

ASSOCIATION OF FLIGHT ATTENDANTS-CWA, AFL-CIO

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**A Time
for Unity**

Inside:

FMLA / Industry Outlook / Northwest-Delta Organizing

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Employee Free Choice Act

There is an attack on collective bargaining in our country and it impacts all of us. Our ability to preserve our profession depends on our ability to change the rules to increase collective bargaining power and strengthen the unions that benefit all working Americans.

CWA has recently launched a 'Million Member Mobilization' in support of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). EFCA would reset the rules so that free and fair elections could take place. Specifically, it would discourage intimidation of workers during organizing and collective bargaining, and simplify the election process by allowing signed union authorization cards to count as votes in a card check election.

Please sign on to the CWA Million Member Mobilization by visiting www.FreeChoiceAct.org.

We Want to Hear From You!

Life as a flight attendant may be many things; but is always challenging. Your interactions with the public; the whirlwind changes in our industry; and the unique challenges we face every day on the job make ours one of the most fascinating professions of our times.

That's why AFA-CWA has launched *SoundOff*, a new member feedback forum where you can tell us your stories and share your opinions on a current topic or concern. Your experience may provide a personal angle on a legislative issue that could tip the balance on Capitol Hill in favor of our profession. Your story could prompt a new union initiative. Or your feedback might inspire a fellow colleague.

The topic of the day is checked luggage fees. If your airline has instituted new checked luggage fees, please visit www.AFAnet.org, click on *SoundOff*, and let us know what impact are they having on your job in the aircraft cabin?➔

(Note: SoundOff is not a venue for filing your aircraft incident reports—those must still be made to your local union officers.)



Coming Political Change Offers Hope, Calls for Unity

AFA-CWA's recent victories in advancing flight crew FMLA legislation and securing cabin air quality standards, as reported in this issue of *Flightlog*, are overshadowed by the tenuous state of our industry as many airlines announce layoffs and others cease to operate. Unregulated, out of control and on the brink, aviation has become a volatile and uncertain work environment. As industry expert Dan Akins explains in our feature article, "Tailspin: Airlines Struggle with Record Fuel Costs," skyrocketing fuel costs have prompted the latest round of aviation industry turbulence, ushering in dramatic changes in the way business is done.

Aloha and ATA Airlines' announcement within the same week this Spring that they were ceasing operations (see page 5), left many aviation employees in a state of shock. The unexpected closures had a ripple effect throughout our profession, even among those still left standing. Many of us asked ourselves: If a well-established carrier can simply close up shop from one day to the next, how can I be secure in my job? There is no simple answer to the question of how to increase our job security, but a comprehensive series of answers—a strategy—that hinges on our ability to see our challenges as flight attendants, in the broader context of our economic and political environment. In that broader context, we are employees. We are workers. We are labor.

Labor 2008, the all-out mobilization of the American labor movement around the upcoming elections, is moving into high gear. In

coordination with the CWA and the AFL-CIO, AFA is participating in an effort to redirect the anxiety we are all experiencing about our economy into concrete action. By participating in get-out-the-vote efforts through our AFL-CIO Central Labor Councils, we can turn the tide in this country and finally put an end to one of the most hostile administrations American working families have ever known.

In June, at the CWA Convention in Las Vegas (see page 14), over 3,000 delegates from every CWA sector endorsed the candidacy of Senator Barack Obama and pledged to work "as hard as he is" to elect the Senator and a labor-friendly Congress to office in November 2008. In turn, Senator Obama pledged to the Convention delegates to "make the Employee Free Choice Act the law of the land," ensuring the rights of the majority of American workers to organize freely and bargain collectively, thereby changing the climate for all American workers, including those of us in the transportation industries who work under different laws (see box at left).

Different laws, different industries, different unions: we are all part of the same whole that is American labor. Our interests are one and the same. We cannot afford to be divided and we cannot afford to wait to demand sensible policies from a government that should be defending our interests, not undermining them. Now is the time to insist on our right to equal protection under FMLA; our right to organize under impartial laws; our right to bargain collectively. Now is a time for unity.➔



By participating in get-out-the-vote efforts through our AFL-CIO Central Labor Councils, we can turn the tide in this country and finally put an end to one of the most hostile administrations American working families have ever known.

All Hands on Deck: Ultimate Push for FMLA Is Now

Victory in the House

During the past year, AFA-CWA members produced brilliant results when they mobilized around passage of FMLA protections for airline flight crew in the House of Representatives. After receiving thousands of letters and phone calls from you and your flying partners and having face-to-face meetings with AFA-CWA members on Capitol Hill and on airplanes, your elected Representatives threw their support behind the Airline

Flight Crew Family and Medical Leave Act. If we can do the same in the Senate, this legislation will protect the right of flight attendants to provide care for ailing family members or themselves without risking our jobs.

Before going before the full House of Representatives, the Committee on Education and Labor unanimously approved the bill on May 14. On May 20 the House passed the Airline Flight Crew FMLA with 402 members in favor and nine against, in a special “suspension vote” reserved only for bills that are known in advance to have overwhelming support.

“I want to thank the flight attendants for their tireless advocacy of their bill and the many long hours of work that they put in to secure approximately 240 cosponsors for this bill,” Rep. Tim Bishop (D-NY) told his fellow members of Congress. Rep. Bishop is the original sponsor and author of the House bill.

