight deck is now secured with reinforced cockpit doors, pilots are armed and more Federal Air Marshals (FAM's) are on our flights. We have become the last line of defense in a possible terrorist attack. Complacency is out - action and deterrence are in. We are armed with flex cuffs, restraint tape and, most importantly, common sense and awareness. TSA Crew Member Self Defense classes are ongoing. Classified security information is available to us, allowing each of us to fulfill this critical role.

We fight fires more effectively,

save lives in medical situations more confidently and protect the security of our aircraft with more vigilance than ever before. We are wives, husbands, mothers, daughters, sons, domestic partners and friends. We are Flight Attendants. We continue to evolve and change everyday, as does our career, but we continue to put on our uniforms and show up for work.

Once in awhile, it is important to reflect on where we were and what we have become. Ever evolving and ever changing, the role of a Flight Attendant in the past two decades has been altered dramatically. However, once in awhile it is also important to remember that we are first responders - regularly performing heroic duties 35,000 feet in the air with only each other to rely on.

It was once said that heroes are ordinary people who do extraordinary things. Those heroes are our Flight Attendants, the Safety Professionals of American Airlines.

## Safety Accidents & Incidents

**11/2004, MIA/LAX, B767-300ER**

Seventy-two-year-old male with Parkinson's "woke up" in flight feeling confused and attempted to leave aircraft. Flight

Attendants restrained passenger by wrapping blanket around his chest. Because he was frail, they feared flex cuffs could injure him. A Flight Attendant sat in seat directly behind passenger for remainder of flight continuing to restrain man. A strong passenger restrained man for landing. Paramedics and man's son met the flight.

**12/2004, SJU/JFK, A300-600R**

Passenger brought dog on board leaving kennel open allowing dog to escape. Flight Attendant requested that passenger return animal to kennel. Passenger complained about procedure. Dog bit Flight Attendant on back of hand six times. Flight Attendant bleeding. Nurse on board recommended paramedics meet flight to administer antibiotics. Flight was also met by Passenger Service Mgr questioning how passenger able to board animal without paperwork.

**12/2004, JFK/SDQ, A300-600R**

Unexpected turbulence. Captain made PA for Flight Attendants to take jumpseats immediately. Five seconds after announcement, aircraft jolted up and down and lost altitude quickly. Three Flight Attendants experienced serious injuries to chest, shoulders, legs, knees, back and neck.

# Hotel Security in the Worst of Times

12/2004, ORD/IND, S80

During taxi-out, passenger found security threat written on briefing card. Aircraft taken to remote area off runway where all passengers deplaned without carry-ons. Pax bussed to terminal. X-ray machine taken to aircraft and all passengers' bags removed from aircraft and re-scanned on-site. Aircraft searched by canines, and passengers were re-screened. Flight cancelled and all passengers accommodated on next available flights.

12/2004, JFK/LAX, B767-200ER

Passenger acting strangely and taking pictures with digital camera inside cabin. Later in flight, passenger continued taking pictures. Failed to comply with crewmember instructions. Was downloading pictures onto laptop computer. Purser spoke with passenger, who now changed seats. Passenger asked to hand over equipment. Pax did not comply and stated, "You are just a Stewardess and cannot do a damn thing about it." Flight Attendants communicated with cockpit. Law Enforcement Officers requested to meet flight. Flight met by eight Airport Police, one TSA Rep. and LAX Flight Service. Passenger detained and denied further travel. ▲



Dané Townsend  
APFA Hotel Coordinator

hotel@apfa.org  
817-540-0108, ext. 8306

It is hard to believe that this month marks the fourth anniversary of what a lot of us consider to be the worst day in modern American history. In other ways it seems as though the day we lost so many loved ones and co-workers was a very long time ago. Maybe it seems long ago because we have become much wiser in the intervening time - a depth of knowledge I wish we'd never had to learn. Although September 11, 2001, was a day that exposed our vulnerabilities, sadly it also reinforced our inner strength and brought new resolve to the forefront.

