

the official publication of the association of professional flight attendants

**SKYWORD**

summer 2006



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summer 2006

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**Tommie Hutto-Blake** President

**Brett Durkin** Vice President

**Greg Hildreth** Secretary

**Cathy Lukensmeyer** Treasurer

**Leslie Mayo** Editor

**Darren Glenn** Graphic Designer

### 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

### 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)

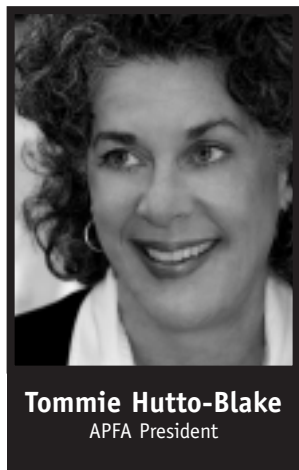
E-Mail Address: [apfa@apfa.org](mailto:apfa@apfa.org)

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**Tommie Hutto-Blake**  
APFA President

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

There is so much I want to say to the membership of APFA. Our Union has just begun its 30th year. APFA is the largest remaining independent Flight Attendant Union in the United States. As a membership we have been through a lot together, especially protecting our Contract.

Presently, it seems each turn we take leads us into another turbulent thunderstorm. The question is, could there be blue skies ahead and can a crisis offer opportunity?

**“Recognizing the loss of nearly \$3 million in dues income, funding the defense of four active lawsuits and now facing greatly increased employee liabilities, APFA, like our employer, is experiencing challenging financial distress.”**

# Crisis... Danger 危 Or 機 Opportunity?

Every week I read and listen to messages sent by many of you. Some of our APFA members are trying to understand how they can be a part of the solution to protect our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and help restore this once-proud airline to a state of viability for all of its employees. Others seem too tired and angry about our present situation to fully engage in any solution. Still others, particularly some of our furloughed members, seem to want only to lash out about the unfairness of it all. All of your diverse points of view are totally reasonable considering our combined set of circumstances.

The leadership of APFA cares deeply about the diverse interests of all of our members. The question is, how do we best meet the overall needs of everyone, without some mem-

bers believing their particular interests are not being met? And, how do we properly protect and preserve our Contract to benefit the whole?

## 危機

I am told that the above two Chinese characters communicate the meaning of 'crisis.' However, if each of the characters stands alone they take on a new meaning. The first character expresses 'danger,' while the second character implies 'opportunity.'

It is my hope to convey to you that our present danger could also provide us with an opportunity to react with a different, more progressive approach; representing the interests of the whole. The intent of my message is to define this potential path and explain how such a path can speak to all of the different interests within the APFA membership. In my opinion, APFA cannot just protect individuals; it must be the safety net for the collective group.

The danger that we all presently face is surrounded by financial turmoil and is consuming our industry, our Company and our Union. I have said before that when the employer is in financial distress, this distress is also shared by the unions on the property. APFA has lost close to 8,000 members and almost \$3 million in dues income since 2002. Our Union is faced with a true crisis. This situation must be challenged head on and with resolve; without placing our organization and the representation of our members at risk.

### TWO OTHER PERFECT STORMS

This fiscal crisis has also been brought about by two other perfect storms within this last year. The first storm involves four very active lawsuits. We have both active and inactive members suing APFA. These lawsuits stem from the 2001 TWA purchase, which brought about the 2003 Flight Attendant furloughs as well as the devastating '03 restructuring of our 2001 Contract. By the time these lawsuits reach their end

**“In my opinion, APFA cannot just protect individuals; it must be the safety net for the collective group.”**

game, millions of dues dollars will have been spent protecting the very survival of our Union. The remaining question is: Will these lawsuits weaken APFA at a time when we need to be strong and resourceful?

The second storm involves other APFA responsibilities. Our Union is also the employer of a fine staff of 16 employees who work at APFA Headquarters. Members of our staff have become a respected unionized workforce. Recently, the APFA received notice that the total liability for the APFA self-funded employee health benefit plan was about to quadruple in cost. At times we are a Union making tough decisions and at other times we are an employer making tough decisions. Our unionized staff contract expires in October of this year. It will be a delicate balance of our responsibilities.

Without a doubt, this next round of staff negotiations will be a difficult one as the employer. I will state from first-hand experience that it is quite challenging to be a union

## President's Report, cont.

advocate one minute and act as the employer the next. Your APFA leadership must be a responsible employer, representing the interests of all the stakeholders of our Union – the APFA membership and the APFA Headquarters staff.

Recognizing the loss of nearly \$3 million in dues income, funding the defense of four very active lawsuits and now facing greatly increased employee liabilities is quite a financial challenge for APFA. Your National Officers have every confidence that the entire APFA leadership will face these financial responsibilities with wisdom and unity of purpose to keep our Union secure for the next round of collective bargaining in 2008. The goal of protecting our 60-year old Contract will take a strong collective focus by all of our leadership and the membership. Certainly our purpose is a good one and we must work together with a determined strategy.

### TO OUR 3900+ MEMBERS WHO ARE ON FURLOUGH

I wish each of you realized the incalculable hours your Officers have spent trying to leverage more recalls. As a review, furloughs began shortly after 9/11, with our most recent round of furloughs in the summer of 2003. There were 330 recalled Flight Attendants in December '03, another 173 in July '04 and the last round of recalled members in November '04. In the spring of '05, the oil crisis accelerated and in the fall of 2005 two devastating hurricanes hit, perpetuating the oil crisis even further. These events affected the Company's bottom line and in turn, halted recalls.

By the fall of 2005, AA began to announce cut backs in flight capacity. Each time there were capacity reductions, our discussions with management focused on the hope of a potential increased capacity for the next quarter. However, as you have seen, capacity has continued to

**“In the months ahead, labor interests will go unrepresented if we step back and release the reins of this new model.”**

decrease. Sometimes reductions have been in domestic markets and sometimes the longer haul flights were included (light international loads + plus high fuel costs = canceled routes). The most recent capacity decrease was the 'storing' of 27 MD-80s in the New Mexico desert and the announcement of nineteen 757s being returned to their lessors.

With no further recalls in sight and capacity reductions continuing, seniority becomes even more stagnant. Reserve numbers continue to grow higher, bid lines continue to be reduced and transfer requests become blocked. The most junior of our furloughed Flight Attendants lose their recall rights in October of this year. The most senior furloughed Flight Attendants remain on the list until July 2008. Management seems intent on reducing capacity as the oil crisis continues, which means no further recalls on the horizon. Bringing people back offers relief in seniority. Having years of no recalls or new hires means a frozen seniority list,

but for attrition. APFA looks forward to the day when all of our members are working.

### MAINTAINING CONTROL OF OUR CONTRACT

Despite dollars that are pouring in AA's front door with record loads and strong revenues, most of those same dollars are pouring out the back door into the oil industries and AA's financial lenders' pockets; as well as into the pockets of the infamous 900+ senior management employees. Focusing on the positive, even with continued record-high fuel costs, AA's financial results are improving. Except for the price of fuel, AA would be reporting a profit and beginning to get out from under the current debt liabilities.

The reality that management continues to focus on the cost reductions that competitors have been able to produce by slashing and burning labor contracts in the bankruptcy courts is highly frustrating. Ignore this reality and before we know it, we too will be racing to the

bottom in a bankruptcy court of our own. Your National Officers do not intend to let this happen. We intend to hold tightly to the reins and co-direct our course with management by being a part of a labor/management business team model. We don't always agree on this exact course – consider the recent Executive Compensation Arbitration (see pg. 6 for an update). In the months ahead, labor interests will go unrepresented if we step back and release the reins of this new model.

Having labor at the business table with senior management is highly unusual. It is unheard of in the aviation industry. We have some time to continue to design this labor/management strategy, as we study other companies that have tried this progressive course. Harley-Davidson, Nucor (see Business Week, May 1, 2006) and Corning are three such companies who have been successful – going against the tide of the *normal* top/down business model in this country. Meanwhile, yet another airline, Northwest, races to the bottom, taking an independent Flight Attendant union with it. Gerard Arpey and his team still say they have no desire to use this devastating bankruptcy process. There are many in our industry that are placing bets that AA

**“The reality that management continues to focus on the cost reductions that competitors have been able to produce by slashing and burning labor contracts in the bankruptcy courts is highly frustrating.”**

and its labor groups will ultimately join this destructive cycle. We must be strategic and forceful in our desire and intent to remain in control of our own destinies. There are only a few examples for APFA to follow. We must forge our own path and I promise you this: It will not be easy and there will be some road blocks to conquer.

#### **COMPARISON OF WAGES, WORK RULES AND BENEFITS CONTAINED WITHIN TODAY'S F/A CONTRACTS**

It has been our purpose for some time to publish a factual Flight Attendant contract comparison. The problem has been the liquidity of this project. It is not a pleasant experience to have to wait and see just how bad the results will be following restructured agreement after restructured agreement. The Continental (IAM) Flight Attendant Agreement is now in place. The Northwest Flight Attendants (PFAA) just voted down their bankruptcy restructured contract with an 80% NO vote and now they must decide which of two unions – AFA or TWU – will be the successor union to their independent voice.

It is our hope to have a fact-based contract comparison in

the next *Skyword*. I urge you to hold on to this and keep it with your APFA/AA On-Duty Contract Guide.

We have received the restructured contracts of the UAL (AFA-CWA), USAir (AFA-CWA), and Continental (IAM) Flight Attendants, as well as the latest Southwest (TWU) Flight Attendant contract. We are trying to get the most recent company-imposed changes to the JetBlue and Delta Flight Attendant work rules since they have no collectively bargained agreements, however, to date this has been extremely difficult to obtain.

This is a pivotal time for all of us to stay focused and centered on our goal – protecting and eventually improving our 2001 Contract as restructured in 2003. Soon you will be able to view this 'meshed' document on our newly-updated APFA Web site. This foundation document will be the solid floor for our next round of collective bargaining. We need to focus on facts in order to be prepared for 2008. We have no intention of only being compared to agreements restructured via bankruptcy. The Southwest Flight Attendant contract has never been faced with such a

hurdle. They, of course still have a profitable employer, and a union voice for more than 30 years. They will soon be the bar to reach in many respects.

#### **THE ART OF MOTIVATION**

My present goal is to convince management that our Company's current situation calls for true performance incentives for all employees from the hourly worker to the CEO. This Company cannot continue to provide incentives only to top management as part of the solution. The three companies referenced earlier have learned that treating their unionized and other hourly workers as owners and business partners along with motivating top executives is the only way to return to a sustained successful business cycle. All three of these companies took on this challenge and today they have both a positive story and even profits to share.

#### **CAN AA BE ONE OF THIS COUNTRY'S SUCCESS STORIES?**

This country and this industry is in need of new leadership and success stories of its own. It is my continued plan that AA and its three labor unions can join the path of these aforementioned progressive companies rather than joining those of the

UAL or Enron corporate caliber. So buckle up and tighten those shoulder harnesses. This is not going to be an easy approach!

With strength and solidarity,



# Executive Compensation Update: Reading Between The Lines

By Tommie Hutto-Blake

The arbitration over executive compensation resulting from the grievances filed by APA, APFA and TWU, concluded with an Order from the arbitrator on April 3, 2006. The unions expected a decision from Arbitrator Harris on March 28, 2006; however, instead on that date the following public statement was issued by the System Board:

*"The Chairman of the System Board has determined that it would be most efficacious for the Board to defer a decision in this matter until after the scheduled meeting of the AMR Corporation Board of Directors. The Chairman will reconvene the System Board. . . on Friday, March 31 to determine what further steps are necessary."*

## The words not spoken are the most important.

Leading up to the arbitration, the three unions proffered a number of creative solutions to align executive interests with employee interests. One example we suggested was that management use some or all of their bonuses to buy new aircraft. Meanwhile, the Company had argued that there was no actual contractual violation and management compensation was their right and their purview. They maintained that the unions had over stepped our bounds and had no demand rights in this

area of executive compensation.

Fast forward beyond the arbitrator's public statement on March 28th, and the resulting significant actions taken by the AMR Board of Directors on March 31, 2006. Following the AMR Board's modifications to the Performance Unit Plan (PUP) - renamed Performance Share Plan (PSP) - limiting the cash draw on the corporation's general fund, the arbitrator rendered the dispute moot. He retained jurisdiction of the Order for 60 days to resolve any disputes that may arise.

The AMR Board altered the PUP plan, which they stated would conform with the provisions and limitations of the Annual Incentive Program (AIP) of 2003. The AIP was a part of the 2003 restructured agreements of all three unions and its initial purpose was to align the interest of labor and management with performance-based compensation.

What this dispute has clearly disclosed is the fact that the interests of the hourly worker and the executive at American Airlines is not aligned in the area of any annual performance-based incentive. Currently, less than 1,000 management individuals are 'incentivised' on an annual basis.

As I have discussed in my article, there are progressive companies

in the U.S. that have created plans aligning performance-based incentives for everyone from the entry level worker to the CEO. This subject has surfaced due to the PUP dispute and it will not go away until a real solution has taken shape to better align the interests of both AA labor and management.

## Now, what was the cash savings of this grievance?

The primary purpose of this dispute was to limit the amount of cash drawn on the AA general account. Were we successful? Without being able to review the actual calculations for the recipients of the PUP/PSP payouts how will we ever know? So, in order to prove assurances that the distributions were correct, the three unions requested audit verification.