Original Intent

When the Act was signed into law in 1993, the purpose was to provide 12 weeks of unpaid leave if employees worked 60 percent of a full time schedule in a 12 month period to care for a sick relative or a new child or to recover from illness. The 1,250 hour threshold for qualification was established based on the traditional 40-hour work week. However, due to the unique methods in which flight attendant hours of work are calculated, it is virtually impossible to meet these minimum standards, even though the original intent of Congress was to cover flight attendants and pilots.

“When working on the Family and Medical Leave Act 15 years ago, Congress never intended to exclude airline attendants and pilots from the law’s protections,” said Rep. George Miller (D-CA), Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor. “Hard working flight attendants and pilots deserve and need family and medical leave, and should be able to take it when their home lives demand it.”

“This legislation is long overdue and clarifies the original intent of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) passed in 1993, to ensure that airline flight crews have access to job-protected unpaid family and medical leave,” said Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), chair of the Subcommittee on Workplace Protections. “Flight attendants are parents too, and it’s about time that we recognize that they face the same challenges of balancing work and family as the rest of us.”

With passage of this legislation, airline flight crews will be eligible for FMLA leave with a mini-



U.S. Representative Tim Bishop (D-NY), at right, who is the original sponsor of our FMLA legislation jokes with U.S. Representative George Miller (D-CA), Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor (the committee that voted to approve our bill initially) in a meeting with AFA-CWA representatives following successful passage of the FA FMLA bill in the House. U.S. Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, Committee on Education and Labor) pictured at center.



Left to right: US Airways LEC 41 Secretary Steven F. Smith, II; US Airways LEC 41 Vice President and MEC Govt. Affairs Committee Chair Steven Schembs; Rep. Tim Bishop; United Council 21 Council Representative Mark Gangler; Rep. Lynn Woolsey; International Vice President Veda Shook (standing in the back); US Airways Flight Attendant Audra West; International President Pat Friend; United Council 21 President Andreas Curlee; United Flight Attendant Angela Curlee.

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ATA, Aloha Flight Attendants Face Uncertain Future

ATA Airline's loss of military flying in early April 2008 was the last straw. Just hours after filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, the company promptly ceased operations and 750 flight attendants lost their jobs. "When a supervisor called me at 2:15 AM to say we would not be flying that day, it took me by surprise," said ATA MEC President Rhonda Hogard. "I thought our military contract was secure. I thought we'd survive." Rhonda expected a hard road ahead but after 16 years of military charter flying and 35 years of commercial service, she never imagined her carrier would cease operations completely.

For many years, ATA was a member of a large FedEx contract with the military. In early 2008, FedEx informed ATA that they were out of the contract, leading the airline to file for bankruptcy and promptly cease operations. ATA is pursuing possible legal action against FedEx over deciding not to include them in the continued contract.

Within the same week, Aloha Airlines ceased its inter-island and transpacific passenger flight operations that began in 1946. The company cited their inability to charge fares sufficient to generate the revenue needed to cover increased fuel costs. Some 1,900 Aloha employees were affected by the closure.



Employees and friends of Aloha Airlines held a rally at the Hawaii State Capitol on March 28 to call for legislators to help save the airline.

The closures left the more than 1,200 newly unemployed AFA-CWA flight attendants in a state of shock and AFA-CWA's support mechanism immediately kicked into gear. AFA-CWA members opened their homes to stranded flight attendants; AFA-CWA's Employee Assistance Program quickly assembled information about available emergency resources to help the flight

attendants with the difficult transition ahead; AFA International staff and volunteers from other carriers arrived at Aloha and ATA bases to provide assistance; fundraisers were held around the system; AFL-CIO

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Resources for Furloughed, Unemployed FAs

The AFA Employee Assistance Program (EAP) strongly recommends three websites to help you gain access to available resources if you are unemployed or on furlough. Resources can be sorted by state of residence and by assistance category on these websites. Please remember that the AFA EAP is also available to assist you as you try to navigate through these community services. Our toll free number is 800-424-2406 or email eapassist@afanet.org

www.afanet.org

The AFA website offers guides and resources to assist individuals and families access health, legal, debt management, unemployment, and other community services. Go to www.afanet.org and click on 'Furlough.'

www.ahirc.org

The Access to Health Insurance/Resources for Care website features a state-by-state database on health insurance alternatives and low cost health care resources for the unemployed, under-employed and self-employed. At this site you will find:

- Income-based health insurance plans
- Children's health insurance plans
- Private Insurers and HMOs
- Managed care plan ratings
- Prescription, dental, and eye care programs
- Clinical trials
- Free and low-cost health services
- Income-based care at hospitals and clinics
- Financial assistance for medical bills.

www.govbenefits.gov

Here you will find one-stop shopping for federal and state funded programs for low to no income families on a state-by-state basis with specific eligibility criteria for each program. You can also conduct tailored searches of programs for which you are eligible by in-putting your individual circumstances. Go to www.govbenefits.gov and click on 'Benefits.'

Cabin Concerns: How AFA-CWA Is Working for You

Air quality. Water quality. Cart safety. Cell phones. Self-defense training. Carry-on bags. AFA-CWA has challenged federal regulations on all of these issues and many, many more. As we update you on our recent victory in upgrading cabin air quality standards, our ongoing campaign to improve on-board drinking water, and our first steps in addressing the new carry-on bag problems resulting from airline fees for checked baggage, we ask you to bear in mind that the road to change can be long but AFA-CWA is working diligently for positive changes in creating the safest, healthiest and most secure cabin environment possible.