When the July terror attacks occurred in London, APFA and AA utilized our newly-gained capabilities in crew coordination during a tragedy. For the many crews that were in London on that fateful day, this

column reconfirms what you saw; for all others, it will provide insight into what to expect should you ever find yourself in this situation. This is not meant to be a comprehensive strategy, but rather a general overview as each situation will warrant slightly different variations in approach.

As with any type of emergency, APFA, Systems Operation Control (SOC) and other departments worked diligently to ensure the safety and security of our crews.

First, when the unexpected occurs, the number of crews in the targeted city is immediately determined as well as the number of inbound aircraft. Once these numbers are confirmed, decisions are made regarding what to do with each crew.

In the London case, it was determined that it was best to let crews already at the long-layover hotel as well as those already en route, to remain there to set up a ground-command center at the hotel. The purpose of the ground-command center was to ensure crew security and deal with any crewmember concerns. It was further decided that all crews on inbound aircraft, regardless of layover length, would be placed at airport hotels. In the event that we are ever faced with a similar situation, it is

“When the July terror attacks occurred in London, APFA and AA utilized our newly-gained capabilities in crew coordination during a tragedy.”

very likely that you will see this same response. However, it is important to note that each individual situation and the intelligence received will govern the decisions made.

It then becomes a matter of “beat the clock” in securing the number of rooms needed at airport hotels because, as you can imagine, every other airline with inbound crews is also trying to secure alternate housing for their crews. This may lead to our personnel being placed in a variety of hotels; however, every attempt is made to ensure that all individual crews remain together.

The next thing to be considered is the length of time the layovers will continue to be placed at the airport location. This determination is made on a day-to-day basis and reduces the likelihood that crews will be kept at airport hotels indefinitely.

While we understand that it is unfortunate and often times uncomfortable to be placed at an airport hotel for a long lay-

over, the primary concern is crew safety, security and coordination. Rest assured that everything possible will be done to return crews to the original layover location as quickly as possible.

The purpose of this article is not to alarm you or cause undue stress, but rather to assure you that important lessons have been learned from past experience. Whether you are in Los Angeles or London, Des Moines or Dublin, your security while on layover is paramount. In a world full of uncertainties, it's comforting to know what to expect when the unexpected happens. ▲



# APFA's First-Ever Intern

By Kristine Edwards



From l. to r. lower - Jaimie McNeice, Kristine Edwards, Tommie Hutto-Blake, Cathy Lukensmeyer. From l. to r. upper - Cilla Golas, Lonny G.Lover, Leslie Mayo, Denise Pointer, Brent Peterson and Greg Hildreth attending monthly National Coordinator's meeting.

"I'd like you to meet our new Labor Relations Intern, Kristine Edwards. She is going to Mercyhurst College in Pennsylvania and she just returned from studying in Spain. Right now she is completing her internship with APFA in order to graduate with her degree in International Business. Kristine is interested in labor relations and she has a wonderful opportunity to see a union and its company's management at work."

If you were introduced to me during my ten weeks at APFA, I'm sure you heard some version of this spiel from President Tommie Hutto-Blake. On June 14, 2005, I became the first APFA Intern. No, I am not a company spy nor am I an audi-

tor who infiltrated the system. I am just a student who did not want to have the typical coffee getting, copy-making internship. I also did this for free, so I didn't receive any of your dues money as compensation.

Everyone I meet here asks, "How did you find an internship at APFA"? Actually, I'm an Airline Brat. Both my step-mom and my aunt are Flight Attendants for AA, so when I was searching for an internship, like nearly every other student on the planet, APFA made sense. Using my family connections, I got in touch with Tommie, pitched my idea to her and, with an enthusiastic president on my side, I have experienced much more than the average intern.

As soon as I stepped on the property, my head was a jumble of acronyms. "We're meeting at APFA with the DFW and ORD FSM's and APA and TWU on the FAA's..." The important information in that phrase is coded with airline jargon.