As *Skyword* goes to press, Arbitrator Harris (who not only has a legal background, but also an accounting degree) has extended his jurisdiction over the Order until he can review an internal audit of the payouts of the PSP. The three unions want to know the dollars that would have been drawn if we had done nothing AND the dollars that ultimately were drawn out of the cash liquidity for purposes of executive compensation. APFA plans to disclose to our members the verified numbers for the

**ef·fi·ca·cious** *adj.* Producing or capable of producing a desired effect.

April 2006 cash distributions and whether these numbers met the limitations of the 2003 AIP. We will then publicly see how much cash this grievance and resulting arbitration saved AA's general fund.

In hindsight, a wise arbitrator used one strong word and forced a solution: **efficacious**. Now it is up to the three unions to continue to push for a true alignment of performance-based incentives from the shop floor, to the ramp; from the counter to the cabin; and all the way to the executive suites of AMR Headquarters - on an annual basis.

## What did this ruckus over the Performance Unit Plan (PUP) accomplish?

For starters, it has created a stronger partnership between the three unions on AA's property. At the same time, however, it has caused strong divisions between labor and management in what was an unprecedented era of cooperation to restore AA to profitability and subsequent long-term security for all employees.

Given the scope of the grievances, this was the best possible

outcome labor could have forced on management using the tools we have - the grievance machinery. We have watched others in this industry file grievances and lawsuits, with little success. Our dispute is the only action that has achieved any favorable modifications limiting how much cash can be drawn from the Company's general fund for executive bonuses during a non-profitable period.

The amount of money saved from withdrawal out of AA's general fund as a result of these grievances will be needed in the year ahead as this Company tries to return to profitability. Let's hope that management understands the significance of all three unions standing together and saying, "Enough is enough!"

We must move forward with a continued effort to align the interests of all employees - labor and management. Only time will tell if AA is ready to become a more progressive Company; a Company that really treats its unions and employees as true business partners.

**THB**

*Visit [www.apfa.org](http://www.apfa.org) to read the entire Order from Arbitrator Harris regarding the Executive Compensation Presidential Grievance Arbitration*





**Brett Durkin**  
APFA Vice President

[vp@apfa.org](mailto:vp@apfa.org)  
817-540-0108, ext. 8111

*Editor's Note: As always, names, locations and some identifying details in "You Be The Judge" may have been changed, however, the context remains the same*

## You Be The Judge Ghosts In The Galley

Prior to June 2004, Robert was a 22-year Flight Attendant with a flawless personnel record at American. He had never been placed on any performance or attendance discipline, nor had he ever received a passenger complaint letter. Further, Robert had been given three PFA awards during his career.

In June 2004, Robert held a Super 80 line with his buddy bidder, Karen. Robert held position #4 and Karen held position #2.

When Robert and Karen flew together, Karen was on the Company's Unannounced Observation Ride (UOR) list as a result of a passenger complaint letter in August 2002. After two unsatisfactory ghost rides citing safety violations, Karen was issued a First Step Advisory in March 2003, which would remain in her file for a period of two years.

Karen had another ghost ride in August 2003 and the observer wrote: "Karen did not arm her door and due to the severity of the safety violation and the possibility that AA would have to self disclose to the FAA, I broke the check ride and told Karen of my observation."

Karen's FSM called her in for a meeting and told her that one more unsatisfactory ride would move her to a Second Step Advisory, after which she might be terminated.

In June 2004, Robert and Karen were working a Super-80 flight from RDU to DFW. The S-80 flown that day was a former TWA configuration. Position #4's jump seat on that aircraft extends out into the aisle with the Flight Attendant facing forward. The passenger load was 72 and there were a total of three passengers seated in the last six rows. A commuter sat in row 30 and a Non-Rev

Pilot sat in row 29. FSM Jose Gavin was the ghost rider assigned to observe Karen and sat in 28D next to the #4's jump seat.

There were thunderstorms in DFW and after the plane taxied out in RDU they sat on the ramp for about two hours awaiting clearance into DFW. During the delay both Robert and Karen were out of their jump seats doing galley prep work and assisting passengers. They were also engaged in small talk with the Non-Rev crew members who were seated in rows 29 and 30.

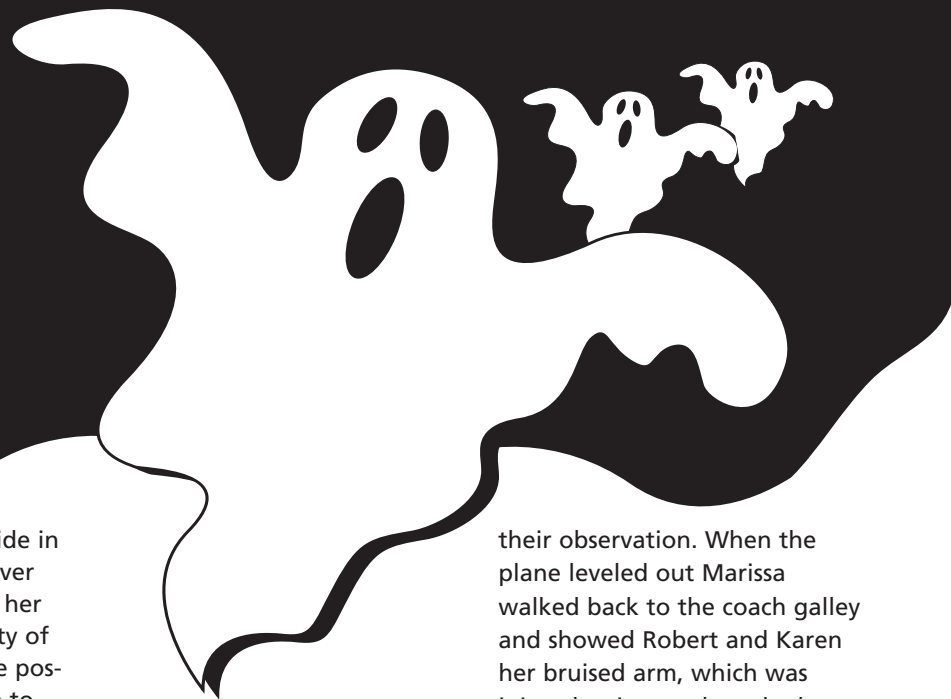
During takeoff the cockpit door flew open. Both Robert and Karen called the #1, Marissa, via the interphone to alert her of

their observation. When the plane leveled out Marissa walked back to the coach galley and showed Robert and Karen her bruised arm, which was injured trying to close the heavy cockpit door. Marissa told them she was going to write up the injury in case it got any worse. She also advised the Captain.

Upon arrival into DFW, the crew went to their layover hotel and finished their trip the following day.

Robert and Karen were contacted separately by their FSMs two weeks later. The FSMs requested meetings to discuss alleged safety infractions on their flight from RDU to DFW.

Robert was removed from service and withheld with pay pending an investigation. During the 31R (reference to the Contractual language defining a meeting called by Flight Service;



## Vice President's Report, cont.

with the right to union representation) the context of the ghost ride was revealed. The ghost rider stated that Robert was sitting in a passenger seat during take off. Robert was alleged to have let Karen arm his door and did not complete safety compliance checks. While in his jump seat for landing, he was not properly harnessed and was observed reading a book.

Robert denied the infractions and stated he was in his jump seat. He further stated he had to have been in his jump seat in order to reach the inter-phone which he used to call the #1 when the cockpit door flew open.

Robert was terminated for violation of Rules:

16. Misrepresentation of facts or falsification of records is prohibited
17. Work carefully. Observe posted or published regulations
18. Use safety equipment.

Karen was also terminated.

### THE ARBITRATION

#### The Company's Position

During the arbitration, the

Company's case revolved around the testimony of ghost rider Jose Gavin. FSM Gavin stated that he did not observe the cockpit door opening. He also testified that he observed Robert seated behind the galley in a passenger seat during take off.

Randy Ausquez (Robert's FSM) testified that he collected evidence in the investigation and drew the conclusion that Robert was lying about the cockpit door opening. He believed Jose Gavin's report, which had Robert sitting in the row behind the galley during take off.

The Company also put on testimony that because of the many safety violations that occurred on the flight, they had to "self-disclose" to the FAA to avoid a penalty. They also stressed that in the heightened security environment in which Flight Attendants work, safety violations cannot be tolerated. Because the Company believed Robert lied during the investigation, they felt that warranted termination as well.

#### The Union's Position

The Union believed the Company failed in proving *Just Cause* for Robert's termination.

The seven tests of *Just Cause* are:

- 1) **Notice**
- 2) **Reasonable Rules and Orders**
- 3) **Investigation**
- 4) **Fair Investigation**
- 5) **Proof**
- 6) **Equal Treatment**
- 7) **Penalty**

The Union believed that the Company did not do a **Fair Investigation** leading up to Robert's termination. The Union contended that FSM Randy Ausquez investigated only the facts that would have supported his case for termination and omitted facts that would have cleared Robert. FSM Ausquez's investigation was marked by a dogged determination to credit all of what the ghost rider reported.

The Union also asserted that if the safety violations were so egregious for the Company to self-disclose to the FAA, then Robert should not have been allowed to finish his trip, nor should he have been allowed to continue working for two weeks before being called in for a meeting.

In testimony by Karen, the Union also stated that the Company did not prove they provided **Equal Treatment** and consistent **Penalty**. Karen had been counseled for similar infractions and had not been terminated until the events surrounding this flight.

It was clear that the ghost rider did not observe the cockpit door opening on take off. It doesn't, however, mean that it did not happen. Testimony by the #1 stated that FSM Ausquez knew she was injured by the cockpit door on take off. This was confirmed when he interviewed her and inquired as to the extent of her injury.

#### THE DECISION

The Arbitrator requested an on-site inspection of the aircraft in question and the request was honored. During the on-site inspection phase of the arbitration each Flight Attendant sat in their jump seat. It was determined that the ghost rider would not have been able to see the cockpit door open from where he was seated. It was also determined that the call Robert placed to the #1 would not have been possible from the seat behind the galley. The

Arbitrator also found that "where serious misconduct is alleged and [the] investigation is delayed, the alleged offense may not be as serious as claimed in arbitration." The Arbitrator also determined that the cockpit door **did** fly open and the ghost rider did not see it.

#### THE RULING

"The Company has not met its burden of showing that the grievant violated Rule 16, 17 or 18. The Company has not met its burden of showing, through the evidence presented, that grievant is guilty of the conduct of which he stands accused. Therefore, the Company did not have just cause in terminating the grievant. He is to be reinstated."







**Greg Hildreth**  
APFA Secretary

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

This year the APFA Annual Convention, which is mandated by the APFA Constitution, was held in Los Angeles at the Ayres Hotel, our long layover hotel.

This is the one time a year that our leaders and governing body, the APFA Board of Directors, meet to set policy and focus on the direction of our Union in order to lead our membership into 2007. It is also a time for the Board to decide how your Union dues are to be spent and approve the APFA budget for the following year. For a complete text of the official minutes from the meeting, please go to the APFA Web site at [www.apfa.org](http://www.apfa.org).

## And The Award Goes To...

This year a new Ad Hoc member of the Executive Committee was elected by the Board. Our newly elected Ad Hoc is Laura Glading, replacing Ted Bedwell whose term had ended. Laura, JFK-based, brings with her a plethora of knowledge and expertise from her 25 years of union work. She has served as a Base Chairperson, Division Representative and APFA Negotiator, and is now a member of our Executive Committee. Laura has pretty much seen it all!

This year, the National Coordinators of our Union were there to report, update and brief the Board on their respective field work. Information booths were set up and staffed for Flight Attendants attending the convention or just passing through by the Communications, Contract, Health, Hotel, Safety and Security, and Scheduling Departments, as well as the Infoprep Program and our APFA Archivist. In addition,

Scheduling, Contract and Retirement training was conducted for any Flight Attendant who wanted to attend.

This year's keynote speaker was Mr. Dave Low, Assistant Director of Governmental Relations for California School Employees Association (CSEA), where he has worked since 1981. Mr. Low is responsible for the lobbying and political activities of CSEA, which represents 230,000 classified employees in California's public schools and community college school districts.

In addition to conducting Union business throughout the week, the 13th Annual Awards and Recognition Banquet was held on February 20, 2006, as set forth in the APFA Policy Manual, Section 4.B. This is the time when APFA members and non-members are recognized for their accomplishments, achievements and contributions to the betterment of the Flight Attendant career.

This year the **Martha W. Griffiths Award**, APFA's highest award, was presented to Elaine Barber for her 36 years of Union Activism fighting for Flight Attendants' rights.



Elaine Barber

During her career, Elaine has served the Union as a local Representative, Vice Chair, Base Chair, member of the APFA Board of Directors, Negotiator, Division Representative, Vice President and Ad Hoc Member of the Executive Committee. Leaders like Elaine Barber are rare. The APFA is extremely fortunate to have had a role model of her caliber. We wish her the best in the years ahead, and will be forever grateful for her dedication to our Union.



Suzie Thorley, seated, with Nancy Archer and Danny Marsh

**The Distinguished Service Award**, which may be bestowed upon any current or former APFA representative, is awarded in recognition and appreciation of outstanding union contributions and service. The recipients this year were Suzie Thorley, (IDF) and Steve Sternig (LGA), posthumously. Suzie has been involved in Union activities since 1972. She was a member of the APFA Scheduling Committee, a Vice Chairperson and an active Negotiator in 1983, 1992 and 1995. She is also responsible for updating a more Flight Attendant-friendly compilation of our '01 Contract as amended in '03 (see pg. 17). Suzie plans to retire at the end of June 2006 and she will be sorely missed. On a personal note, I would like to say "Thank You, Suzie, for all of your hard work and dedication."