AFA-CWA Scores Air Quality Victory

AFA-CWA has been fighting for improved aircraft air quality standards for decades, against airlines' and manufacturers' interest in keeping air quality unregulated and as weak as possible. AFA-CWA has been steadfast and influential in an industry standard-setting process overseen by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). After 13 years of hard-fought debates, the ASHRAE "Air Quality Within Commercial Aircraft" standard was finally published earlier this year. It is the first-ever consensus standard on aircraft air quality and includes cabin temperature limits, measures to address the problems of air supply contamination and pesticides, and a mechanism for complaints to be heard and addressed. AFA-CWA will stay involved in a "continuous maintenance" role to maintain and expand our wins.

Here are some of the highlights. The standard states that: cabin temperature should be between 65-75°F and shall not exceed 80°F; repeated air quality complaints require the airline to meet ventilation requirements; sensors must be installed in the air supply system to monitor for chemicals indicative of oil or hydraulic fluid contamination and records of reported contamination must be made available to crewmembers to assist their physicians in diagnosis and treatment; airlines must take measures to prevent and remedy exposure to airborne chemicals that may be found in deicing fluid, exhaust fumes, fuel, hydraulic fluid, oil, ozone, infectious agents, pesticides, lavatory fluids/odors, carry-on bags, and dry ice; and airlines shall pass the recirculated air through high-efficiency filters. The standard for pesticides is especially strong, requiring the cabin to be dry and odor-free before crewmembers board post-spraying and promoting the non-chemical means of disinsection that AFA supports.

While airlines are not required to adopt the ASHRAE standard, there are some strong incentives for them to voluntarily do so. First, the standard represents the best current consensus and has the stamp

of approval of the expert body within ASHRAE that includes Boeing, Airbus, Honeywell, as well as airlines, crewmember unions, passenger representatives, and others. In addition, there is a chance that Congress or the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), under a new administration, would push for its inception as a regulatory mandate. At the very least, the ASHRAE standard provides free advice to the airlines on how to improve cabin conditions in a reasonable and effective manner. Given the industry approval behind the new standard and its health and safety benefits for flight attendants, the AFA-CWA Air Safety, Health and Security (ASHS) Department plans to fully support the efforts of the ASHS committees working to advance its adoption at every AFA-CWA-represented carrier.

AFA-CWA Challenges Proposed Drinking Water Rules

On April 9, the Environmental Protection Agency published proposed new aircraft drinking water regulations. These regulations raise serious concerns among AFA-CWA International staff and Safety Committee members, who have been working with the industry and regulators for several years to promote rigorous aircraft water quality standards. A few of the shortcomings in the EPA proposal are summarized below:

- The rules allow airlines to provide inadequate notification if contaminants are found. For example, there is no requirement to notify passengers or crew exposed prior to the monitoring and since the last disinfection. Also, contaminated water may be used for hand washing, which is inadvisable since it can be splashed on the face and get into eyes.
- The EPA analyzed self-monitored data from a small subset of carriers, which is a concern since these results are "preliminary" and of unconfirmed validity.
- The rules do not require individual carriers to develop water safety plans, risk management tools internationally recognized as a means to assure safe drinking water.
- The rules do not require the monitoring of any contaminants other than bacteria.
- The rules allow EPA to conduct periodic audits of operations and maintenance plans, but do not require independent monitoring to verify water quality, relying instead on carriers to perform self-inspections at least once every five calendar years.

AFA-CWA MEC and LEC Safety Committees are working with the ASHS Department to represent the interests of members at all AFA-CWA carriers, as well

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How AFA-CWA Is Working for You *from page 6*

as the traveling public, through written comments to the EPA that were submitted in early July 2008. To support this effort, AFA-CWA members who have experienced recent onboard water quality problems — e.g., odd tastes, odors, colors/turbidity/sediment, or lack of potable/healthy running water in lavs/galleys, or any related health problems such as gastrointestinal diseases — should provide reports to their LEC and MEC safety committees. These reports will be de-identified (to ensure privacy) and reviewed, then summarized for inclusion in letters to the EPA. With your support, we are confident that the proposed rule can be significantly improved.

Checked Luggage Fees Raise Concerns

Rising fuel costs combined with an aversion to raising fares in a competitive market have driven airlines to seek revenue in new ways, the most recent of which is to charge for checked luggage. The impact of

this new industry trend remains to be seen but flight attendants can rest assured it will present us with new challenges. Will the volume of carry-on luggage that passengers attempt to board increase dramatically? When the overhead bins are full, will passengers have to pay to check their bags? If so, who will collect the fee? While some airlines plan on cracking down on the size of carry-ons and stationing bag monitors at checkpoints, this new policy leaves many questions unanswered. In order to formulate solutions, AFA-CWA needs a clear picture of the related problems you are encountering in the aircraft cabin.

AFA-CWA has been the leader for years in lobbying Congress on carry-on baggage legislation that would provide one consistent policy for every carrier. Congress and the FAA have resisted reforming the policy, but with the new airline checked baggage fee structure, Congress may have to act. Your feedback could be vital to possible future legislative efforts. Please visit *SoundOff*, the AFA-CWA feedback forum at www.AFAnet.org. →

New Film Implicates Industry in Cabin Air Contamination

The new documentary film by British filmmaker and former British Airways captain Tristan Loraine, 'Welcome Aboard Toxic Airlines,' reveals the serious health and safety consequences of exposure to unfiltered cabin air. It implicates the airline industry for failing to inform the traveling public of these problems, despite the industry's knowledge of passenger and crew exposure to toxic fumes. The filmmaker's own health was affected by repeated exposure to fumes in the cockpit of a Boeing 757.