Webster and his dictionary are no match for this industry. My first thought was "I spent almost half an hour signing confidentiality documents, but who cares because I don't understand a word of what they're saying" For the first two days, I wrote down every three letter acronym I heard, snuck into the rest room and called my step-mom for translation. Now, when I talk to my dad on the phone I can picture him as he sighs, shakes his head and says, "You sound like one of them."

Here are a few reasons why my internship has been better than most. Instead of remembering if my supervisor likes mustard or mayonnaise on his sandwich, I had to remember the name of every senator and congressman I met on the Hill during the Washington, D.C., Fly-In. Rather than a micro-managing boss who takes his frustration out on his worthless intern, my direct supervisor was the APFA President. The meetings that I've gotten to sit in on weren't over who forgot to remove the moldy cheese from the community refrigerator – they involved discussions on the future of

**"Of course, my entire internship experience wasn't perfect."**

American Airlines with Union and Company bigwigs. Of course, my entire internship experience wasn't perfect. Some of you may not know that the permanent staff at APFA headquarters is unionized under the UAW. Like yours, their work is protected from anyone else performing it, so nobody can make copies without being in violation of their contract. Let's just say that I made that mistake only once (oops!).

Whether I was with your union dealing with the big company management (APFA and AA) or the little union dealing with the bigger union management (UAW and APFA), whether they were discussing the problem or I was the problem, I sat on all sides of the table. I found the only way to keep your sanity in this internship business, or the airline business for that matter,

**"The meetings that I've gotten to sit in on weren't over who forgot to remove the moldy cheese from the community refrigerator – they involved discussions on the future of American Airlines with Union and Company bigwigs."**

is this: You live, make a mistake, it kicks back, you learn, and then you laugh later. All in all, it's been a wonderful experience, one I will never forget.

Thank you APFA.

**Editor's Note:** Kristine was a great asset to APFA. It was refreshing to see things through a newcomer's eyes. As is the case with most internships, hers was unpaid.

After leaving Euless, Texas, she joined Airline Ambassadors at her own expense along with the rest of the Airline Ambassador volunteers on their mission to Thailand. She returns to Mercyhurst College in the Fall for her senior year.

# Night Stalkers Honor AA Flight Attendant Sara Low

By Ron Harris, DFW

The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) out of Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, known as the Night Stalkers, has had a special relationship with the memory of Boston-based Flight Attendant Sara Low for several years now. Shortly after the terrible events of 9/11, SOAR crews wore American Airlines' Flight Attendant wings on over twenty missions they flew in Afghanistan, including Operation Anaconda, in honor of Sara and other AA Crewmembers lost on that day. On May 25, 2005, the Night Stalkers again honored Sara with the creation of the "Sara Low Non-Rated Crew Member of the Year Award." Sponsored by Lanmark Technology, Inc., a female and Service-Disabled Veteran-owned technology company, this award was designed to honor the Crew Chiefs and Flight Engineers from the 160th, whose actions and service are rarely recognized. Indeed, they are unsung heroes, like the Flight Attendants on the morning of September 11th.

The trophy is symbolic as well. "When you look at the wings on the trophy you will notice that the American Airlines' Flight Attendant wings are in the middle, surrounded by Army Crew Member wings. This is our way of saying [Sara] is not alone and that we will never forget those who were taken away from us on 9/11," said MSG Raul Ruiz of the 160th SOAR. "At the bottom of the trophy is a small plaque that references [Sara] with the flight number and date of her death. My hope is that when the plaque is read, it will instill a fire in the hearts of our Soldiers to keep doing what we do best." Mike Low, Sara's father, agreed. "The men and women of the Night Stalkers represent a wonderful, albeit bittersweet, legacy of 9/11. They are like the men and women of American Airlines...who have a special place in our hearts. We hold you both in the highest regard."