Steve Sternig

Steve was truly dedicated to his beloved base, LGA. He devoted his energies to the rights and needs of his "kids" in the NYC area tirelessly. During the 1993 strike, Steve and Laura Glading were able to rally their membership, disseminate information and coordinate the troops for picketing at all three NYC airports. Steve lost his battle with Pancreatic Cancer on April 10, 2002. His lifelong partner, Flight Attendant Michael P. Kelley, passed away June 15th of this year from his own battle with throat cancer. Steve's presence is truly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

The **Jose Chiu Award** was established in 2001 in honor of JFK-based Flight Attendant, Jose Chiu, whose life was sacrificed in the line of duty. This award recognizes APFA Flight Attendants and APFA Safety Professionals who achieve significant accomplishments and/or have seen to the health and safety needs of our Flight Attendants. This year's recipients were Kathy Lord Jones (DFW), Debbie Roland (DCA),

Lonny Glover (IOR) and Mario St. Michel (JFK), all members of the APFA Go-Team. They were recognized for their hard work, but in particular, for their courage while handling situations surrounding the tragedies of Flights 11, 77 and 587. They were asked to show their strength during the most horrific tragedies in our airline's history and did so professionally and with compassion. They are a tribute to our organization.



Kathy Lord Jones and Lonny Glover



Mario St. Michel



Debbie Roland



Ada Asher



Marie Lockbaum and Patty Baskin

The **Award of Merit** is issued to persons who, through the exemplary performance of their duties, bring great credit to the Flight Attendant profession. This year three very tenacious and determined women were given this honor. Ada Asher, posthumously, Patty Baskin (LAX) and Marie Lockbaum (JFK) were singled out as founding leaders with extraordinary dedication to the *Wings Foundation, Inc.* Any crew member who has enlisted the assistance of Wings, can attest to their graceful generosity. As the president of The Wings Foundation, Kathy Crandall, states "It is my honor to be associated with these women and to call them my friends."

This year's **Honorary Member** Recipients were APFA Staff Members Rosemary Cooper and Kim Ramos. They are Executive Secretaries at APFA Headquarters and a part of our unionized staff. This award is reserved for non-Flight Attendants who, through many years (in Kim's & Rosemary's case, 20 years) have shown their loyalty and dedication to APFA and its membership.

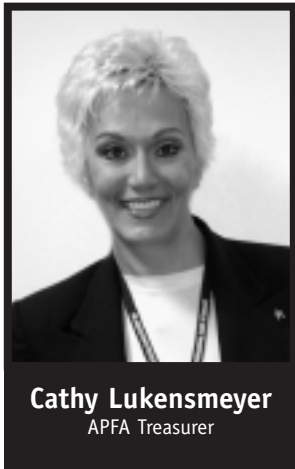
Congratulations Kim and Ro, you have certainly earned this recognition!



Rosemary Cooper and Kim Ramos

Special thanks to all of the people who helped me put this year's convention together, especially Nancy Archer, Denise Pointer, Leslie Mayo, Becky Kroll, Linda Herod-Rivas, Dane Townsend, the LAX and LAX-I Chairs and Vice Chairs and my fellow National Officers.

Hope to see even more of you at next year's convention!



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

This quarter I would like to bring each of you on board for a review of the APFA Treasury, specifically as it relates to the income, expenses and subsequent spending of your dues dollars. This is called our cash account. Mind you, this article has nothing to do with our long-term savings, investments and Negotiations & Negotiations-Related Fund (NNRF). Those are all very healthy, safe and sound; and I'll save that for my next article. Still, it's quite an eye-opener and I hope you find this article educational and enlightening.

What I will attempt to do is paint a picture of our history going back a decade to 1997. That specific year was chosen because our headcount and income were almost identical to

that of today's. Our peak income was in 2002 (ending with fiscal year '03) when we had almost 8,000 more dues-paying Flight Attendants contributing money to our treasury each month. Additionally, in '03 our dues increased from \$35 per month to \$41 per month.

APFA's fiscal year runs concurrently with our elections and terms of office, which start April 1st. (Division Reps and National Coordinators' terms begin May

1st to assist in the transition). Thus APFA's fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31, not January 1 - December 31.

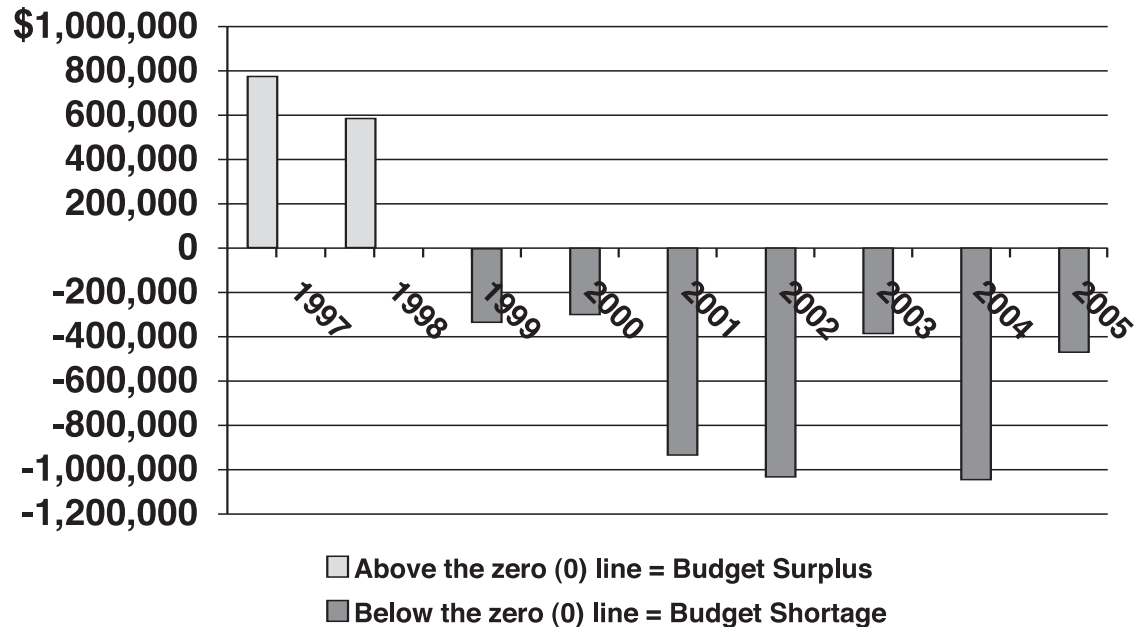
The Budget Committee began preparing the Budget for FYE '07 in September 2005 using the most current data available in order to make accurate projections. It was placed in a binder almost six-inches thick; graphs were put onto slides and it was then presented to the Board of Directors at the Annual

Convention in February 2006. Once approved, this became the APFA budget from April 1, 2006, through March 31, 2007. It was amended and approved by the voting Board comprised of your Base Chairs.

As you can see from the chart above, the APFA has been in a cycle of deficit spending; or, simply put, the overspending of its budget for quite some time. Does that mean we're broke or bouncing checks? **NO.**

# Don't Shoot the Messenger

## APFA Cash Account vs. Budgetary Spending



Does it mean that this is all the money we have and we've raced through our savings and investments? **NO.** In fact, we invest in our Union first each and every month by putting money into our mandatory savings/investment accounts. What it does mean is that up until 1999 (the first two bars on the chart) we had a sufficient cash balance.

Just like Flight Attendants are paid twice monthly, APFA also receives income in the form of your dues payments twice monthly into our Accounts Receivable. We also have the cash receipts of checks coming in or credit card payments made by Flight Attendants; often those on Leave of Absence. Added to that is the extra revenue in the form of dues arrears or back dues that this Department diligently collects. This infusion of money becomes the cash flow that allows us to cover our bills. But the cushion is long gone, as you can see from the chart to the left.

### So, just what happened to this cushion?

Well up until 1999, despite the fact that APFA had already been through a round of negotiations, the Union was still



**“...it’s your money and you have a right to true transparency and accountability from us.”**

coming in well under budget. Then the Tentative Agreement was turned down by the membership and we were right back into very costly, full-blown negotiations. Those negotiations were completed in September 2001. Following that, there was a dues increase of \$6 per month that took place in July 2002; and our headcount of dues-paying members was at its peak.

**Exactly where are we today?**

Our membership count is reduced by more than 30 percent since 2001 with furloughs and other forms of attrition. Although APFA has had three rounds of recalls in '03 and '04, with lowered capacity recalls have stopped. This means that we have thousands of Flight Attendants out on furlough, which has also contributed to less dues income. We have fixed costs that continue to rise (staff salaries, insurance, building maintenance, equipment, lodging, utilities, etc). We also have Flight Attendants suing the Union. These lawsuits must be defended. These costly items have placed a huge drain on the APFA Treasury. On top of that, there was a dues decrease of \$3 per month from July 2004 through April 30, 2006. The dues decrease reduced our annual income by more than \$600,000 for the past two years.

**Now for our report card.**

This administration took office on April 1, 2004, with APFA President Hutto-Blake joining us in August of '04. Our first fiscal year ended March 31, 2005. That is the bar on the far right shown on the graph. Upon taking office in April of 2004, there was an outstanding line of credit from 2001 that needed to be paid-off. We doubled up on our payments and paid off this debt as reported in a previous *Skyword* article. **APFA did not renew this line of credit.** FYE '06 is projected to be about \$600,000 over budget. Had it not been for the dues decrease, we would have come in slightly under budget, and above the 'zero' line in the chart in each of the two years. But even that's not good enough. We need to re-build our cash reserves.

The APFA Board and this Administration is committed to returning APFA to a realistic budget and living within its means. The Board sets the policy of APFA and I am charged with ensuring compliance. Difficult choices and deep cuts have taken place resulting in a reduced budget. This year's trip removal budgets were built on the average schedule, system wide. This means that a full-time trip removal for a rep is based on the average bid award (81:00 hours Domestic

and 83:00 hours International) of Flight Attendants throughout the system. There is no cushion for overtime. We recognize this as a sacrifice and we thank our reps for stepping up to the plate and continuing to work hard for our membership. Thus, we are asking for your indulgence, patience and help as your reps work to resolve your issues. Just like you, APFA reps are working harder and longer hours, so as to not have to sacrifice the services you receive both from Headquarters and on the local level. APFA's income has decreased by about \$3 million, but the workload to preserve our careers and protect our Contract remains the same.

As APFA members and representatives, we have a huge challenge ahead. When the winter issue of *Skyword* goes to print, we will be 3/4 of the way through our fiscal year. As I prepare that article, the APFA Budget Committee will have just begun preparing the Budget for FYE'08. In that article, I plan to delve into the APFA Policy Manual (which can be viewed in its entirety on the new APFA Web site), because it is the Policy Manual that dictates how reps are compensated. While the National Officers can make recommendations to policy, only the voting Board can set policy for the Union.

Included in the winter *Skyword*, I intend to report out just how well each Officer, Department Coordinator and Base Chair is doing with the spending of their budgets. My goal as Treasurer is to bring the APFA back into the black - back to living within our means, to a balanced budget, and to subsequent financial health.

The APFA Financials are mailed to the Base Chairs monthly. As always, feel free to contact your Base Chairperson or the Treasurer's office for a review of the most recent APFA Financials. This certainly wasn't an easy message to deliver to you and you may not like what you have read. But it's your money and you have a right to true transparency and accountability from us. ▲

## W-2

# Just the Facts, Ma'am

## W-2's vs. LM-2's

By Cathy Lukensmeyer

## LM-2

### What is it?

An Employee's Wage and Tax Statement to the IRS

### What does it include?

Wages, tips and **other compensation\***

Box 12a (\$14,000) = 401(k) contribution

\* **Other compensation** includes: Per Diem (same as line F/A)

### What is it?

Annual Reporting to the Department of Labor (DOL) of **All** Disbursements by every U.S. Labor Union

### What does it include?

Wages, tips and **other compensation\*** as well as **Disbursements for Official Business\*\***

\* **Other compensation** includes: Per Diem (same as for Flight Attendants)

\*\* **Disbursements for Official Business** include:

- Corporate Apartment Rent
- Lodging and Utility Costs for Out of Town Officers and Reps' Hotel Costs
- Car Rentals for Union Business
- Transportation Costs
- Phone Costs
- Postage
- Any other approved expenses required to conduct union business
- ALL of these disbursements are added to the salary giving a TOTAL of \$69,571 on the dummy LM-2

The above documents are a 'dummy' W-2 and a 'dummy' LM-2 (DOL-required report for official union business). The purpose of publishing these documents is to show what the difference might be between a union representative's actual income, and the Government's onerous requirements for reporting expenses as listed under "Disbursements for Official Union Business." Last year's report was 15 pages long. This year's report is 112 pages due to new reporting requirements not only for our reps but also our vendors.

In the end, all income AND disbursements are combined and appear on the LM-2 as a grand total. Requiring reports to be

filed in this manner can be very misleading. It can easily be construed that a union rep's income appears substantially higher than it actually is. It would be like AA including disbursements of a Flight Attendant's layover hotels and transportation on the W-2 causing it to *appear* as income.

Angela Wright, an auditor for the UAW, wrote the following piece on President Bush's "labor reform" act late last year:

"...Unions covered by the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act are required to submit annual financial statements to the U.S. Department of Labor. These statements provide basic

information about the unions that is then made public.

Under the U.S. Department of Labor guidelines, labor unions with income receipts totaling \$250,000 or more will be forced to file the new report electronically. This "labor reform" was passed ... as a way of weakening unions by imposing unreasonable bureaucratic procedures on them.