Through a special arrangement with AFA-CWA, Fact Not Fiction Films is offering the DVD to AFA-CWA members at a price of \$24 (a 50% discount) including shipping and handling, from the UK. To order, go online to www.dftenterprises.com. Be sure to enter AFA-CWA discount code 2024341300 on the order form. For more information, visit www.welcomeaboardtoxicairlines.com.



Airlines Struggle with

By Dan Akins*

All of us feel the pinch: soaring oil prices mean record costs at the gas pump. For airlines, the problem is magnified by the sheer amount of jet fuel consumed each year. Jet fuel costs are up almost five times since 2002. Airlines are struggling to raise revenues by increasing fares and imposing fees for baggage in order to keep cash levels above the rising fuel bill. With higher fares and fees, fewer people will fly and airlines will have more capacity than is necessary to meet demand. Fares, fees and cutbacks on capacity are, together, the first reaction by airlines to the increasing cost of fuel.

Many in the industry thought the worst was behind us. New competitors and difficult economic cycles, followed by the 9-11 terrorist attacks, led to an unprecedented series of bankruptcies and restructurings. The cutbacks were deep, and the effects were devastating. But the industry regrouped in 2007; profits were up and the crisis seemed to be averted. Then came the spike in oil prices and skyrocketing fuel costs.

There is much debate about the causes and the projected duration of the increase in fuel costs. No one

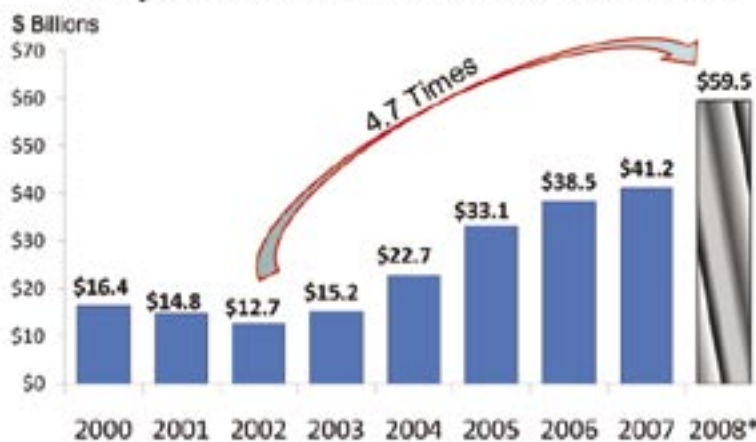
inside or outside the airline business predicted energy prices to rise this far this fast, nor can anyone offer any clear guidance as to the future of fuel prices. But while the debate continues, airlines are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of fuel. Airlines' business models and operating forecasts depend on assumptions about fuel costs, and a huge spike in the price for fuel can unravel even the best business plan. U.S. airlines, taken together, burn approximately 20 billion gallons of jet fuel each year; the impact of such large fuel price increases can be debilitating. Eight U.S. airlines have ceased operations or declared bankruptcy during the first five months of 2008, and most others are cutting back capacity to cope with the increasing cost of fuel.

Even a small increase in jet fuel prices can create huge cost increases because of the amount of fuel the industry uses. For example, a one cent increase in jet fuel translates to a \$200 million increase in the industry's annual fuel expense. As shown in the chart below left (from the Air Transport Association), U.S. airlines are expected to collectively spend more than \$59 billion to buy fuel this year, which is \$47 billion more than they paid for fuel in 2002.¹ The magnitude of these fuel price increases is unprecedented, causing all carriers to reevaluate their operational plans as the price of crude oil, from which all petroleum products including jet fuel are derived, has pushed well above \$140 per barrel. With no end in sight and little historical guidance to go by, airlines will continue to monitor fuel prices carefully and attempt to minimize their impact on operations and the bottom line.

For airlines, protection from uncertainty and fuel price volatility comes in two forms: a fuel-efficient fleet and the ability to lock in the price of future fuel requirements through hedging. The purchase of fuel for delivery at a certain price in a future period is commonly known as hedging. All airlines hedge some portion of their fuel purchases, but Southwest has been the leader among U.S. airlines in hedging its future fuel requirements.

A fuel hedging contract can be a complex arrangement and can take many forms, but at its core it is a contract which secures the price

U.S. Airline Spending on Jet Fuel Is Up Almost Five-Fold Since 2002



Source: US DOT Data.

*Note: 2008 fuel burn based on 18.6 billion gallons at \$3.20 per gallon.

*Dan Akins, of Akins and Associates, is a consultant to AFA-CWA on economic matters.

¹ According to a 2008 Air Transport Association study titled "Coping with Sky-High Jet Fuel Prices Industry", U.S. carrier will spend collectively \$59 billion for fuel this year to provide roughly the same level of capacity (ASMs) as was produced in 2002, when the total fuel bill was \$12 billion.

Record Fuel Costs

of fuel for delivery in the future. It is like a corner gas station offering customers the chance to buy today all of the fuel they needed for 2009 at \$4.00 per gallon. It would be a great deal for the customer if the price rose to over \$4.00 in 2009, but a bad deal if it fell to less than \$4.00. While fuel likely amounts to a larger and larger portion of most of our budgets, imagine if we had to purchase billions of gallons per year. Such a bet would potentially make or break the bank. This is the situation that most airlines face today.