## CLARIFYING INFORMATION ON SKYWORD EXPRESS II Q&A ARTICLE

*In the most recent issue of Skyword Express we carried a Q&A session between Patrick Hancock and Skyword. The information concerning the PBGC maximums was misleading and we wish to take a few moments to clarify this important subject. The entire article has been reprinted with clarifying information on the APFA website. For a total understanding we suggest you refer to it.*

*The issue causing confusion is the PBGC maximums, which are based upon the age you are when you begin receiving benefits from the PBGC. Under our plan you can retire at age 60 and receive full benefits. If you have enough years of credited service you can retire as early as 55 and receive your pension with a reduction of 3% per year for every year you are under 60. The PBGC rules state that you will receive the employer provided benefit up to certain maximums. The PBGC has a chart on their website at [www.pbgc.gov](http://www.pbgc.gov), which specifically*

*shows what the maximum benefit is for each age. These numbers are significantly lower (approximately 6%) for every year one is younger than age 65. This does not mean that your pension would be 6% lower for every year you were under 65, but that the applicable maximum is lower. The maximum PBGC benefit for someone age 55 is \$1,710, so if your pension was that amount or less you would be covered.*

*Remember that the PBGC also has a five-year phase-in for new benefits, so there would be a recalculation for everyone covered by a pension plan taken over by the PBGC, whether you are already receiving your pension or you are still employed if the plan were to go to the PBGC prior to September 12, 2006.*

*It is a good idea to take a look at the PBGC tables and consider the maximum that would apply to you when planning your retirement strategy.*

Flight Attendants had been assigned, crews were undermanned, and there were no standbys. Union witnesses disagreed with this assessment of staffing availability on that day.

A similar occurrence happened at BOS during the same week; in both cases, the flights were delayed for less than 15 minutes in order to make the Flight Attendants legal. According to Mr. Dansby, delaying flights to keep Flight Attendants legal is a long-standing practice undertaken during extreme situations. He could not, however, document this practice since no codes are entered into a Flight Attendant's record if s/he remains legal and there is no written policy or procedure in place. Union witnesses who have served as Schedule Coordinators testified that no Flight Attendants have ever reported that their scheduled flight departures from home base had been delayed in order to keep them legal.

Mr. Dansby's review of Company records indicate that no Base staffing emergency was declared at ORD the night Dent's flight was delayed, and the steps set forth in 9L for filling open time were not exhausted. He pointed out that because Dent was never illegal, no open time occurred. According to Mr. Dansby, Flight Attendants do not become illegal until they are removed from their schedule. He further

noted that 9L is cumbersome and unsuccessful because everyone refuses the call. **CONTENTIONS OF THE UNION**

The Union points out that this case addresses only one narrow situation covered by Article 9P6a: when Flight Attendants become illegal for their last trip sequence originating during the last five days of the month. According to the Union, the Company's new actions in "making a Flight Attendant legal" violate the intent, meaning and practice of Article 9P6a, which has been in effect since 1979. Although staffing is thinner now than it has been in the past, the pertinent contract provisions have not changed.

According to the Union, the Company cannot change working conditions without first bargaining with the Union. In fact, the parties negotiated a Restructuring Agreement to account for economic hard times. The Company asserted then that reducing the pay-protection period from the last seven days of the month to the last five days saved it two million dollars. It cannot now further reduce those protections unilaterally in the name of efficiency; it is not entitled to get at arbitration what it failed to get at the bargaining table.

The Union disputes the Company's contention that the contract is silent about when a Flight Attendant becomes ille-

gal and points to the many contractual references to the published flight schedules and bid sequences that govern the status of all Flight Attendants. A decision in the Company's favor, according to the Union, would not only erode the 9P choices governed by seniority, but would also effectively dismantle other provisions that address rates of pay, hours of service and working conditions. This is demonstrated by the testimony of a Company witness who on the one hand conceded that a Flight Attendant has no contractual obligation to contact Scheduling when s/he arrives at home base, but also maintained that the Company has the right to change the departure time of that Flight Attendant's next scheduled flight, that no first-party notification was necessary, and that a Flight Attendant who missed a rescheduled flight in that circumstance could be charged with a missed trip. The Board should grant the grievance and order the Company to cease and desist from future violations involving Flight Attendant illegalities. Furthermore, the Board should order the Company to pay the Union's costs for prosecuting this grievance at all levels.