The reporting is a burdensome, time-consuming, detailed reporting of the activities of

union officials and staff. The requirement mandates that percentages of time be allocated to activities of those members and staff persons performing duties for the membership. The reporting was designed to monitor unions' political and organizing activities. The new regulations require splitting up clock hours and after-work hours associated with official business into five different categories. It will be a burden for financial secretaries who have the task of keeping track of all the comings and goings

of union leaders and member activists. It will require more highly detailed vouchers. According to a Department of Labor investigator, the DOL has opened a new investigative office in Indiana and has added 25 percent more workers to focus primarily on organized labor.

Meanwhile, the federal government only has enough OSHA inspectors to check workplaces for health and safety hazards to workers once every 106 years."▲

# The Thousand-Yard Stare

By Leslie Mayo

APFA Communications Coordinator

Years ago, I was flying 130+ hours a month to make ends meet, living in New York and trying to survive in a studio for which I was paying way too much. I owed more than I earned and flew extra high-time – like so many of you – just to keep my head above water. It was a Catch-22 being away from the home I was working so hard to keep. After several months of flying more than 20 days a month, the *thousand-yard stare* would kick in. It would start around sign-in, and remain until I emerged from the Sullivan Street Subway station and was able to sense the energy and smells of the neighborhood I loved. Eventually I took a second job that not only kept me off the plane a little more, but slowly alleviated the downward spiral in my attitude that goes with 130 hours of on-board bliss with our passengers.

And that was pre-9/11. We functioned under a much more resourceful operation back then with plenty of soda inserts, longer layovers, the occasional crew meal and even some rest. We didn't have to spend 1/3 of our time in the aisles apologizing for the lack of blankets and pillows, or explaining to our passengers that times have changed and "yes, the snack box with the petrified sausage stick that reads 'Taste the Magic' on the package really is \$4." Transfers and prof-fers were abundant and the Reserve list got more junior, not senior. We were better paid and we had more vacation time. I could no more fly 130 hours in a single month under today's conditions than do the splits. It's a miracle that more full-time of us don't have the look on our faces.

*The Thousand-Yard Stare* among some in our workgroup stems, in part, from the constant disappointments in the Company we had such high hopes for. Not one of us took this job because we were eager for pay cuts, under-staffed planes, or the threat of possibly losing our retirement. Even though it's always been the job we love to hate, we are addicted to its lifestyle. All of us have been here long enough to know what the job was before 9/11. It would be easier to get by on "just ok" if we didn't know what we were missing. But when you've had what we've had, it's difficult to grow accustomed to *mediocre*.

So what now? Do we bury our heads and dog paddle our way from sign in to debrief?

In my opinion, Flight Attendants are the most resourceful group of people on the planet. Somehow we manage to find a way around any hurdle on the plane, whether it's keeping the 767 forward cart compartment propped open (the one below the coffee makers) with styrofoam cups jammed between it and the 1R door; or

extending the work area on a beverage cart by placing a large plastic tray under the insert; or inventing the aisle trash cart with a big blue bag and an insert. The list is endless and we never give up. If management takes it away or changes it, we find a way to make it work regardless. Those are the choices we make to improve our life on the plane.

But what about the other stuff? What about our career? It's difficult watching every airline around us lose their pensions in Chapter 11, "bargaining" away round after round of work rules and pay cuts because the alternative is even worse. Then, witnessing management fortify the pull cords on their golden parachutes leaving pennies on the dollar for the rest of us to live on in retirement. That'll leave a really bad taste

in anyone's mouth. Well, almost anyone's, anyway!

I was proud to see the three unions at AA stand up to this Company and realize results in arbitration after filing a Presidential Grievance against Executive Bonuses for 973 "elite" members of man-

agement (see pg. 6). The average AA'er is reaping about \$35 each quarter after taxes in AIP payouts, and several members of our own management are trotting home with well over a million dollars in bonuses. That's plain vulgar.

When a soldier gives up the fight, he risks losing his life and possibly the lives of those around him. By rolling over and giving up on the choice to make a difference, we risk sleepwalking our way through a very large portion of a very short life. If you don't like something, work to change it. If you're not willing to work, hopefully the ones you think are doing the work aren't thinking the same thing about you. After watching every single major airline dive into Chapter 11 and every union member drown in the front row of bankruptcy courts across the country, that is one river we can't afford to swim in. Everyone's already hogging the lifesavers and labor is in the deep end - the last to be saved. As with everything we tackle on the plane, this is another issue we must deal with together.

Complacency is a dangerous concept. If you accept your situation because you believe it's the best you'll ever do, then you're right: it is the best you will ever do. I'm going to keep plugging away at the things that take our career beyond mediocre - stay informed, email Congress and say YES when my Union calls. I can carry one or two of you, but that leaves about 21,307 who are going to have to step up and pull your own weight for the fight of our careers and our lives. ▲



*The Thousand-Yard Stare is the title of this painting by LIFE Magazine artist Tom Lea. He was known for his Norman Rockwell-type renditions of WWII scenes until he came upon the Battle of Pelileu, above, and so effectively captured the empty gaze of this soldier.*





**Brent Peterson**  
APFA  
Contract Coordinator

contract@apfa.org  
817.540.0108, ext. 8271

**“... American must find a different way of operating as the current business model just won’t cut it in the future.”**

## American’s Simplification Plan and APFA’s Concerns

Change is inevitable in our industry; however, what we have experienced during the last five years is a complete evolution, or more accurately, a revolution. A revolution that I believe is not complete. I also believe each of us realizes that American must find a different way of operating as the current business model will not cut it in the future. After all, crude oil prices just surpassed the record previously set following Hurricane Katrina.

It is essential for us that AA returns to stable ground so that we are in a better position for the next round of bargaining. I applaud American for shining the spotlight on the operation as opposed to its employees. Most of the other major carriers have chosen to take the easy way out, filing bankruptcy then repeatedly taking from the pockets of their employees. It is for this reason that I would like to spend some time talking about the Company’s Simplification Plans and what APFA is doing to protect the interests of its members.

### APFA’s Concerns

Our first concern is the ability for our members to obtain food on long duty days when short ground times do not allow for time to get off the aircraft. Second, that the cabin cleaning provisions of our Contract are adhered to and the cleanliness of the aircraft does not get to the point of becoming unacceptable. **It is important to note that nothing in our Contract has changed with regards to cabin cleaning.** Article 2.N. states, in part, that *“a Flight Attendant shall not be responsible for the accomplishment of any cabin preparation duties after flight legs of over eleven hundred (1,100) statute miles or terminating flights. However, Flight Attendants will make every effort to bring in as neat an aircraft as possible.”*

### Why Is APFA Taking The Time To Explain Simplification?

It was clear during the first few weeks of the most recent expansion that a lot of finger pointing was going on between Flight Attendants, agents and ground crews. This was primarily due to the lack of clarification by AA of each employee’s role

in Simplification. It is essential that we, the front line employees, continue to stick together as we have with pension reform and most recently with the management bonus issue. After all this is our Company; managers come and go, but the vast majority of us have been here for many years and plan to be here for many more to come. We are a mature workforce that is accustomed to the old hub and spoke system.

A change as massive as the second phase of Simplification requires a thorough understanding and will take some time to get used to. I believe it is important to note that in both phases of Simplification, we were the only work group that did not experience furloughs as a result.

### Simplification Wave II: The Current Round Of Simplification

The concept consists of three key components:

*Microwave Scheduling – The First Element.* It simply means that the “waves” of flying that come through the hubs to facilitate connections for passen-

gers will be eliminated. These will be replaced by continuous flight arrivals and departures at hubs throughout the day. This means that our aircraft spend less time sitting in an outstation in order for its scheduled arrival at a hub to be timed for convenient passenger connections. Likewise, at a hub, planes do not have to spend additional time on the ground in order to provide a sufficient amount of time for passengers to connect. As a result, connect time for passengers is longer and should result in fewer passengers and bags misconnecting.

*Checkerboard Gating - The Second Element.* This simply means that rather than scheduling flights and ground crews by individual gates, gates will be paired (i.e., gates 10 and 11) and only one flight will be scheduled at one of the paired gates at any given time.

Early arrivals and late departures will cause two planes to be at the paired gates some of the time. The ground crews assigned to the paired gates are somewhat larger than those assigned to non-paired gates, enabling ground crews

to quickly unload, clean and service the aircraft and reload for departure. When an overlap occurs (two aircraft on paired gates at the same time), something's got to give. Some of the attention that was to go to cabin cleaning will most likely be redirected to parking and unloading the second aircraft.

*Shortened Ground Times - The Final Element.* The previous standard for minimum ground times for the Super 80 was 42 minutes in an outstation and 45 minutes in a hub. Simplification shaves 7-10 minutes off that time allowing for a 35-minute ground time. Most of this time comes from the fact that aircraft cleaning will begin prior to all passengers' deplaning and First Class passengers will begin boarding while Main Cabin is still being cleaned.

Recently Jaimie McNeice, National Scheduling Coordinator, and I worked a four-leg turn that consisted of only the new mini-

**“The overall goal of Simplification is to create additional aircraft by operating our current ones more efficiently.”**

mum ground times. We were fortunate in that we had a good weather day and no mechanicals, and it was a couple of weeks after the Simplification Plan was expanded so most of the agents and ground crews had some experience under their belt. I'm still amazed by the number of passengers that actually listened to the P.A.s. Of course, not everyone complied, but enough stowed their luggage properly, lowered their window shades and opened air vents and handed us their trash on descent to make a difference. Our colleagues on the ground appreciated that the planes we brought in were not a total disaster. Ground crews in each city cleaned (when scheduled) and restocked each aircraft thoroughly and they were pleased to give us a clean plane in time for boarding.

The flight time for the day was eight hours and the duty day was scheduled for 11 hours. If this day had been scheduled the previous way (prior to Simplification), we would have been on duty longer with no additional pay because the day had no E-time. Essentially we were home at 1700, as opposed to 1730 or 1745, and with eight hours of pay.

The solution to our ability to obtain food during these days is still a work in progress. When I talk to our members and ask them what they feel is the best answer, it seems we are split on whether AA should provide a crew meal or we should have scheduled time built into the day to allow us a break from the aircraft. And when asked what the crew meal should actually consist of, as you can imagine, that presents a whole new dilemma.

As far as cabin cleaning, statistics from the STL test that began in late October 2005 show that more planes were being cleaned more frequently than they were prior to the test. Of course, those are just statistics. We still need your feedback. In addition, information the Company receives from various surveys showed passengers rated aircraft departing STL just as clean, if not cleaner, than those departing other cities.

The ground crews have been staffed such that they should be able to begin cabin cleaning sooner than they are able to do so today. With today's staffing, cabin cleaning does not begin in most cities until all bags have been unloaded, and bag

loading does not begin until cabin cleaning has been completed. The Company has already made the decision to adjust the schedule so there will be fewer overlaps in the actual operation, which is when cleaning problems are most likely to occur. One of the TWU Reps commented that the Simplification Plan was already second nature to them and a much better alternative than what ground workers at other carriers have been facing.

The overall goal of Simplification is to *create* additional aircraft by operating our current ones more efficiently. This will hopefully put us in a situation of growth – something we desperately need. Other benefits of Simplification include the need for fewer gates throughout the system, less time spent waiting for a gate should you arrive early, as well as less congestion at the ticket counters and security lines.

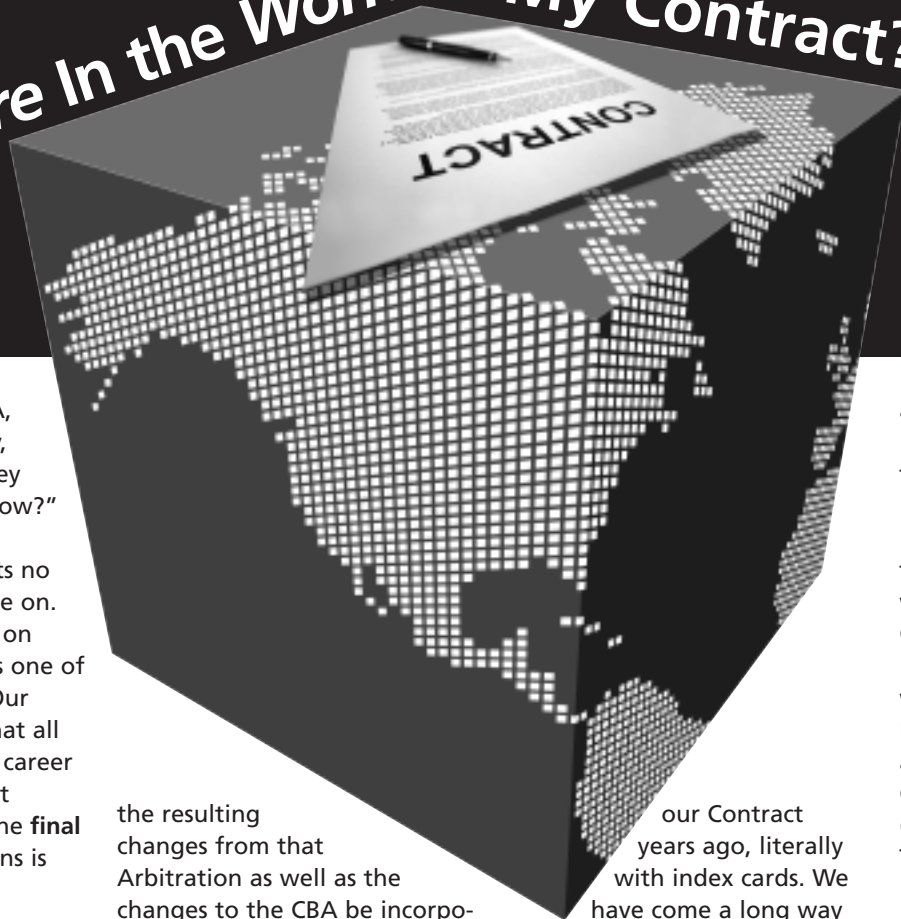
This concept was modeled after Southwest Airlines, and we are clearly not Southwest. We hang coats, offer two-cabins and assigned seating and serve pre-departures, just to name a few of the differences. There will

be procedural modifications as experience is gained before any further expansion occurs.