Airlines take advantage of fuel hedges by attempting to lock in a price that is less per gallon of fuel than they would otherwise pay at some point in the future. Some airlines, like Southwest, that have hedged successfully in the face of skyrocketing fuel prices, have a competitive advantage, which translates into an ability to price its tickets lower than its rivals. As fuel costs absorb a growing amount of available cash, other airlines will find it increasingly difficult to match fares with airlines that are hedged at lower fuel prices.

As shown in the chart below right, as fuel prices have increased, fuel cost as a percentage of total costs has also risen to 45% in the first quarter of 2008, up from 18% since 2003. This shows how fuel costs are eating away at the balance sheet, absorbing more cash, and limiting the competitive options of the airlines.

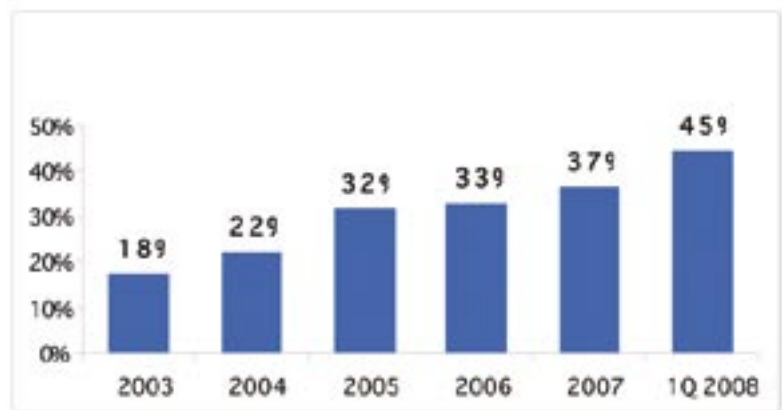
For example, at Southwest fuel as a percentage of total costs has risen over this same period, but only from 15% to 31%. A lower share of fuel costs means that Southwest and other carriers that are substantially hedged need a smaller increase in fares to cover fuel expense than their rivals who are not as fully hedged. Since fuel is less than 100% of total operating costs only a portion of each new revenue dollar from fare increases is needed to offset fuel price increases. Industry average fuel costs were 15 to 30% of total costs not so long ago. Industry fare increases of 19% between 2004 and 2007 covered an industry average jet fuel price increase of 81% during this same period. This is how in 2006 and 2007, despite this huge increases in fuel prices, nearly all U.S. carriers reported their first year-over-year profits since the 1999-2000 period. Even sharper increases in 2008 put more pressure on all carriers to raise fares just to keep up, with those that are not as fully hedged under the most intense pressure. The ability of the carriers that most need to raise fares to successfully do so is limited by the ability of the highly-hedged carriers to

keep fares down. That, in turn, puts pressure on other expense items, with more carriers seeking to reduce costs in other areas in order to offset their failure to successfully hedge against the rise in fuel prices.

Airlines are adjusting growth plans and financial projections because of the impact of the spike in fuel costs. Despite the significant advantages in fuel costs and other operating costs, even Southwest has decided to grow the airline more slowly than it originally planned. Other carriers that are less well hedged and operate less fuel efficient aircraft have been forced to withdraw increasingly significant portions of their existing capacity, as the new cost picture renders some old markets unprofitable. For example, United, Northwest and Continental recently have announced fleet reductions of up to 20% by 2009.

The fluidity of the airline business in the middle of 2008 all but guarantees further changes to operating and financial plans as competitors struggle with a much greater exposure to the price of jet fuel. The impact of poor hedging decisions of the past will continue to be felt for some time. In the short term, cash and liquidity levels are increasingly crucial as airlines burn through cash to pay for fuel while buying time for fares to catch up with the new cost picture. The cost differential between hedged and not-as-fully hedged airlines will define the competitive environment as long as record high fuel costs persist. →

Fuel Cost as A Percent of Total Costs U.S. Industry



Source: US DOT form 41 Data

FA Coalition Focuses on Unity

Eclipsed by the dramatic rise in fuel costs, all industry projections from the beginning of the year are off. Forecasts by industry experts at the multi-union Flight Attendant Bargaining Summit in January 2008 were no exception yet the industry-wide collective bargaining strategy that emerged from that meeting remains unchanged: Flight attendant unity is essential to preserving our profession. We are fighting to maintain our stake in a dwindling middle class and to prevent our long-respected profession from going the way of so many other American jobs — to the bottom of the economic ladder or outsourced across our borders. Through this and any other battering changes in our industry, we remain focused on job security, our right to a fair share of company profits and stopping corporate greed from gutting those profits.

More than half of all flight attendant contracts with U.S. airlines will be up for negotiations by the end of next year. Negotiations are ongoing at Air Wisconsin, AirTran, America West/US Airways, Hawaiian, Horizon, Mesa, and Midwest and a tentative agreement has been negotiated at ASA. As a result of possible layoffs and domicile changes at Spirit, negotiations have been suspended until January 2009. The United MEC is preparing to enter negotiations in August.