**CONTENTIONS OF THE COMPANY**

The Company maintains that although the Union demonstrated that there could be

notification problems when the Company moves departure times, it did not meet its burden of showing that the contract prevents the Company from moving departure times in order to maintain legality. No Flight Attendants missed their trips, no Flight Attendants were disciplined. In fact, both Grievants ultimately worked the flights they had originally planned on flying. In these cases, although the Flight Attendants had no obligation to contact Crew Schedule, both did so, learned of the changes, and made their trips. Neither party wants to concede the issue of notice, but that issue is not determinative of whether the contract or contractual history demonstrates a meeting of minds regarding departure times. Union witnesses admitted at arbitration that moving departure times as was done in these two instances was never discussed at the bargaining table.

According to the Company, legality is about time, not schedule. The Company changes departure times under many circumstances, most significantly in mid-sequence, and the Union conceded that the contract is silent about whether departure times can or cannot be changed in mid-sequence. If the contract has a general prohibition against changing departure times, how can the Union argue that the Company may change them mid-sequence but not at base?



Moreover, the record clearly demonstrates that there is no meeting of minds regarding when Flight Attendants officially become illegal; if there is no agreement on this matter, how can there have been a meeting of minds regarding departure time adjustment?

The Company argues that there is no contractual reason to take away Crew Schedule's ability, on occasion, to exercise its judgement to save a trip from canceling, particularly when no harm came to the Flight Attendants and the fewest passengers and employees were inconvenienced. The existence of Article 9L does not prove that departure times cannot be moved; it merely prescribes the manner in which the Company covers open time. In these two instances, neither trip was considered open.

The Company maintains that all traditional contractual arguments favor its position: the Union could not point to a contractual provision that addresses its alleged right; past practice has developed that allows departure delays for illegality during mid-sequence, and no remedy exists for the Grievants. The four corners of the agreement must be found to have been contemplated by both parties. The grievances should be denied.

#### OPINION

Before we address the main

issue presented here, it is important we are clear about what this grievance is not. First, it is not a challenge to the Company's right to schedule flights under any and all circumstances; there is no dispute about that. Rather, the dispute before us focuses on what impact the delay of a scheduled flight may have on a Flight Attendant's contractual rights. Second, this is not an individual grievance that requires establishment of harm to individual employees and a remedy for those employees. Rather, it is and was filed as a base grievance (actually two grievances) which challenges a practice, policy or procedure that affects all Flight Attendants at those bases.

As many previous arbitrators, including myself, have observed, the scheduling provisions in the parties' collective bargaining agreement are enormously complex and interwoven. The matter before us appears to hinge on exactly when, during the course of their work, Flight Attendants become "illegal", i.e., does the 11 hour required-rest clock start, as the Union argues, by counting back from the check-in time of the Flight Attendant's next scheduled flight, or at some other time designated by Crew Scheduling, as the Company argues. Although the Company maintains that the contract is silent on this matter and the parties had no meeting of the

minds in this respect, a review of the entire contract leads this Board to a different conclusion. Published schedules are the life blood of the airline industry. The Company relies on them when dealing with both its customers and its flight crews. It is self-evident that, in turn, the customers rely on those schedules; no more needs be said in that quarter. More pertinent to this case is how completely Flight Attendants rely on those schedules as well. In no other industry do employees use their seniority to bid on their monthly work schedules, schedules that can vary wildly depending on where an employee stands in the seniority queue; employees rely on these schedules to arrange the rest of their lives. There is no dispute that the bid sequences put out by the Company are based on the schedules that are published to the world.