Southwest has perfected the 25-minute turn. It is the only way their employees know how to operate. By perfecting the 35-minute turn at AA, we can help ensure we are sitting across from a successful employer the next time we are at the bargaining table. ▲

*Please turn to the center section of Skyword for a tear-out of updates to the On-Duty Contract Guide.*

# Where In the World Is My Contract?



Upon seeing me at APFA, a good friend said, "Hey, Suzie, what closet do they have you cleaning out now?"

I seem to get the projects no one else is willing to take on. I seem to actually thrive on those projects and this is one of which I'm most proud. Our Contract is something that all of us look at during our career and it should be our best effort. I'm speaking of the final product once negotiations is over.

I was asked by President Tommie Hutto-Blake to tackle the integration of the Restructuring Participation Agreement (RPA) into the current Contract (Collective Bargaining Agreement/CBA). This is the third time I have been asked to accomplish this task. In 1995, after the Interest Arbitration following our Strike, former APFA President Denise Hedges requested that

the resulting changes from that Arbitration as well as the changes to the CBA be incorporated. This included Tentative Agreement (TA) I, TA II, the CBA and the Interest Arbitration Award. Former President John Ward asked that the same be done after the completion of the '01 Negotiations.

One of the most difficult and voluminous aspects of this task was updating the index. Becky Kroll created the first index for

our Contract years ago, literally with index cards. We have come a long way since those days. Due to the constant changes in computer technology some of our documents have become corrupted.

The CBA had to be printed and proofread. Then corrected and proofread again and again. We had to meet with the Company whenever there was the slightest change in language no matter how seemingly small. The keystroke entries for the index

alone must number in the millions by now. You get the picture; lots of bleary, red eyes.

I must extend my gratitude to those that assisted along the way, most especially Kat Clements, LAX-I, who has been

with me from the beginning, Danny Marsh, IOR, in 1995 and again in 2005-2006, Laura Glading (JFK), Thelma Dodson (MIA) and Cindy Horan (DCA-I). This never would have seen the light of day without their dedication and commitment.

I'm pleased to say that we now have a "foundation document" from which to work that incorporates all of the changes over the last few years for our members to utilize. This document is a compilation of our current 2001 Contract as restructured in 2003 and includes enhancements from the Presidential Grievance Settlements.

This document is NOT the result of any further negotiations. Rather it is a tool for '08 bargaining. It will be available on APFA's and the Flight Service Web sites in July.

I am very proud of this project and hope you will find it useful. Go to the APFA Web site and click on Contract to find the compilation of the '01 Contract as modified in 2003.

**Suzie Thorley, IDF** ▲

***Editor's Note:** At the most recent APFA National Convention, Suzie received one of APFA's highest honors, the Distinguished Service Award. She plans to retire from American Airlines this summer. APFA would like to thank Suzie for all of her hard work on behalf of her coworkers at American Airlines.*





**Jill Frank Smoak**  
APFA Retirement Specialist

### President's Note:

Jill Frank Smoak became a full-time union advocate when she was elected to serve as East Coast Division Representative in 1978 in the first elected APFA-administration. I remember it well since I too was a member of this first administration. It has truly been a pleasure to watch Jill's advocate skills grow and become particularly enhanced in recent years with her in-depth

knowledge of pension and retirement issues.

Jill has the ability to gather the facts on an issue and, after thorough review, articulate the Union's position in a way that draws all sides to a solid solution in the best interest of the members she represents. She is a fighter with engaging words and reliable facts to prove her case. The APFA membership has benefited

greatly from her many years of union work. During the 2006 APFA Convention the APFA Board of Directors unanimously voted to add Jill Frank Smoak's name to the short list of APFA Distinguished Service Award recipients. This award will be formally bestowed upon Jill during the 2007 convention – APFA's 30th year celebration. It will be my honor to be a part of this presentation.

Jill is a most deserved recipient of the award for her years of outstanding union service and her valued union representation, and she will be missed once she becomes a pensioner later this year. There is no doubt she will continue to be a role model for our next generation of APFA Representatives.

## THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

**I**n 1967, I began my new job as a Stewardess. It was the accepted idea of the day that I would work for a couple of years, see some interesting places, then retire (meaning that, of course I would quit with no further connection to American Airlines) and begin my real life by getting married and having a family.

Thirty-nine years later, I am finally preparing to retire with medical insurance, travel benefits and a pension of about \$36,000 per year. Clearly, it didn't quite happen the way I thought it would, and oh, what a trip it has been!

Back in 1967, we had a 10 P.M. curfew at the Charm Farm. There was no alcohol or men allowed in the dorms. Girdles were mandatory. We actually took a class on how to apply false eyelashes and there were complicated rules about when

**“We were hired when the primary requirement was to be pretty, and we spent six weeks working on perfecting that aspect of ourselves.”**

to take off your hat and don your topper. In public, everyone had to wear white gloves with their uniform. At the end of each trip you were required to physically present yourself to Crew Schedule, conveniently located in Operations, and sign-in indicating you knew when your next trip was. We were, after all, silly little things who might forget such trivialities! We had to promise to cut our hair and move anywhere they wanted us to, but that was an easy promise in order to get the job. As a friend once said, “We were hired when the

primary requirement was to be pretty” and we spent six weeks working on perfecting that aspect of ourselves.

Our passengers dressed for travel like people dress for church on Easter Sunday. During boarding, they would put their coats in the overhead racks, which were open shelves. No one carried luggage on board save the occasional briefcase, which always fit under the seat in front of you. Every trip had a meal but there were no carts. Every meal tray was run from the galley by hand.

After take off - never before - you changed from high heels to in-flight flats, checked your make up, took off your hat and put on your topper. One Stewardess took names, final destinations and beverage preferences in coach and plugged in the individual tray tables, while the other got prepared the galley. And then one by one, each passenger was called by name and handed the drink and meal they requested. On a multi-leg trip, the number of passengers to each destination was counted and noted on the PRR (Passenger Revenue Report), then handed off at the next station. If our count was different from the station's, we had to check tickets and pull the ones that hadn't been collected.

Today – well, you know the drill – thousands of nameless, faceless travelers in cut offs and flip flops, no food, no pillows, and no frills.

**“At the end of each trip you had to physically present yourself to Crew Schedule, conveniently located in Operations, and ‘sign-in’ indicating you knew when your next trip was. We were, after all, silly little things who might forget such trivialities!”**

And then there are the Flight Attendants. Every one of us is special, with as many diverse backgrounds, priorities and interests as there are seniority numbers. Even though we don't always see eye-to-eye, we all agree that the camaraderie we feel at work transcends the things we don't like about the job. Going to work during a tough time in my personal life was cathartic. Walking the picket line, although very sobering, was probably one of the most unifying times in our history. Standing in the galley in the middle of the night and laughing over some trivial event was great fun. I cannot imagine what my life would be like without all of these memories.

No matter how difficult it is at times to suit up and go to work, the job and the life style have a hold on each of us. We all tell each other we can't wait to retire but I know better, it is the job we love to hate! I have worked trips to four continents and traveled for pleasure to others. I've seen the Northern Lights from the cockpit, and the sun at midnight in Stockholm. Theater in London, dinner in Paris, and more often than not, I would stop to look at the Thames or the Seine and realize how truly lucky I was. As another friend once quipped "I always knew I'd be part of the jet set, I just didn't know I was going to have to work the trip."

I became active in our Union in the late 70's and have spent the better part of the last ten years at APFA working toward the goal of having a full service retirement department for our members. I know that everyone approaches the milestone of retirement with great trepidation just before they hit the exit door! I thought it would be easier for me, but in truth I am second guessing the decision just as everyone else has.

One of the highlights of my career has been the retirement seminars that I have participated in over the last few years. I have visited every base and been thrilled to see old friends from the early days. I must admit that often someone comes up and introduces themselves and it takes a minute to compute the 50 - 60 year old person I am talking with (grey hair, character lines and a few pounds) to the 20 something one I last saw (short hair, make up, skinny), but in about two seconds we are laughing and reminiscing about something that happened 30 years ago.

My parents (Father, 90, teaches computer skills to senior citizens and Mother, 85, swims daily) are worried that I will be bored, "What will you do" they ask. The answer is I don't know - it is the beginning of the next act and it is filled with exciting possibilities. Although I am still equivocating about

my real retirement date, I plan to take care of a few medical issues while still on payroll using both the higher medical insurance and appropriate sick time before I go.

What will I do "on the other side?" Through my recent marriage, I suddenly have three adult step-children and two and a half grandchildren - what a blast! I would like to get my pleasure-boat captain's license, or at the very least learn how to actually use a GPS and my iPod. While I'm at it, there are so many classes to take and things to learn, not to mention travels I haven't taken yet. And I'm going to buy a puppy!

Whatever it is that awaits me, I am going forward with nostalgia for the past and enthusiasm for the future. I have had a fabulous career and wanted to take this opportunity to thank every American Airlines Flight Attendant out there who contributed to it. We are a very special group!

## A Final Word About The Voluntary Benefits (Insurance) Program

By Cathy Lukensmeyer

In early 2004, under the prior APFA Administration, a Voluntary Benefits Program was put together through the Treasurer's Office. It was offered to APFA members as a supplement to insurance benefits already available to Flight Attendants through American Airlines.

Unfortunately, this program did not meet expectations and was discontinued at the end of the first year due to a variety of reasons including low enrollment, self-pay (as opposed to payroll deduction) of missed premiums when on leave, and numerous complaints from members regarding the lack of customer service from the insurance companies.

The original intent was to offer members access to fully insured, individual policies through payroll deduction at no cost to the Union. After the initial enrollment was completed, APFA received a legal opinion that the Voluntary Benefits

Program was subject to the Employee Retirement and Income Security Act (ERISA) of 1974, as amended, based on a Department of Labor Advisory. In order to comply with ERISA, the APFA, as Plan Administrator, would incur administrative expenses and professional fees to prepare the required annual filings. In addition, ERISA creates fiduciary liability for the Plan Sponsor (APFA).

A Summary Annual Report was recently mailed to participants enrolled with the Continental American Insurance Company, who provided the participants' names. The Annual Report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). Because the Voluntary Benefits Program was discontinued, this is the first and last year the Summary Annual Report will be distributed.



# Pensions and Foreign Ownership

Joan Wages, APFA Washington Representative

**“U.S. jobs that could be farmed out to foreign workers are at stake.”**

## Pension Reform Bill

The pension reform bills that passed the U.S. House and Senate are now pending in a conference committee. Members of key committees with jurisdiction over this bill were named as conferees. Their job is to resolve the differences in the two bills and produce a single bill that will go back to the House and Senate for final passage. Our principle concern is insuring that the Airline Provision contained in the Senate bill remains in the conference report (final bill).

There is no fixed time for completing this bill. A few key, difficult issues have slowed down the talks. In addition, the key committees have become engrossed in getting two tax bills passed thereby tying up the members of the conference committee. While some of these hurdles are out of our control, APFA continues to work with other labor unions and American Airlines and other air carriers who support the Airline Provision of the pension reform bill. The House and Senate leadership still hope the bill will be completed by the time Congress leaves for its July 4 recess.

If you have not already done so, be sure to go to [www.apfa.org](http://www.apfa.org) and send your letter urging members of Congress to support keeping the Airline Provision in the final conference report. You will also find more information about this provision on APFA's Web site.

## Foreign Ownership/Control

Congress set limits on foreign control of a U.S. airline at no more than 25% and reconfirmed those limits a couple of years ago. Two events have occurred in the last few months focusing our attention on this issue. The first was a Department of Transportation (DOT)-proposed change of rules concerning foreign control, and the second is the application of Virgin America to fly within the U.S.

The DOT-proposed rule would separate marketing and economic aspects of a carrier allowing greater foreign control while safety and security departments would remain under U.S. control. Continental Airlines has taken the lead in fighting this proposal. In comments and testimony to Congress, Continental has stated that the proposal is unworkable and there could be no guarantee that CRAF flying would remain U.S. controlled.

A hearing was held in the House Aviation Subcommittee on April 1st to review the proposed rule. In addition, Rep. James Oberstar (D-MN) sponsored a letter to the DOT opposing the change in foreign ownership rules and APFA phoned many members asking them to co-sign the letter. The letter went to the DOT with 85 Republican and Democratic Representatives' signatures sending a strong message that both sides of the aisle were concerned about the DOT's proposed changes.

Next, Rep. Oberstar and Don Young (R-AK) introduced H.R. 4542 in the House and Senators Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and Ted Stevens (R-AK) introduced the companion bill in the Senate preventing the DOT from finalizing the rule until they provided additional information to Congress clarifying their position. At last count, H.R. 4542 has 187 co-sponsors. If you have not already done so, be sure to go to the APFA Web site to send a letter to your representative and senators urging them to co-sponsor these bills.

Subsequently, the DOT issued a Supplemental Proposed Rule and a hearing was held on May 9 in the Senate Commerce Committee to review DOT's revised plan. Many members of Congress have suggested that these changes would be opening Pandora's box to foreign airlines. Once opened, the box will be virtually impossible to close again.

Aviation labor unions have uniformly opposed the DOT's proposed changes. U.S. jobs that could be farmed out to foreign workers are at stake. Recently, Northwest Airlines (NW) proposed in their Flight Attendant contract negotiations that all of their international flights be staffed by foreign nationals. Members of Congress weighed in with NW opposing this action and NW eventually backed down from trying to implement the threat. A carrier controlled by a foreign entity might not

be persuaded by Congress and would be less motivated to keep jobs in the U.S.

