



ARW MEC

Turbulence



July/August 2007 Bi-Monthly News for ARW AFA-CWA members

Volume 2, Issue 3

From MEC President, *Ginger Sterling*

Hello to you all! This month there is much to report on an AFA International level and an ARW level. Back in March, we held an MEC vote to fill the vacancy of the MEC President. A nomination was made for myself, Ginger Sterling, to fill this role for the remainder of the term ending December 31, 2007. This was passed with a unanimous vote, but opened a vacancy for the MEC Vice President. A nomination was made for Barb Neisen to fill this position and again was passed unanimously. So your new MEC officers until December 31, 2007 are as follows:

President: Ginger Sterling
Vice President: Barb Neisen
Secretary-Treasurer: Adam Novish

A new full three-year term will begin January 1, 2008 and a nomination process will take place for MEC officers. If anyone is interested, please keep watch for details.

Many of you are aware that AFA has been meeting with the company on a bi-monthly basis to discuss your concerns and work with the company to improve our working relationship here at Air Wisconsin. These discussions have been with Jim Rankin, Vince Portaro, Laurie Martin, and local In-flight Management where the meeting is held. The AFA MEC and local representatives to that domicile have attended these meetings. Meetings were held in January (PHL), February (ATW), and April (DCA). Our next meeting is tentatively planned for July or August and should be conducted in ORF.

In January I shared with you about our first meeting where we heard from Jim on the direction the company is going for the future. In February and April AFA was given the chance to talk about things that were of the Flight Attendant's concern. Some of these concerns were safety, security, scheduling, a passport plan, FRT training, Headquarters Departments, and the cleaning initiative. On some of these topics we have news to report.

Safety: All aircraft should now have instant ice packs (*for first-aid use when ice is not available*) and foil blankets for emergencies. A passport plan was sent out to everyone via company email, and any changes to a flight attendant's recurrent month will be posted prior to the bidding of vacation in November. The cleaning initiative so far has been quite successful, but only with the help of the flight attendants reporting the problems that they encounter in the morning when receiving an aircraft. The company has agreed to make AFA a part of the cleaning initiative process.

On May 10th we held our first quarterly meeting with Laurie Martin to discuss AFA issues involving the In-flight Department specifically. We spoke about some scheduling issues in regards to trades and staffing levels, but most importantly about the Snow Storm over the St. Patrick's weekend. As many of you know too well, this was a time when things came to a halt with poor communication and impossible expectations. We asked Laurie why it was expected of us as crewmembers to plan ahead for bad weather days when travelling for work, but the company did not have a plan for this type of situation. Crews were sent to hotels hours away and asked to cover pricey cab rides after being on duty for 15+ hours. We also inquired with her as to how it happened, and was never a problem in the past. Laurie replied they too questioned many of the same issues and have now formulated a support team for weather days. **CONTINUED on Page 5.....**

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Weingarten Rights

The rights of unionized employees to have present a union representative during investigatory interviews were announced by the U.S. Supreme Court in a 1975 case. These rights have become known as the Weingarten Rights.

Employees have Weingarten Rights only during investigatory interviews. An investigatory interview occurs when a supervisor questions an employee to obtain information which could be used as a basis for discipline or asks an employee to defend his or her conduct.

If an employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result from what he or she says, the employee has the right to request union representation. (Management may tell you to just ask a flight attendant sitting in the crew room to sit in with you at the meeting. This is not acceptable. You have the right to a union officer or grievance representative) Management is not required to inform the employee of his/her Weingarten Rights, it is the employees responsibility to know and request.

When the employee makes the request for a union representative to be present, management has three options:

1. Management can stop questioning until the representative arrives.
2. Management can call off the interview or,
3. Management can tell the employee that it will call off the interview unless the employee voluntarily gives up his/her rights to a union representative (**an option the employee should always refuse.**)

This is your Weingarten Right

“If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I request that my union officer be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any question.” (This is my right under a U.S. Supreme Court decision. Called Weingarten).