It is also true, however, that departure times change frequently, either because the Company revises its published schedules, usually long in advance, or because individual flights get delayed or even cancelled because of unexpected events such as weather, equipment failure, or even crew shortages. Such delays and cancellations can have an enormous impact on the lives and/or pay of Flight Attendants and over the years, the parties have negotiated provisions that serve to protect either the pay or the personal time of

employees when flight schedules change.

Last minute changes to a Flight Attendant's bid schedule are usually caused by one of three events, a misconnect (a Flight Attendant arrives from one leg too late to fly her next scheduled leg), an illegality (a Flight Attendant arrives from one leg too late to have the required hours of rest before his or her next scheduled flight), or a cancellation (the flight a Flight Attendant is scheduled to fly is cancelled for any reason), collectively referred to as a MIC. The parties have negotiated complex and sometimes confusing methods of dealing with these events as they impact both the pay and schedule of Flight Attendants. The only situation addressed in this grievance is that of illegality.

Illegals occur in two "either/or" circumstances. The first addresses location: a Flight Attendant becomes illegal to fly either in mid-sequence (i.e., away from home base) or at base. The second addresses the time of month: a Flight Attendant becomes illegal either in the first twenty-five (or twenty-six) days of the contractual month or in the last five days. The situation addressed in this grievance concerns only an illegality that occurs at home base in the last five days.

The Company contends that because it has delayed flights

to keep Flight Attendants legal when an illegality has occurred mid-sequence, the contract permits it do so in any of the other combinations of circumstances. The Board disagrees. Article 9P1 specifically permits the Company to reschedule a Flight Attendant after s/he experiences a mid-sequence MIC. How the Company chooses to do so is entirely in its managerial control as long as other duty restrictions are observed, and delaying a flight to extend a Flight Attendant's rest period is clearly within its purview of choices. The Company then reschedules the Flight Attendant to the same flight with its new departure time and the problem is solved. The Company has done so with no objection from the Union. According to the contract, this sequence of events can occur at any time of the month.

When a MIC occurs at Flight Attendant's home base, the parties' rights and obligations differ depending on the timing of the occurrence. If it occurs during the first twenty-five or twenty-six days of the month, Flight Attendants are contractually obligated under Article 9P2 to contact Crew Scheduling; the Company may then reassign them, reschedule them, hold them available for further duty, or release them. Various and particular rules are set out for the rights and obligations obtaining to both parties in each of these situa-

tions. Nothing in the record specifically reveals whether flight departures have been delayed in these circumstances in order to keep a Flight Attendant legal.

Very different rules have been negotiated for a MIC that occurs at home base during the last five days of the month. Article 9P6a is very clear: under such circumstances, Flight Attendants have two choices – they may choose not to fly and give up pay for the lost scheduled sequence or they may protect their pay by being available for make-up flying. Under such circumstances, the Company may still delay the flight and may reschedule Flight Attendants after they become legal again, but this only applies to Flight Attendants who have chosen to make themselves available.

Both the record and the contract as a whole reveal that there is only one plausible sequence of events in these circumstances: a Flight Attendant overflies; s/he works into his or her legal break time as calculated from his or her bid schedule; s/he opts to protect his or her sequence pay and enter the make-up list or s/he declines to make him or herself available and forfeits the pay; the Company reassigns or reschedules the Flight Attendant who is available.

For the Company to be able to

allow a Flight Attendant to land with less than eleven hours available until his or her next scheduled departure, and to refuse to acknowledge the Flight Attendant's illegality for some unspecified period of time, and then to delay the departure of the Flight Attendant's next scheduled trip, and then to announce that the Flight Attendant was never illegal because the trip departure has been delayed to make him or her legal, flies in the face of both the contract and common sense.