The legislative language in H.R. 4542 was included in the Senate Supplemental Appropriations bill but was removed when the bill went to conference. In mid-June, Rep. Oberstar succeeded in getting H.R. 4542 added to the House Transportation Appropriations bill as an amendment. This bill must also go to conference where it will again be in jeopardy. Again, please send your letter to let Congress know that we are watching.

Several months ago, Virgin American Airlines, associated with Virgin Air based in Great Britain, applied to fly U.S. domestic routes. Continental, Delta and American have asked the DOT to require that the new carrier provide additional information about investors and funding sources. Virgin America responded to one round of inquiries and has been asked to respond to another. Questions remain about its connection with Virgin Air and who exactly will be controlling the company.

APFA continues to monitor the progress on the pension conference committee and the many issues surrounding foreign ownership. Be sure to listen to the APFA Hotline and check the APFA Web site for the latest action on these issues.

**“While some of these hurdles are out of our control, APFA continues to work with other labor unions and American Airlines and other air carriers who support the Airline Provision of the pension reform bill.”**





**Lonny Glover**

APFA Safety and Security  
Coordinator

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

APFA's Safety and Security Department, Flight Safety, Flight Service and the FAA have been working for the past several months to expand the Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) to be made available to AA Flight Attendants.

ASAP is an FAA-accepted program currently used by pilots, maintenance and dispatch workers at AA. Captain Scott Griffith, who is now Managing Director of Corporate Safety and Quality Evaluations, developed the pilot program that is now utilized at American. There are several other airlines that are using a similar program;

## Cabin Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) for AA Flight Attendants

however, there are very few airlines with a Flight Attendant ASAP program in place. The APFA Safety and Security Department has reviewed one existing Flight Attendant program between United Airlines and AFA, as well as the ASAP program between APA and AA. Reviewing these programs and watching how they actually work has provided us with the foundation to develop and streamline our own program.

Six years ago, APFA and AA began initial discussions to contemplate providing an ASAP program for Flight Attendants. The parties were in Contract Negotiations and felt that until negotiations were complete and a Contract ratified, it was best to hold off on this program. Unfortunately, the events of September 11th further stalled the efforts to develop the program.

What are the potential benefits of having a Cabin ASAP?. This program would allow for voluntary self-disclosures to avoid FAA penalties for Flight

Attendants and AA. Non-punitive actions by AA will decrease discipline against Flight Attendants if the event falls within the parameters of the Cabin ASAP. This could potentially reduce the amount of disciplinary case work on a local base level. Flight Attendants are currently FAA certified although there are few regulatory requirements to which they must personally adhere. In the future this could possibly change, therefore, having an ASAP program in place would add more protection for Flight Attendants when dealing with the FAA and AA. The program allows for Flight Attendants to be more responsible and proactive in safety issues. It also creates a database for the Event Review Team (ERT) or Event Review Committee (ERC) to trend common safety issues and provide quicker more effective resolutions to issues without the fear of discipline.

Here is a brief scenario of how the program might work: A Flight Attendant submits a Cabin ASAP report stating that

they forgot to conduct a briefing at the window exits on a S80 prior to departure. The Cabin ASAP Manager sends the de-identified report to the three-member ERT/ERC, which consists of one representative each from APFA, FAA and Flight Service. All three members of the team must first determine whether the report meets the criteria of the program. If the report falls within the parameters, they may elect to contact the Flight Attendant for more information. After discussion, the ERT/ERC must then unanimously determine the best course of action to take in order to address the situation.

An Advisory Circular (AC) was released by the FAA regarding their acceptance and guidance for ASAP. A Memorandum or Understanding (MOU) is being developed exclusively by the stakeholders (APFA, FAA and AA) for the program. The MOU concept is designed using a template established by the

**“...therefore, having an ASAP program in place would add more protection for Flight Attendants when dealing with the FAA and AA.”**

FAA from previously accepted ASAP programs. In February 2006 at the APFA Board of Directors Convention in Los Angeles, the Board approved our participation in the Cabin ASAP program. We anticipate having the final draft of the MOU completed shortly and hope to roll out the program by the end of the year.

APFA would like to thank each of the individuals that have worked tirelessly to develop this program, particularly former APFA Safety Coordinator Kathy Lord-Jones (DFW). It has been a huge undertaking and we hope you are as excited about the possibilities and potential this program may provide for our membership as we are.



# ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

## **3/06, RNO/DFW, S80**

On push back, the Captain reported a small emergency. A/C returned to the gate and maintenance discovered then reset a 50AMP circuit breaker that had popped. F/As heard loud popping noises and reported sparks and flames in the aft galley. PAX were deplaned through the aft stairs and forward boarding door. No slides were deployed and no injuries were reported. Maintenance found several scorched wires in the galley.

## **3/06, MIA/BWI, 737-800**

During boarding, a catering truck struck RH wing. Four PAX reported injuries to lower back, knees, shoulder and neck. Two F/As reported injuries to arm and hip. F/As were removed from sequence and escorted by FSM to local medical facility. They were examined, x-rayed and given medication. A/C removed from service for repairs.

## **3/06, RDU/LGW, 777**

PAX complained to F/As about humidity on the A/C and asked why nobody was doing anything. The crew explained they only had

control of the cabin temperature. The F/As offered a cup of water and inquired if everything was okay. PAX then asked when the second beverage service would begin. When F/A tried to respond the PAX told her to "shut up" and get her a cup of coffee. The PAX threw the cup of water on the F/A and pushed her against the jump seat. She stood in the middle of the galley demanding a cup of coffee. PAX was then told to return to her seat. Upon landing the PAX was met by LEO, FBI, and TSA at which point she fainted. She was taken to hospital where authorities stated she would later be arrested.

## **2/06, SJU/DFW, 757**

Approximately 40 minutes into flight, cockpit relayed to F/As that they received a slide deployment indicator light at one of the over wing window exits. F/A inspection found nothing out of the ordinary. Approximately 30 minutes prior to landing, a slight jolt was felt and initially dismissed as turbulence. PAX were asked to open their window shades to assess conditions outside. Visual inspection showed

the slide at left hand overwing had deployed outside and was pressed tightly against the fuselage. This information was communicated to the cockpit and it was decided to continue to DFW. The flight landed without incident and A/C was inspected by emergency personnel in remote area. The plane taxied to the gate where everyone deplaned via jet bridge.

## **1/06, MIA/EWR/MIA, 767-300**

After take off, F/As experienced ears popping and felt strange pressurization. The A/C experienced a sudden jolt and O2 masks dropped. Several masks appeared to not work properly. Flight landed without incident and no injuries reported. After landing, maintenance confirmed some O2 units did not fire. F/As later experienced muscle pain, headaches and felt light-headed.

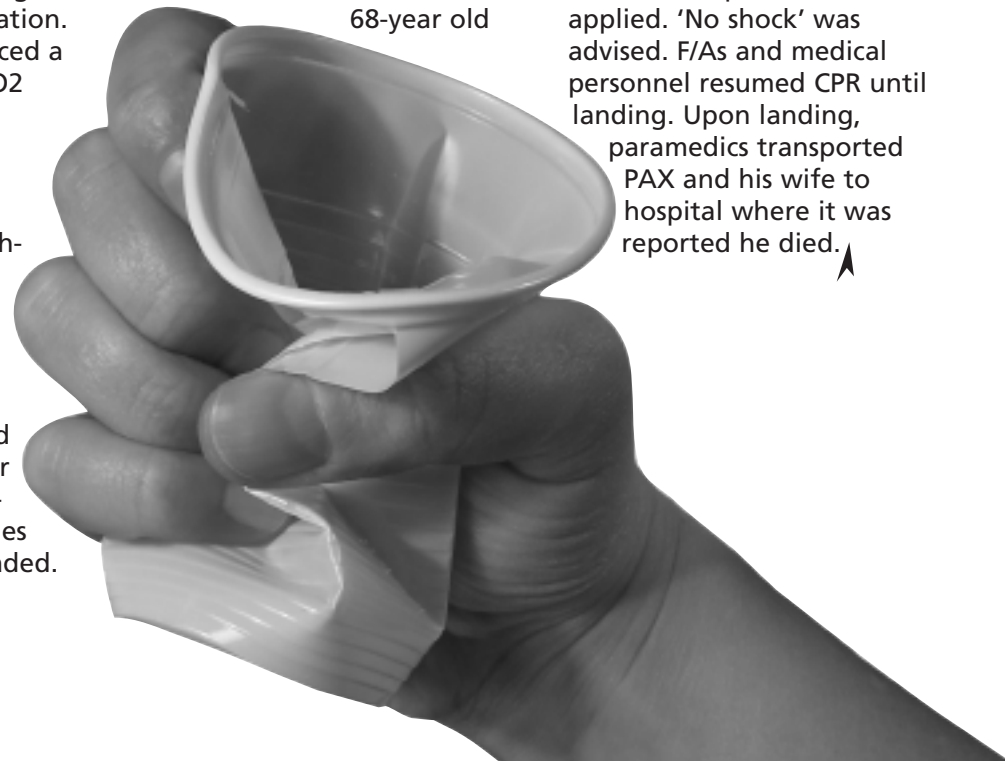
## **1/06, DTW/DFW, S80**

During boarding, PAX challenged F/A when told that his child's car seat could not block PAX access to the aisle. The PAX demanded to see regulation, so F/A presented manual section (Boarding 3.4, Seat Locations). After F/A provided documentation, PAX made derogatory remark to F/A. F/A reported this to the Captain and PAX and child were removed.

## **1/06, SJU/PHL/BDA, 757**

During beverage service, a nurse alerted crew that a 68-year old

PAX was having severe breathing problems. The nurse took his blood pressure while F/As administered O2. PAX's breathing improved. PAX's wife indicated that he was Type 2 Diabetic. After 20 minutes on O2, PAX went to lavatory. After 30 seconds, he collapsed inside. Cockpit was contacted. As PAX was pulled from lavatory into aisle, Code Red was declared. F/As attempted to clear his airway, but he was regurgitating fluids from his nose and mouth. CPR was initiated and AED pads were applied. 'No shock' was advised. F/As and medical personnel resumed CPR until landing. Upon landing, paramedics transported PAX and his wife to hospital where it was reported he died.





**Jaimie McNeice**  
APFA  
Scheduling Coordinator

# 2000-Series Open Replacement Lines

days can actually cause all reserves to fly less during the month. We worked very hard to find a creative solution to this challenge.

All of us should be thinking about two things. First, it is time for a change to the way day-before coverage works, and maybe we should consider testing a new concept prior to the next round of negotiations. The current system doesn't work for many of our members. Second, our reserve system needs to be improved. It is difficult to fix because so many improvements involve computer programming which can be costly. Regardless, maybe improved coverage from existing or reduced numbers of reserves can justify those expenditures.

This 2000 series will run for three months. The Company has made it clear that if this solution is not effective, they intend to increase the number of reserves in the summer and holiday months. We will be monitoring how the selection works and need to hear comments and suggestions for changes or improvements from those of you actually flying the 2000-Series.

The following Q&A's were created to help those Flight

Attendants that plan to bid for and/or hold a 2000 Series Open Replacement Line. Please go to [www.apfa.org](http://www.apfa.org) to view the letter between APFA and the Company for further clarification.

**Q: Why was this new Open Replacement Series 2000 established?**

A: Open Replacement Series 2000 was established as a result of the Company's announcement earlier this year to eliminate Open Replacement completely and place those jobs on the reserve list. Crew Planning stated they were not experiencing proper coverage when they needed it because Open Replacement flying, also considered the buffer, was not subsidizing the flying it was intended to. AA stated their need for adequate staffing, and APFA realized the importance of keeping our members off reserve, especially during this no-growth period.

**Q: Isn't disallowing pre-plotting for Open Replacement a violation of our Contract?**

A: No. Per Article 9, Letter I, dated May 22, 2001: "Should Operational or System needs require, the Company may temporarily discontinue access to the AVRS automated self-plotting system."

**Q: Can I add myself to the makeup list on my Days off and max out early?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Is Open Replacement 3000 and 4000 changing?**

A: No.

**Q: Can I drop the trip I plotted on day-before coverage?**

A: Yes. There are no restrictions to dropping your trip once it is on your schedule.

**Q: How many Flight Attendants will be affected by this change?**

A: A total of approximately 200 Flight Attendants system wide will be affected by this change, which will result in keeping hundreds of Flight Attendants off of a Reserve rotation.

**Q: What is the difference between 2000 Open Replacement and 3000-4000 Open Replacement?**

A: 2000 Series Open Replacement Holders will bid for set days off like the current Availability lines, and are restricted to pre-plotting trips the day before.

**Q: How long will this new procedure be in effect?**

A: This test begins June of '06 for a three-month period. The Company has made it clear, however, that if this solution is

**"The Company has made it clear that if this solution is not effective, they intend to increase the number of reserves in summer and holiday months."**

ineffective, they intend to place more F/As on Reserve during the summer and holidays. Throughout this test, the parties will review data collected by both the union and the Company. The membership will be surveyed regarding this test.

**Q: What about the ideas submitted by the membership?**

A: There were numerous ideas submitted by the membership. For example, one in particular was to create a Heavy A and a Heavy B schedule for days off and change sick clearance time.