The next meeting of the Flight Attendant Coalition, scheduled for July 2008, promises to be as charged and dynamic as the January meeting, as union leaders come together to examine our past successes and failures, to assess our current situation, and to think out of the box in our continuing struggle to create a better future for flight attendants through collective bargaining. →

Union Coalition Takes 'Say on Pay' to United Shareholders

AFA-CWA leaders and activists at United joined forces with other unions at their carrier to address common concerns about executive greed and shared rewards for workers. Union leaders representing nearly 50,000 flight attendants, pilots, machinists and other employees championed the shareholder proposal launched by AFA United MEC President Greg Davidowitch for a shareholder 'Say on Pay' of executive compensation packag-

es. While the resolution did not pass, it garnered 21 percent of shareholders' votes and pitched the problem of excessive executive compensation into the limelight. Comments from angry stockholders and a highly visible employee protest at the meeting received broad media attention. More than 90 similar proposals have been filed at U.S. corporations and the concept is making legislative inroads in Congress. →



Organizing in a Hostile Climate: Northwest, Delta FAs Renew Strategy in Joint Campaign

On May 28 the National Mediation Board (NMB) closed polls, tallied votes and determined that the Delta flight attendants would go forward without union representation. The Delta activists demonstrated their courage and determination as they assessed the loss, shifted their focus and launched the next phase of the campaign to win a union voice. They worked with Northwest AFA leadership to devise a new strategy for a continued Delta-Northwest campaign that will include a Joint Delta-Northwest National Organizing Committee with four members from each carrier.

“By working with our flying partners at Delta, we are building a foundation for a strong union for flight attendants at the merged airline,” said Northwest MEC President Kevin Griffin. “Delta executives fought the Delta flight attendants’ attempt to organize, and they will now try to eliminate the unions that already provide protections for their members at Northwest. We will stand together to ensure that our contract and collective bargaining rights are protected.”

In a merger scenario, if 35 percent of the combined workforce has union representation or signs union authorization cards, the NMB must call a union election. Otherwise, NMB rules require a one year waiting period from the time of the last election in which case the target date for the next election would be May 29, 2009.

Delta’s Anti-AFA Crusade

From the moment Delta executives realized its flight attendants had successfully petitioned for a union election, they began a relentless campaign to interfere with and intimidate those who wanted to elect AFA as their exclusive bargaining representative and funneled company resources to the law firm Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP, which specializes in

union busting. The firm’s website, www.paulhastings.com, specifies: “We routinely represent employers who are facing union-organizing campaigns.” As outlined in AFA’s interference charges filed with the NMB, Delta used anti-AFA communications, surveillance of AFA supporters, and the promise of monetary benefits to dissuade flight attendants from supporting the union.

In a DVD distributed to all Delta flight attendants, CEO Richard Anderson lied about raising flight attendant pay and giving domestic partner benefits while he was CEO at Northwest Airlines, flight attendants

gave heart-warming testimonials about Delta’s “concern” for them when they were stranded out of the country after 9/11, and how this contrasted with the “indifference” shown by union carriers. Delta published a weekly newsletter called *I BELIEVE IN OUR DELTA* that chronicled its anti-AFA statements and contained repeated warnings to flight attendants to “give a rip—don’t click, don’t dial” — in other words, rip up your ballot information and don’t vote by internet or telephone. Delta explicitly told flight

attendants to destroy their ballot information since it was the only way to “prevent anyone else from obtaining the information and perhaps voting on your behalf,” a completely unfounded allegation.

In crew lounges and airport concourses, Delta supervisors flooded the areas where AFA activists were attempting to discuss the election with their colleagues. Some supervisors practiced outright intimidation while others just stood or sat near AFA tables and conducted surveillance on any flight attendant seeking AFA information. Delta often called airport security to complain about AFA’s activities and some AFA activists were actually questioned by airport police. The chilling effect



In a May 7 hearing before the Aviation Subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee, International President Pat Friend testified about the state of the airline industry and the potential impact of a Delta/Northwest merger. Following a question from Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-NJ, regarding management interference in the Delta FA organizing campaign, she displays the anti-AFA DVD distributed by management to the homes of all Delta FAs as Northwest CEO Doug Steenland looks on and Delta CEO Richard Anderson averts his gaze at left.

continued on page 12

on the Delta-AFA organizing campaign was palpable as many flight attendants were afraid to speak to AFA activists in the presence of so many Delta supervisors.

In the midst of the campaign, on May 2, Delta announced a 3% raise effective July 1 for all “non-contract” employees, including flight attendants if they

voted down AFA. Delta denied that was its motive but given the dire economic conditions caused by an astronomical rise in oil prices and the timing of the promised raise, their motive seemed quite clear. Delta

“This is an extremely important campaign for our profession: a loss could pave the way for the outsourcing of flight attendant jobs that Northwest management previously sought and a win would provide collective bargaining leverage like we have never seen before.”

also announced a voluntary “early out” program that over 820 flight attendants decided to accept. Their names remained on the voter eligibility list even though they had essentially severed their ties to Delta. AFA believes a majority of those 820 did not vote because they would be gone within a month of the May 28 ballot count.



Rep. Betty Sutton (D-OH) pressed Delta CEO Richard Anderson for a direct answer to a question about whether he would remain neutral in the Delta flight attendants' election at the April 24 House Judiciary Committee hearing. Anderson dodged the question repeatedly as Rep. Sutton rephrased it several times. He then stated he was "supportive of the democratic process and would not engage in illegal interference." Representative Sutton replied that she took his answer as 'non-responsive'.