With respect to the contract, the sequence described above denies the special benefit negotiated for Flight Attendants who are illegal at home base during the last five days, the right not to fly. If an illegality occurs anywhere else or at home during any other time, the Flight Attendant has no such right, and must remain available for the benefit of the Company. In the last five days at base, however, the parties have carefully carved out an exception to that rule, giving Flight Attendants the absolute right to opt out of flying – and forfeit pay. Moreover, Article 9S specifies that the right to opt out kicks in when overflying causes a Flight Attendant to be "illegal for his/her next scheduled trip sequence(s)". The reference to "scheduled" can only mean the published schedule in the Flight Attendant's bid, not a re-sched-

ule. To find otherwise would make this and many other contractual references to "scheduled" and "rescheduled" meaningless. The Company may reschedule flights as necessary, but when it does so in these particular circumstances, it cannot as a result require Flight Attendants to forfeit their contractual right to choose between declining to fly or becoming available for reassignment. To do so would violate both the letter and the spirit of the collective bargaining agreement.

This conclusion is underscored by the operational result that could occur in these circumstances. If Flight Attendants arrive at base and have less than eleven hours before their next scheduled flights, they know that by contract, they cannot fly that sequence. The contract also tells them they have the right not to fly for the rest of the month and that they have no contractual obligation to contact the Company. Let us assume that such Flight Attendants were scheduled for vacation or duty-free days immediately following the completion of the dropped sequence and, as a result of the MIC, they leave town to begin those activities a few days early. If in the interim the Company delays the flight departure to make the Flight Attendants legal, they will not learn of the reschedules, they will miss their trips, and,

“The Company shall, from this date forward, refrain from delaying flight departures in such a manner that Flight Attendants are denied the benefit of exercising the choices set forth in Article 9P6a.”

according to the Company, they will get charged with an occurrence, all while behaving completely in accordance with their contractual obligations. Not incidentally, these circumstances would also likely result in flights cancelled for lack of crew.

It is immaterial that in the two examples brought before us, the Flight Attendants contacted the Company, learned of the delayed departures, and both flew the trips, although under protest. The scenario we set forth above, where Flight Attendants are charged with missed trips although they have met absolutely all their contractual obligations, is patently pre-

dictable if the Company is permitted to continue with this practice.

From the Company's point of view, the common sense cuts in the other direction. It pointed out that Ms. Dent flew the sequence she was originally scheduled for with only a thirteen minute delayed departure, a plan that ensured that the flight was staffed as well as inconveniencing the fewest employees and passengers. Although this is true, it ignores one central and crucial point: under the particular circumstances at issue, the Grievants had the right to opt out of flying.

Since Ms. Dent was eager to maximize her income, once she became illegal and then put herself on the make-up list, there would be nothing to prevent the Company from delaying the departure to ensure she was legal. Even if there were no reserves, the flight still would have gone – with Ms. Dent on board. Of course, if the Flight Attendants involved exercised their option not to fly, there could be staffing consequences, as serious as causing a cancelled flight. Or the Company might have had to exercise all its options under Article 9L, which allows it eventually to call in Flight Attendants on their days off. There is no question that exhausting 9L options is cumbersome and difficult: as I

observed in an earlier award, even the Union does not want regular Flight Attendants to be forced into work. But this is the procedure the parties have bargained and until they change it, it is the law of the shop.

There is no question that the Company is trying to run in the most efficient way possible which has, in part, resulted in reduced staffing of Reserves. This is tantamount to a game of roulette, hoping that no more staff will be paid than are used and no fewer staff will be available than needed. It is not an easy time for anyone, and to accommodate economic realities, the Flight Attendants have already relinquished rights and benefits they had bargained earlier. The Company's understandable search for efficiencies, however, must be kept within contractual parameters or sought at the bargaining table.

With respect to the Union's request for what are tantamount to punitive damages, that request is denied. Such a remedy is extremely rare in labor arbitration, as the Union is well aware, and then only in the most egregious circumstances. This situation does not even begin to approach that standard.

#### **AWARD**

The Company violated Article 9P6a and Article 9S1 of the collective bargaining agreement

under all the facts and circumstances of this case.

The Company shall, from this date forward, refrain from delaying flight departures in such a manner that Flight Attendants are denied the benefit of exercising the choices set forth in Article 9P6a.





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