The days-off pattern proposed by a Heavy A or a Heavy B schedule did not fulfill the Company's needs because the scheduled days off don't have much impact on how Replacement Flight Attendants really fly. Flight Attendants would still have the ability to relieve themselves of AVBL obligations and the concept would not improve coverage on weekends and holidays. Remember, coverage was the impetus for this change to begin with. ▲

In January, Crew Resources told APFA that they intended to assign more Reserve jobs and reduce Open Replacement jobs, particularly during holiday and summer months. The problem, they explained, was that holiday scheduling resulted from Open Replacement Flight Attendants not being available on the days they were originally scheduled. Many would pick up trips, trade, etc., which would allow them to remove some or all of their remaining Available (AVBL) days.

By now, 128 of you have been awarded one of the 2000-Series Open Replacement lines. APFA maintains that, although access to pre-plot is restricted, these Open Replacement lines are necessary in order to avoid an increase to the reserve pool during the summer and holiday months. An increase to reserves just to cover certain peak flying

## Health



**Patty French**

APFA Health Coordinator

[health@apfa.org](mailto:health@apfa.org)  
817.540.0108, ext. 8290

### Editor's Note:

The following message appeared May 1, 2006, in Flight Attendants' HI6 messages system wide. The message, sent by Dr. Bettes, was intended to respond to Flight Attendants inquiries about the use of Ambien particularly as it relates to addiction, side-effects and drug testing.

APFA acknowledges that while the use of Ambien can cause "next-day drowsiness," so, too, can no sleep at all. In light of our short layover times and the increased amount of flying our members must do in order to compensate for lost wages from the 2003 RPA, we encourage you to seek professional medical advice on any sleep aids you are considering.

### HI6 Message

**To: All Flight Attendants**  
**From: Dr. Thomas Bettes, M.D. - Director Occupational Health**  
**Subject: Ambien**  
**Received: 5/1/2006 3:42:27 PM**

*Many pilots and Flight Attendants have asked about the use of sleep medications including Ambien to assist with the problem of circadian desynchronization during or after work trips. Ambien is a benzodiazepine-like medication similar to Valium that is available only as a prescription, and is the most frequently prescribed hypnotic in the US. Ambien is intended for short term treatment. A new extended-release formulation, Ambien CR is now available and is being heavily*

*marketed directly to the public to promote sleep. Ambien, like many prescription medications, is increasingly available for purchase directly over the internet, mainly from out-of-country suppliers.*

*Although generally safe, Ambien like all sleep-inducing medications can have adverse effects such as next-day sleepiness and significant rebound insomnia after extended use. All sleep hypnotics are potentially addicting causing both physical and psychological dependence. There are various side effects that need to be considered including reports of sleep-walking and sleep-eating. In general, Flight Attendants shouldn't take any prescription*

*sleep medication within 24 hrs. of a duty period, and all prescription sleep medications should be taken while under the care of a physician.*

*Practicing good sleep habits is a simple way to improve your quality of and ability to sleep. Getting adequate rest before a trip begins is the best single way to avoid sleep deprivation. For additional information about these or other aero-medical topics, please go to the WebMD site available on JetNet or contact American Airlines Occupational Health Services.*

It was the night before day-two of your trip following a long work day with hot aircraft, full loads and irritable passengers. You're finally in bed at your layover hotel looking forward to a well deserved good night's sleep. You turn off the light, pull the covers up and look forward to finally getting some sleep. Instead, you lie there unable to turn off your mind as the clock beside your bed ticks off the minutes one by one. You are still awake at 3:00 A.M. wondering if you'll get to sleep before the alarm goes off for pick-up in a few hours.

Maybe the flight was particularly stressful and you can't stop thinking about the angry passenger in 33B. Or you wonder how your child's soccer

## Another Sleepless Night



**"Insomnia is real, and it's no fun."**

game went, the bills you still have to pay or whether your pension will still be there when you retire. Or it could be that nothing is bothering you – except for the fact that you can't sleep.

If this scene sounds familiar to you, be assured that you have a lot of company. According to the National Sleep Foundation, approximately one-third of all American adults have had insomnia during the previous year, and half of this group reports severe or constant sleep problems.

Flight Attendants have unique

challenges to a good night sleep with our changing work schedules, jet lag, cabin environment, change of time zones and lack of food. Most Flight Attendants, at one time or another, have experienced that irritable, drowsy feeling at work that follows a sleepless night. Some have experienced this discomfort often enough that they have resorted to going to their personal physician who assures them that a good night's sleep is just a pill away.

In fact, despite the fact that sleeping pills can be dangerous and often make a sleep prob-

lem worse, 21 million prescriptions for sleeping pills are written each year.

How much sleep is really necessary for us to avoid the groggy, irritable feeling the next day? Studies show that about two-thirds of adults sleep between six and nine hours per night. Genetic variation accounts for the wide range in the amount of sleep we each need. The need for sleep also depends in part on one's current emotional state and level of stress.

Sleep-restriction experiments show three behavioral effects of sleep deprivation that are

consistently observed that most Flight Attendants are all too familiar with: *Daytime drowsiness*, especially during sedentary activities like sitting on the jump seat, *irritability*, and a *decline in performance* on clerical tasks like adding numbers and making change.

This comes as no surprise to anyone who has laid in bed counting the minutes until the alarm goes off an hour before pickup. As you lie there, you think about what the trip home will be like. You'll drag through the first service, keeping yourself awake with coffee. In the afternoon you'll grow

irritable and have a hard time concentrating. You will practically nod off as you drive home, and you won't have the energy to do more than watch TV once you have unpacked your bags. And when you turn out the light and lie down, you may not even be able to sleep. The cycle will begin again.

Insomnia is real, and it's no fun. The term "insomnia" is actually a misnomer, because it implies a complete lack of sleep. Sleep professionals sometimes refer to insomnia as DIMS, an acronym for "disorders of initiating and maintaining sleep." This term recognizes that insomnia comes in two major types. Some people have difficulty falling asleep, and some have difficulty staying asleep through the night. Others experience both problems.

After a number of sleepless nights and irritable days at work, it is common for a Flight Attendant to begin looking for solutions to this problem. The first line of defense often sought is alcohol. Many believe that a glass of wine or beer at bedtime will help them sleep – hence the reference "night-cap." But alcohol is not a good sleep aid. In fact, alcohol use is estimated to be a major cause of at least ten percent of chronic insomnia cases. There is no doubt that some find that alcohol helps them to relax enough to drop off to sleep. The major problem with alcohol involves not falling asleep but staying asleep. As the body metabolizes alcohol, withdrawal effects occur, causing the

person to awaken. Even one drink within two hours of bedtime can cause nighttime awakenings and difficulty falling back to sleep. Sleep becomes less deep and less sound and there will be less total sleep over the course of the night. Sleep that is shallow and disrupted results in little to no delta sleep. This causes the sleep-wake rhythms to become blurred, causing daytime sleepiness and nighttime wakefulness.

The second line of defense against sleepless nights for Flight Attendants is over-the-counter sleep aids like Tylenol PM or Excedrin PM. Non-prescription sleep medications utilize antihistamines as active ingredients. The drowsiness caused by antihistamines is actually a side effect of their intended purpose of counteracting allergic symptoms. The biggest problem with these medications is that they lose their effectiveness if taken regularly for long periods of time. They are marginally effective and have side effects such as dry mouth. This only adds to the problem of dehydration after flying all day.

The third sleep aid that Flight Attendants often use is prescription sleeping pills. Ambien and Halcion are two of the most popular sleeping pills but should be used with extreme caution because of the potential for physical and psychological dependence. Any prescription sleep medication should be used under very limited circumstances such as no more than two pills per week. Because there have been

reports of negative side effects with the use of Ambien, it is recommended that Flight Attendants use Ambien only if they have a minimum of twenty-four hours before flight duty. These reported negative side effects are sleepwalking, sleep related eating disorders, sleep driving and amnesia. If anyone experiences these types of problems while taking this medication, they should consult their doctor immediately. Both Ambien and Halcion produce a shallow sleep cycle thus increasing the instance of drowsiness the next day. Ambien is rapidly eliminated from the body which makes it more suitable for insomnia that involves difficulty with falling asleep than for problems with staying asleep. It is recommended that if you do use sleep medications that you don't leave them next to your bedside. It is quite common to awaken in the middle of the night, see the pills on the nightstand and take a second pill without remembering that one had already been taken earlier in the evening. It is not recommended that alcohol be consumed when taking these pills. Alcohol slows the activity of the central nervous system. When alcohol is combined with sleeping pills, the effect of the pills will be compounded. About one-third of drug-related deaths involve sleeping pills.

No matter what sleep medication you use, they should never be used too often or for too long. The problem with regular long term use is that they lose their effectiveness over time.

Drug tolerance means that the pills don't work as well as they used to. Larger doses are needed to obtain the original effect. With drug tolerance, withdrawal symptoms are also produced. This means that when a person stops using the sleeping pills, the withdrawal symptom of rebound insomnia appears. People who stop taking the pills after their bodies have learned to depend on them for sleep find that quitting causes their insomnia to be much worse than it was before they began taking sleeping pills. When this happens, they often continue to take the sleep medication to avoid experiencing worse insomnia than they had before they took any pills.

There are no short easy answers to getting a good night's sleep with our irregular hours, change in time zones and lack of food and water. But there are some very simple and common sense guidelines to follow that will provide the best opportunity for a good night's sleep.

- Get adequate rest before a trip begins to avoid a sleep debt.
- Manage stress and anxiety by learning coping skills, utilizing relaxation techniques or seeking professional advice.
- Limit use of alcohol, caffeine and tobacco
- When at home, maintain a regular sleep/wake schedule
- Don't allow yourself too much time in bed
- Expose yourself to sunlight every day

- Exercise vigorously at least three times a week
- Maintain good nutrition
- Set your room for bed time by closing shades and eliminating excess noise
- Use relaxation tapes or visual imagery to help get to sleep or to return to sleep in the middle of the night
- Try not to worry about sleeping as this only makes it worse (easier said than done!)

There are two situations in which you would consider professional help to resolve a sleep problem. First is if poor sleep is caused by a physical problem. A consultation with your doctor will help to identify whether this is the case. Second, if stress, anxiety or depression is interfering with sleep and self-help methods have not reduced sleep problems, a consultation with a mental-health professional may be of help.

Going to a sleep disorder clinic should be considered when:

- There is constricted breathing or excessive leg movements during sleep.
- Severe and relentless insomnia impair your daytime functioning despite genuine efforts to change possible causes.

**For more information about sleep, check out the following Web sites:**

[www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)  
[www.aasnmet.org](http://www.aasnmet.org)  
[www.sro.org](http://www.sro.org)  
[www.wfsrs.org](http://www.wfsrs.org)





Dané Townsend  
APFA Hotel Coordinator

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

### Palm Beach

This review was necessitated by lower bids having been received during the Request For Proposal (RFP) process. After a full review of the city, it was decided to remain at the current hotel, the Crowne Plaza. A one-year contract was signed.

### Washington Reagan

The former crew hotel for the long layover informed AA that they were no longer interested in having AA's business, thus a review was called. It was decided to move to the Crowne Plaza, Crystal City. There are many shopping and eating venues in the surrounding area as well as a Metro Station, allowing access to downtown DC within ten minutes. Due to the proximity of this hotel to the airport, we are also looking into the possibility of utilizing this property for short layovers as well.

# Hotel News and Reviews

### Orange County

Although we had a long standing relationship with the Hilton SNA, the hotel raised the rate by a hefty amount at the end of the contract and was unwilling to budge. After reviewing all properties available, the decision was made to house the crews at the Ayres Hotel SNA. (See review in previous issue of *Skyword*)

### New York

(Short) This review was conducting solely because the contract was set to expire and lower bids were received for the area. The hotels viewed were determined to be of inferior quality and the decision was made to remain at the two current crew hotels, the Crowne Plaza and Marriott Courtyard.

### Acapulco

The contract expired for the crew hotel and once the city was put out to bid, there were less expensive RFPs returned. After reviewing the available properties, it was determined that it was best to move the crews to the Hyatt, a former crew hotel.

### Salt Lake

The crew hotel was less than desirable, so when the contract expired, change was a warm welcome! Crews will now be housed at the Radisson hotel.

### Cabo

The contract at the former crew hotel expired. When a renewal was negotiated, a significant rate increase was imposed. An emergency review was scheduled and a new property was chosen. The crews will be housed at the all-inclusive Crowne Plaza Resort.

### Seattle

Contract renewal was due with the current crew short layover hotel. It was determined that the best course of action is to continue our relationship with the Doubletree.

### Chicago

The Allerton Crowne Plaza, a crew favorite, noticed AA that it was no longer interested in our business and would sever the relationship at the end of the contract. After an exhaustive review of downtown and suburban properties, a wonderful new property, The Homewood Suites, was procured. The hotel will offer crews complimentary breakfast seven days a week, as well as a complimentary dinner including soft drinks, beer and wine Monday through Thursday.

### Love Field

AA began service into Dallas Love Field recently. After reviewing properties in the area, the Radisson Love Field was chosen as our layover property.

### Cancun

After last year's hurricane season, our crew layover hotel, the Marriott, was damaged and is undergoing severe reconstruction. AA crews are being housed temporarily at the RIU Palace which is all-inclusive. Once the construction at the Marriott is complete we will move back to the Marriott, in the summer of 2006.

### Orlando

Both the long and short hotel contracts were up for renewal in Orlando. We have faced numerous problems with the short layover hotel and are anxious to find a replacement property. At the time of this writing, the review was completed but a decision had not yet been made. However, APFA's choices for short layovers are: Crowne Plaza MCO, Hilton Garden Inn, Florida Mall Hotel, and the Courtyard MCO. Our choices for the long layover are: Radisson Barcelo (our current crew hotel), Crowne Plaza, Courtyard I-Drive, and Springhill Suites.