Within the context of extremely unfavorable NMB rules and Delta management's forceful anti-union campaign, the 40 percent of Delta flight attendants who cast votes for union representation overcame significant obstacles to do so. Admittedly, there was a portion of the Delta work group that did not want a union and abstained from voting to voice their ‘no’ vote. However, those who chose not to participate were also counted as ‘no’ votes under NMB rules. Delta activists calculated that beyond the 40 percent a majority of Delta flight attendants do, in fact, want union representation.

An Opportunity for Change

The NMB, an independent agency of the executive branch of government, is charged with overseeing labor-management relations in the transportation

industries under the Railway Labor Act (RLA) which stipulates it is “to be composed of three members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, not more than two of whom shall be of the same political party.” Under the Bush administration, the NMB has consistently ruled in favor of management and against unions making it exceedingly difficult for employees to exercise their rights in the workplace.



Delta flight attendants with AFA-CWA leaders and staff outside International headquarters in Washington, DC.

The anti-union climate created by Delta executives and tolerated by the NMB is a prime example of the forces that are lowering unionization rates in the United States and, correspondingly, eroding the American middle class. In November, we will have an opportunity to elect a president who will appoint new NMB members. We will work to make sure that the new NMB members will interpret the RLA with objectivity and fairness. Under a new administration in 2009, AFA-CWA will assert our full influence in ensuring a new and unbiased Board is appointed by the President.

A High Stakes Campaign

The outcome of the Delta-Northwest organizing campaign has serious implications, not only for our members at Northwest who have no intention of giving up their collective bargaining rights or their contract, but for our entire profession. The approximately 7,500 Northwest flight attendants and 13,000 at Delta would form the largest flight attendant workforce in the country--a loss could pave the way for the outsourcing of flight attendant jobs that Northwest management previously sought, and a win would provide collective bargaining leverage like we have never seen before.

In Atlanta, the site of Delta's hub, labor leaders believe that a union victory at Delta could turn the tide in favor of America's middle class and would put Georgia on the labor history map. The campaign has also shed light on the need to elect a president in November who will begin reversing the destructive policies of the current administration and on the dire need for reform of our nation's labor laws. ➔

ATA, ALO Flight Attendants *from page 5*

Central Labor Councils and surrounding labor communities joined forces to assist the affected flight attendants, and; message boards were filled with expressions of sympathy. A web of support was quickly woven around the ATA and Aloha flight attendant communities.

“There has been an overwhelming outpouring of generosity from the community here in Hawaii and from our fellow flight attendants at other carriers across the country,” said Aloha MEC President Gail Kim-Moe. “It truly goes a long way.”

International President Pat Friend began garnering Congressional support in an appeal to the Secretary of Labor to provide National Emergency Grant funding to assist the former employees of Aloha and ATA. State governments may request these grants to provide employment related services for dislocated workers pursuant to the Workforce Investment Act. At press time over \$8.3 million in funding has been granted to Aloha and ATA employees in Hawaii and Indiana. Additional funding is pending in other states.

While simultaneously coping with the new reality of their own lives, flight attendant union leaders at Aloha and ATA heroically continued serving their members.

While these actions helped to soften the blow, nothing could change the reality for the impacted flight attendants. The vast majority is seeking new employment amidst some of the highest unemployment rates seen in decades.

Rhonda Hogard observed among her members that their disbelief and anger has taken a political turn. “One of the more difficult pieces is knowing the devastation that’s out there — people filing for bankruptcy, losing their homes, covering medical expenses ... Flight attendants who have never thought about voting before are determined to vote this year. Sometimes it takes something tragic to get people involved,” she said.

Gail Kim-Moe reflected on the past few months since her airline ceased operations. “Flight attendants are very resilient people who have the disposition to make the best of the situation they’re in, but a vast majority of the Aloha flight attendants who live here in Hawaii are still unemployed. When the unemployment benefits run out in the first week of October, I expect another wave of emotional trauma. We are not going to easily replace the quality of employment, benefits and wages that we earned all these years at Aloha,” she said, “but we’re flight attendants. We’re going to move on and we will all be okay.”➔

FMLA *from page 4*

of 504 work hours a year and at least 60 percent of the employer’s monthly guarantee or the equivalent in the 12 months preceding the leave. On average, a full-time flight attendant is scheduled for 960 in-flight hours per year.

Senate Hurdle Ahead

Unfortunately, the Department of Labor (DOL) has stirred up controversy in the Senate by insisting that on-call time should not count towards FMLA qualification and, therefore, neither should reserve flight attendants. AFA-CWA Director of Government Affairs Shane Larson has met repeatedly with DOL officials to explain the unique circumstances of reserves and that even our employers recognize reserve hours as legitimate working hours deserving of pay; yet they continue to refer to reserves as “part-time flight attendants.” Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), top ranking Republican on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, is leading the charge to block the bill.

To ensure the Airline bill becomes law, we need to

gain a veto-proof 66 cosponsors for Senate Bill 2059, “The Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections Act.” It is up to you call your Senator and let her/him know where you stand. If the bill does not pass in the Senate this year, we will have to start from scratch again next year in both the House and Senate.

Flight Attendants Deserve Equal Protection

Millions of working families enjoy FMLA protections but, the way the law is currently written, flight attendants have been forced to bargain collectively for these same protections. We must pass this bill once and for all so that FMLA is no longer something we have to bargain for. Our success will require that AFA-CWA members mobilize en masse, as we did before. The strategy is simple: all AFA-CWA members must call their Senators and keep calling until they co-sponsor the legislation.

