

# Northern Light



Wishing you and your family  
a wonderful holiday season and a  
healthy and peaceful New Year.



**From the Executive Board, Directors and Administrative Staff of District 143.**

Stephen M. Gordon - Steve K. Dunn - Gerald F. Bernson - Sharon Caldwell - Jerry Cross  
Ruth Dorsty - Sammy Ellis - Jackie Fay - Bill Holloway - Paul N. Longden - Nan Otto  
J Scott Peterson - Richard Suarez - Vickie Cheek - Stephen Kostora - Kevin Heffernan  
Candice Hendrickson - Bea Knott - Tracy McKean - Gary Mobley - Dominic Nese  
Kiana Peacock - Diane Tomevi - Larry Webb - Patty Bledsoe - Cheryl Hoover - Roger Nohovig  
Ray Painter - Clay Parraghi - Michael Rachfal - Lisa Stager - Al Wojcik  
Jan Tami Nancy Barb Andy Debbie

## Northwest Airlines Update

### Vacation Bidding

Vacation bidding has been completed for all classifications in DTW, ATL and CMH. Remember, all unused 2008 birthday/anniversary days will automatically go to your vacation accruals. Check your January 2009 accruals to make sure those days are credited properly.

### Stay Focused

We are going to see a lot of unusual things happening in the coming days with regard to the Delta/NWA integration process. Stay focused on your guaranteed contract language. Don't fall for the written open-end promises that last only as long as Delta says they last. Remember, "at will" is at Delta's will!. Negotiate it to keep it! Happy holidays to all. Love each other, enjoy your families, and peace to each of us.—*General Chair Sharon Caldwell*

### No Union?

Many of us have been under a bargaining agreement in the work place all of our careers and cannot even imagine going to work without Union protection and the benefits afforded us within the provisions of a CONTRACT. Although some take the agreement for granted, most just accept it as a way of life without giving a thought to the effort and time required by your elected representatives to negotiate wages, benefits and work rules. You, as a collective group, determine the provisions to be negotiated by sending representatives from your city to a conference to VOTE on contract proposals. In this manner, we all have input in determining the policies and procedures of the Company we have chosen to make a career with. In contrast, our friends at Delta have never worked under a contract and are accustomed to that way of life. They don't have the right to a grievance procedure, nor do they have the right to bump or bid any city on the system using their seniority. Those who still have a frozen pension plan will see an offset in the amount of whatever social security they have earned. These are just a few of the benefits our contract provides that Company policy at Delta does not.

(continued)

We must educate our brothers and sisters at Delta to the benefits of union representation in order to preserve our benefits and give the same to that entire work force. We must also do this to honor and preserve the memory of those in the labor movement who fought and sacrificed so WE could enjoy a better way of life. I challenge you to help make Delta Air Lines the world's largest UNIONIZED airline!—*General Chair Sam Ellis*

### "No Frontliners Will Be Cut" (Well, maybe...)

In a memo dated December 2, DelWest CEO Richard Anderson announced further capacity cuts. The memo stated, "We are analyzing the impact on staffing as it pertains to these reductions and, as in the past, we will offer voluntary programs to adjust staffing needs." I'm not an actuary but I believe reduced capacity in layman's terms means fewer flights. I'm reasonably sure that means less people—no matter what.

My first thought is, with all the takers on voluntary reductions so far, what happens if they *don't* get enough volunteers? Remember when the merger was first announced and it was trumpeted from here to eternity that there would be no frontline layoffs? You can bet there will be frontline layoffs and it will be blamed on anything but the merger. Your job will be the "luck of the draw" depending on the capacity reduction in your city no matter which carrier you're with (although the memo did state they wanted "Delta people" to be the first to know about business changes.)

Secondly, the word "execution" is used twice in this memo. Uh oh. Freudian slip? It still strikes me as odd that we need to merge and quadruple our size to 'get smaller' by reducing capacity.

The memo further stated that "speed in execution is the difference between success and failure." Really? For whom? Speed can always be equated with recklessness and, if you're still analyzing the impact on operations, I'd say: take your time! I wish a Happy Holiday Season to one and all.—*General Chair J Scott Peterson*



### **Don't Be Fooled Again**

The following excerpt can be found on page 34, the last page of the 2009 Delta Benefits Guide. The original print is so small you need a magnifying glass to read it. Once you do, you'll know why.

It states, "Delta reserves the right to amend, modify or terminate all or any part of its benefit plans in its sole discretion at any time, for any reason. Any such amendment, modification or termination may apply to active employees, inactive employees, retirees, disabled employees, COBRA participants, or employees on a leave of absence or furlough and their dependents and survivors. Any amendment or modification may be applied prospectively or retroactively and may be applied only to one group of participants, such as retirees, but not to other groups of participants. This guide is not a contract or guarantee of your benefits..."