### Anchorage

This service is seasonal out of both DFW and ORD and began in May. The current crew hotel, the Sheraton had a huge rate increase, thus a review was called. The decision was made to move to the Inlet Hotel.

### San Pedro Sula

The contract with the current hotel expired. A review was accomplished and after sighting the available properties, it was determined that the best course of action was to remain at the current crew hotel.

### Liberia

This review was necessitated by new service to the city of Liberia, Costa Rica. Two properties bid on the business. The Occidental Grand Papagayo was selected and a one-year contract was signed.

### Glasgow

This seasonal flight will begin again this spring and the contract was due for signing. The former crew hotel was not up to APFA fire safety standards. We chose a newly-built property, The Jury Hotel, to house our crews. It is located on the south end of the city and is within three blocks of the main shopping and entertainment areas.

## Fort Lauderdale Hotel Review

Long and Short Sheraton Yankee Clipper

By Denise Pointer

Effective April 1, 2006, our new long and short layover hotel in Fort Lauderdale is the Sheraton Yankee Clipper located at 1140 Seabreeze Boulevard. The hotel is on the beach and is 10 - 15 minutes from the airport. Within a short walk of the hotel are shops on Las Olas Boulevard and the Los Olas Riverfront, as well as downtown shopping and cultural centers.

All rooms at the Sheraton have the new Sweet Sleeper bedding packages. Crew rooms are nicely equipped and feature high speed internet, 32" TVs, hairdryers, coffee makers, iron and ironing boards. Crews will be housed in a separate 150 room ocean-front "Crew Tower." Jet Blue and Delta layover at the Sheraton Yankee Clipper as well.

The hotel has two pools, a workout facility, a deli, several restaurants and two bars. The Wreck Bar has an underwater view into the main swimming pool and features live entertainment nightly. A 50% discount on appetizers is offered to crew members during happy hour. The hotel is undergoing a complete renovation, which should be completed by the time you receive this issue of *Skyword*.

The Beachside Bar & Grill is literally on the beach and will be a favorite spot for crews to unwind and enjoy the outdoor barbeque. The Deli offers early morning coffee, sandwiches, snacks, and beverages and is open from 5:30am to 1:30 am.



## Rome Hotel Review

Hotel Ripa

By Chas Cipriano, JFK APFA National Hotel Committee

Change...we often don't like it, but due to circumstances beyond our control sometimes it's inevitable. Effective with the start of this year's seasonal Rome flying, both JFK and IOR crews, cabin and cockpit alike, moved to the Ripa Hotel located in the historic Trastevere area of Rome.

While we are aware that most crew members loved the Quirinale, this move was necessary. I would like to make everyone aware of the facts about our move. It was not a decision that was made lightly. To dispel rumors, no, we were not 'kicked out' of the Quirinale. When I asked the hotel management if there were any problems last year, they said absolutely not. They enjoyed having us and looked forward to our arrival each day. This move was purely economical. The hotel needed to raise their rates and did so, quite considerably.

That said, we pounded the pavement and explored numerous options. While there were several viable alternatives, AA's budget remained the same. For quite awhile there were no other hotels that could accommodate us at an affordable rate. That is until the Hotel Ripa stepped up!

This is a very nice property, run by the same family that built the hotel

in 1973. They are very excited to have our crews staying with them, and were happy to sign a two-year contract. Thai Airways stays here and has for the past 20 years. The hotel enjoys them and the crews enjoy the hotel. I hope you do as well.

The Hotel Ripa is a modern boutique-style hotel in a trendy, newer (if you can call any part of Rome new) area of the city. It is a 25-minute walk in one direction to the Coliseum, and a 25-minute walk in another direction to the Vatican. There is also a simple, fast and inexpensive tram ride, which departs from in front of the hotel.

The area offers excellent restaurants (considerably less expensive than other parts of the city), shopping, sightseeing, transportation and the ever-popular grocery store - 20 feet from the hotel entrance. All rooms have been renovated and most have balconies. Most amenities are included in the room, and yes, each room is equipped with air conditioning for those hot Rome summer days!

Wi-Fi is available in each room for 10 euro a day, as is a complimentary bottle of water. There is a nice restaurant in the hotel with very reasonable prices and crews will



receive a 15 percent discount. The hotel has a small fitness room free of charge and a new state of the art gym around the corner that charges crews 10 euro a day.

Due to the close arrival and departure times, and since it is a smaller hotel, there may be a small wait for the JFK crew, since they are the first to arrive. The wait should only be approximately 30-45 minutes, and crews will be offered a free breakfast

I want to be completely blunt about this next statement: Fellow Flight Attendants, there was a choice to be made here, and through my eyes the choice was clear and simple. Move to The Ripa, a nice hotel with a short room wait, or return to the Hilton airport. That's it. You made it very clear that you wanted a downtown location, and we got it. I think this is a small sacrifice to secure a downtown property.

Please be open to our new home away from home while in Rome, enjoy the new location, and please know everything possible was done to secure a safe, clean, comfortable, downtown hotel for our crews.

Until next time, Grazie e Buon Viaggio!



## Montreal Hotel Review

Long and Short

By Joel Medford

Due to the fact that the contracts for both the long and short layover hotels in Montreal were set to expire, a review was conducted this past March.

The current long layover hotel, Le Centre Sheraton, was a match for our crews. This hotel is centrally located in downtown Montreal and provides plenty of diversions nearby to satisfy anyone's hunger pangs, shopping addictions or even the sports fanatic.

Located near the metro stop Bonaventure, Orange Ligne, the Sheraton provides comfortable rooms, discounts for restaurants and bars, an excellent gym and

sauna. This hotel does make for a great "Bienvenue a Montreal."

Our new short layover hotel in Montreal will be the Hilton Montreal Airport. This hotel is in close proximity to the airport and provides a comfortable rest for those with limited time in the city. Air Canada currently uses this hotel for their crews. A nice crew room with complimentary Internet, as well as a 20 percent discount for food and beverage make this hotel an excellent choice.

The Hilton provides van service every 15 minutes with a quick five-minute drive to and from the airport.

# “Nobody Believes the Official Spokesman, But Everybody Trusts an Unidentified Source” – Ron Nesen

By Denise Pointer, InfoRep Coordinator  
inforep@apfa.org

For more than 18 months I've been writing and e-mailing a bi-monthly InfoRep Hotline. I try to include things in this Hotline that are relevant and of interest to all of us. Rumor Control and the Hotel updates seem to be the most popular bits of info based on the feedback I get. Or, at least those topics seem to generate the most email responses from InfoReps.

Regardless of the nature or tone of the emails I receive from Flight Attendants in the field, I love getting feedback from my co-workers. It means that you are reading, you are interested in becoming even more informed and that you most definitely have an opinion. I am as pleased to receive messages disagreeing with what's being said as I appreciate the “good hotline” or “glad to know that,” messages. Feedback is a very good thing.

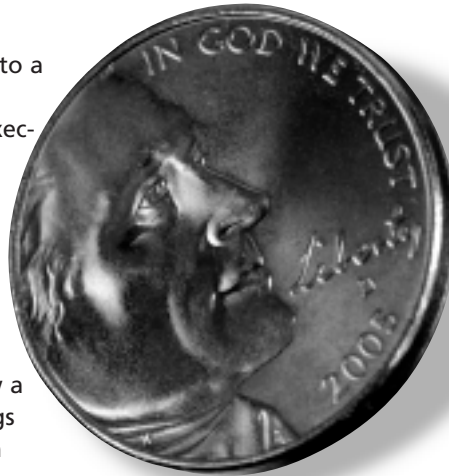
When I am challenged with clarifying a rumor and request the Flight Attendant's source, I very rarely get a name included with their response. It's usually “my neighbor's friend has an aunt who works for someone who is in management at AA and they said...” or, “I flew

with somebody who talked to a passenger who met this guy who had talked to an AA executive at a cocktail party and they said...” or my personal favorite, “I read it on the Internet.”

There will always be those who consider themselves “sources” - those who know a little bit about a lot of things and mix slivers of truth with rumors convoluting the information to such an extreme that it takes a village to get to the facts. The beauty is it causes us to question and consider, and engages us all in communication. Your questions lead to dialogue and dialogue leads to understanding. And in the end, we are usually able to get the truth out there.

How much of your day on the airplane or in the crew van is spent talking to other crew members about what's going on with American or with APFA? How much of what you hear in the galley do you think is the honest-to-goodness truth? If one of your co-workers in that situation is an

**“There will always be those who consider themselves “sources” - those who know a little bit about a lot of things and mix slivers of truth with rumors convoluting the information to such an extreme that it takes a village to get to the facts.”**



InfoRep, it is the mission of this important APFA communication program that they are equipped to share facts, not rumors.

I was born in and spent most of my formative years in Las Vegas where my family was involved in the gaming industry. Recently, I went home for a visit with a Flight Attendant friend with whom I shared an apartment in New York back in the good ole' days. She was eager to share with me a newspaper article about a woman who had just hit a \$10 million dollar jackpot playing nickel slots. She was exceedingly happy to whip this article out

of her flight bag and show me the proof.

In the past, I have been known to scold her for wasting her money on these seemingly stupid nickel slots. I prided myself on knowing that this was a huge waste of time and hard-earned money. After all, Vegas was my area of expertise!

Clearly, I could not have been more wrong and her article about the new mega millionaire proved it. She then said to me, “Denise, you can't expect to hit the jackpot if you don't put a few nickels in the machine.” I phoned my father when we landed and he confirmed this bit of news although we both concluded it was a fluke. Nonetheless, it really did happen.

I was amused and intrigued by my friend's advice because I believe it carries over into other aspects of life both personal and professional. You can't expect to know everything that is going on with your career and your union if you don't put in a little effort.

You need to read what you can, stay informed and finally, consider the source.

Think about signing up to be an InfoRep. You can be as involved as much or as little as you like. But, regardless of your involvement, you will be informed and passing on correct information. If you are flying with someone who has a blue circle pin on their lapel, ask him or her questions, or ask to read the latest InfoRep Hotline. We've asked the InfoReps to carry copies of these Hotlines with them on their trips, if for no other reason, to generate interest in and discussion on what's going on. And, if you aren't sure whether or not what you are hearing is accurate, ask!

I've said this before, I don't know all the answers but if you send me a question, I promise I will do whatever it takes to get you an honest accurate timely response. My email address is inforep@apfa.org.

And, by the way – I still refuse to play the nickel slots. ▲

# RECLAIMING THE SKY

By Tom Murphy  
Submitted by Debbie Roland, DCA

A Program to Support  
Flight Attendants Post 9/11



Reclaimingthesky.com offers an online forum to support aviation employees as they struggle with the issues of loss surrounding 9/11. It is designed to help airline employees cope with the changes brought about by that tragic day and meet the challenges of flying during a turbulent time.

This support program, a non-profit organization created with input from Flight Attendants, also offers links to aviation charities and a segment on wellness. The Web site grows out of a book entitled "Reclaiming the Sky: 9/11 and the Untold Story of the Men and Women Who Kept America Flying," which is an account of the quiet heroes of aviation who rose up that day and continue to respond to the challenges. The book, written by Tom Murphy, a 20-year aviation customer service trainer who worked with American Airlines

staff in Boston and New York, will be published later this summer by AMACOM Books. All profits will go to support aviation charities. The book highlights the charity projects created by American Airlines flight crews for their colleagues lost on 9/11, including a video library project for Michelle Heidenberger and the creation of a garden (the Kennifer Memorial Garden) in Culpeper, Virginia for Ken and Jennifer Lewis.

The healing themes from the book have been incorporated into the reclaimingthesky.com Web site with leadership input from representatives of the WINGS Foundation, Inc., and the CAUSE Foundation Inc., the charities that assist the American and United Airlines Flight Attendants, along with assistance from other aviation groups across the country. The station manager's council at Newark airport was the first to endorse the program.

The first story published on www.reclaimingthesky.com was written by American Airlines DCA-based Flight Attendant Linda Souder who penned an inspiring tribute to her Flight Attendant colleagues lost on Flight 77. Linda, who was among the last to fly with Renee May, Michele Heidenberger and Ken and Jennifer Lewis, shared her personal story of recovery. New York-based Flight Attendant, Mary McKenna, followed with a tribute to her colleagues lost on Flight 587. Boston-based Flight Attendant Sunny Bishop wrote two poems in honor of her colleagues and Cathie Ong, sister of Betty Ong, a hero of Flight 11, wrote a story about the charity foundation she has created in Betty's honor, among other stories.

The Reclaiming the Sky program expanded in May to offer an online Community Center, with a message board system

where aviation employees throughout the U.S. now have an opportunity to adapt the healing and stress relief principles from Reclaiming the Sky to their own lives. The message board, made possible by a contribution of software from iVillage, allows Flight Attendants to connect with each other and stay in touch in a hi-tech way.

On the message board, Flight Attendants can open online discussions, and get and give support as they meet the challenges of operating as first responders in a new, nervous world. Topics address the ongoing need to express emotions of loss around 9/11 as well as share personal approaches to recovery, share how the support they receive from friends and family has been critical to that process, discuss the difficulty of balancing the balls of responsibilities in a post 9/11 world. Also, the message board offers a place - a safe haven -

to talk about getting stronger and ask for advice about how to grow stronger physically and emotionally while meeting the demands of keeping America flying.

Finally, the program is offering an Advance Charity Book Sale this summer to help WINGS and other aviation charities raise funds for their organizations before the book begins appearing in stores in September. All profits from the sale of this book will go to aviation charities.

**For more information about the Advanced Charity Book Sale, the Web site and the message board with its online Community Center - log onto [www.reclaimingthesky.com](http://www.reclaimingthesky.com).**



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