With our extraordinary victory in the House, we have proven that when we have the will, we are capable of changing the laws in our country. Please join your flying partners as we target key Senators to let them know that flight attendants demand equal access to FMLA. ➔

What You Can Do

1. **Call your Senators (contact information can be found at www.senate.gov).**
2. **Ask them to co-sponsor S. 2059, the Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections Act.**
3. **Visit www.afanet.org to send a fax to your Senator’s office.**
4. **Urge your friends, family and flying partners to do the same.**

A Report from the 70th CWA Convention

At the June 23-25, 70th CWA Convention in Las Vegas, 3,500 delegates approved a resolution to endorse Senator Barack Obama for United States President. In the Senator's address to the Convention he told delegates "it's time to finally make the Employee Free Choice Act the law of the land," rousing an enthusiastic response. Delegates also resolved to mobilize CWA members in the Labor 2008 get-out-the-vote effort to elect a President and members of Congress who will support the Employee Free Choice Act, real health care reform, jobs and fair trade and retirement security.

Prior to the Convention, the Northwest MEC held a strategy meeting for Northwest and Delta flight attendants and, at an AFA sector meeting, AFA delegates reviewed the Convention agenda and organized an FMLA postcard campaign targeting other delegates. During the convention, they donned FMLA t-shirts with "Got FMLA? Flight Attendants Don't. Call Your Senator Today," printed on the backs. During coffee breaks, they offered their cell phones to CWA delegates to contact their Senators on the spot to ask them to sign on to the Airline Flight Crew Technical Corrections Act. An estimated 500 calls were made to Senate offices and over 4,000 FMLA postcards were signed during the Convention. The postcards were distributed to the Senators the following week, along with the tens of thousands more anticipated from AFA-CWA members as the campaign for Airline Flight Crew FMLA continues in the Senate.

The first order of Convention business was nominations for CWA International officers, Executive Board members and district vice presidents. Larry Cohen was elected to his second term in the office

of CWA President; Jeff Rechenbach was elected as CWA Secretary-Treasurer, replacing Barbara Easterling who retired after 16 years in office; and Annie Hill was elected as Executive Vice President. Committee reports and awards presentations occupied most of the remaining agenda.

In a report by Northwest LEC 93 President Shawn Fivecoat and Delta Flight Attendant Paul Tanner, they

described the beginning of the Delta-AFA campaign as "a true grass roots movement of flight attendants that slowly grew into supporters" and described the misleading campaign waged by Delta executives intended to turn flight attendants against the union through lies and intimidation. However, Tanner noted, "The enemy here is not

really Delta Air Lines...The real problem here is the process." He proceeded to explain the oppressive National Mediation Board rules under which we must organize.

Among the achievements acknowledged within the 700,000-member union, were outstanding local union publications. Four AFA-CWA LEC publications were recognized. The America West/US Airways Council 66 magazine *The West Wing* won three awards in the CWA newsletter contest including a second place for "Best Front Page," a third place for "General Excellence" and an honorable mention for "Best Human Interest Feature." Also in the "General Excellence" category, US Airways Council 41 received an honorable mention for National News; Hawaiian Council 43 received a third place award for "General Excellence" for *UNION Beat*; and United Council 12 won "Best E-Newsletter" for *AFA LAX News*. ➔



Daughters of Northwest, United FAs Win AFA-CWA Scholarships



Brooke and Denise at an orphanage in Antigua, Guatemala, that received funds from the school club that Brooke founded.

Brooke Bobyat

The trip that United Airlines Flight Attendant Denise Simpson took with her daughter in 2006 to study Spanish in Guatemala made a deep impression. Brooke Bobyat recalls visiting an orphanage with her mother where, due to a lack of funding, the children were only educated through the sixth grade when “they begin a lifetime

of labor.” Back at home in San Diego, Brooke founded an organization that raises funds for education at the orphanage. In addition to this and other community service activities, Brooke has been a member of her high school varsity tennis team while maintaining a 3.5 GPA. With the assistance of a \$1,000 AFA-CWA scholarship in 2008, she will attend the University of California, Irvine, with plans to major in Environmental Science with a concentration in natural resource conservation.

Carly Newton

Faith has been a central theme in Carly Newton’s life so far — a strong faith in God and her mother’s faith in her daughter. “My family has done so much to support me and I am so thankful for their presence in my life, especially my mom who would give me the world if she could,” she wrote in her application for the 2008 AFA-CWA Scholarship, citing Northwest Airlines Flight Attendant Carol Newton’s unwavering faith in her abilities. Carly is the winner of the 2008 AFA-CWA Scholarship for \$2,500 which

she will apply toward her freshman year at Belmont University in Nashville with her sites set on a double major in French and English.


AFA-CWA awards two scholarships of \$2,500 and \$1,000 annually to dependents of AFA-CWA members in good standing who will attend a college or university in the coming academic year. The winners are chosen by lottery from a pool of applicants who meet the guidelines posted on the AFA-CWA website at www.afanet.org. →



Carly (right) performs in “Guys and Dolls,” a performance she student directed last summer.



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Inform Yourself

The next issue of *Flightlog* will highlight the candidates' positions on the major issues that impact our profession. Be sure to read it. You can also learn where the candidates stand on critical issues for working people at www.cwavotes.org

Get Involved

You can make the difference. Visit www.aflcio.org to see how you can get involved in the campaign for Labor 2008. →