Compare, yet, another highly dubious promise from Delta to the legally-binding IAM-negotiated contract benefit language.

In case you forgot, paragraph (D) on page 2.3 of the COFPS contract and paragraph (B) of the ESSC contract states, "It is understood and agreed that all provisions of this agreement shall be binding upon any successors or assigning the Company which acquires ownership and/or control of all or substantially all of the equity securities of the Company or all or substantially all of the value of the assets of the Company."

How ironic that Crystal Knotek, NWA Sr. Vice President of Customer Service, refuses to recognize this fact; yet Michael Campbell, Executive Vice President of Human Resources and Labor, has sent President/Directing General Chair Stephen M. Gordon a letter acknowledging that point.

We ALL must realize, though, losing a representation election changes everything. Secure your future, support your union.—  
*Organizing Director Al Wojcik*

## **Alaska Airlines Update**

### **IAM/ASA 2007—2008 Review**

As we prepare to represent the IAM/Alaska Airlines members in 2009, lessons can be learned from the past two years. Reviewing some of the events of 2007 we see:

**January**—Cargo Spot rolled out. RSSA lockout arbitration began. Serious weight and balance problems occur.

**February**—Home Agent testing begins.

**June**—Seattle Customer Service is devastated when vendor no-shows on June 23 and 24.

**July**—Seattle vendor awarded with double-time premiums and a big screen TV contest. General Chairs Otto and Fay secure double-time premium for IAM members and demand special project people return to their locations.

**August**—RSSA lockout arbitration phase ends. Company hires a second vendor to assist Menzies! Union-negotiated LTD begins.

**December**—Closing arguments for RSSA lockout case submitted, arbitration completed.

Events of 2008 we see:

Weight and balance matters are still a problem—many GSRs are filed. General Chairs Otto and Fay prepare and begin to present arbitration cases. Home agent meetings begin. Reno converts to a Horizon operation, IAM COPS furloughed. California stations reduce full-time COPS CSAs—more part-time. RSSA lockout award made public—IAM WINS! RSSA lockout remedy meetings result in an impasse between the parties. Company meetings which exclude official Union involvement to centralize operations. BET letter renewed to maintain IAM presence with utilization of temporary positions. Company uses vague terms of "wave" and "diminished capacity" to describe reduced passenger seat availability—translation = lay off, job loss. Early out package offered. RSSA lockout award referred back to the arbitrator for final award to settle. Company will contest unemployment benefits if you take EOP.

In 2007-2008, there were many more events and activities which may have affected you personally. As IAM officers, the most frequent matter we dealt with was the discipline issued over weight and balance mistakes, attendance matters, and performance issues. To be fair, discipline to correct bad behavior was sometimes warranted. However, progressive discipline was often ignored. In some areas of the Company, the lack of consistency and training often made the discipline merely a punishment. Many employees are redeemable!

### **Forecast for 2009**

The Company's November 11, 2008 "hidden" compensation message is most telling. The Company recently posted a reminder to everyone that there is more to your compensation than just your paycheck. The message references the "fringe" benefits of health insurance, 401k contributions, performance rewards and travel credits. The Company article is remiss in two major areas. First of all, the Company doesn't correctly state how a member receives these "fringe" benefits. You are not a charity! The Union negotiators FOUGHT HARD for these fringe items. So hard that 478 RSSA members lost their employment! The Union balanced the membership's needs over their wants. Health care costs may lessen with an Obama administration. If not, the 2009-2010 negotiations will once again be impacted. To characterize your quality of life needs, such as insurance as a "fringe" benefit provided to you by the Company is NOT an accurate depiction.

The second missing reference of the November 11 Alaska World article was what the worker readily can see. This article angered many IAM members who, when reading the email, felt unappreciated. The member wondered what the purpose of this reminder was, other than to set the stage for upcoming negotiations. The member has earned their pay, their 401k contribution, health care and the occasional trip for a vacation! Neither the employee nor the fringe benefit are merely ornamental to what Alaska Airlines is! Benefits were fought for by the Union and earned by the member. The employee IS Alaska Airlines.

When reviewing the 2007-2008 highlights/lowlights, and this most recent Alaska World, one can clearly anticipate more of the same struggles due to circumstances within the Company and also outside world influences.

### **2009 Action Plan**

Appreciate what you have today. Enjoy the upcoming holidays with those around you. Keep your spending to budget. Go to the Union meetings if you can. Talk to the junior employees—mentor them. Make Safety more than a slogan.

In closing, thanks to all local Union officials who've helped us perform our duties. Thanks to the IAM/Alaska membership for their continued ideas and support.

**Happy Holidays to You and Yours.**  
General Chairs Nan Otto and Jackie Fay