Rumors and Gossip:

One of the terms we use in AFA is solidarity. Have you ever thought about what this term means? When we're in Railway Labor Act Negotiations (a.k.a. Contract Negotiations), we instruct flight attendants to say to supervisors, “my union speaks for me.” That's solidarity. when other unions at Air Wisconsin, such as Mechanics & Customer Service Agents (represented by IAM) or the Pilots (represented by ALPA) are in negotiations we support their cause and their issues. That's solidarity. When AFA files a grievance on behalf of flight attendants unfairly disciplined, our dues pay for this process. That's solidarity.

But how do we handle the interpersonal, day to day, jump-seat and crew lounge interactions among ourselves? If we engage in gossip and rumor about each other, is that solidarity? If we contribute to character assassination and slander, is that solidarity? The airline industry is a tough place to be right now. Gossip in the workplace is like a poison that demoralizes everyone it touches. Let's raise the bar on how we handle ourselves as flight attendants. Let's give each other the benefit of the doubt. Let's make this workforce one of mutual respect. If we have an issue, let's take it directly to the person with whom we have the issue - not the grapevine!

That's Solidarity!

Below is a re-print of our AFA e-news that was sent out via email on July 4th. If you did not receive it, we most likely do not have a current email address for you. Please send an email with your name in the subject line to arwafanews@comcast.net to be added to our list.

By now most of you have read the IIF from inflight assigning additional tasks and adjusting certain other areas of our first flight security sweeps. AFA is disappointed that the company did not notify us of the outcome of TSA's security audits that caused some of the changes to the sweep. We were just as surprised to see additional requirements as most of you are.

We are especially concerned with the added requirement to remove and inspect all contents from the seatback pockets. Searching seat pockets creates additional risks for all of us as potentially hazardous items may be located inside. Air Wisconsin is paying us \$1.55 an hour to perform a potentially hazardous security sweep of our cabins. It is unrealistic for the company to expect that these added requirements can be accomplished efficiently and on time along with our pre-flight of emergency equipment and our prepare-for-boarding responsibilities.

Air Wisconsin continues to issue IIF's to remind flight attendants of the search requirements as a result of unsatisfactory audits by TSA and Transport Canada and the requirements of the searches are repeatedly changed. When irregularities are noted by TSA the company implies that the flight attendants are at fault.

AFA believes the company is at fault for failing to ensure a "properly trained and qualified individual" is performing the security sweeps. Flight attendants can not afford to be the scapegoat for management's failures.

Did you know that flight attendants have been disciplined for "alleged or observed" deficiencies in the completion of the security sweeps or not completing a thorough enough sweep? It's important for you to document any conversations you may have with inflight management or airport employees over security sweep procedures.

AFA is recommending that all flight attendants have out and available for step by step reference their flight attendant manual and IIF-080 while conducting security sweeps to ensure that no area of the required search is overlooked. Make sure you are wearing gloves when performing all aspects of the sweep. If gloves are not available on your aircraft please complete written documentation and forward to your manager/supervisor and keep a copy for your records.

Air Wisconsin flight attendants are among the minority of flight attendants still responsible for conducting the extensive cabin security searches.

Most airlines utilize trained security personnel to complete aircraft security sweeps. At the beginning of 2007 the MEC suggested the company implement a procedure where the door be taped with a special security label in the evening to remove the security sweep from the flight attendant responsibilities. Management presented reasons why this is not possible at that time, but told us they would suggest that idea to the other parties involved with the US Airways Express operation. We have not heard anything from management regarding their progress on our recommendation since that meeting. Section 26, Safety of our contract says that recommendations of the AFA-CWA safety chairperson will be considered. The company's lack of follow up on our security seal recommendation is troubling to say the least.

In closing, while we believe the company should provide personnel who are highly trained to conduct extensive security sweeps on our aircraft. In the meantime, flight attendants are safety professionals tasked with security searches by Air Wisconsin. These searches should be taken seriously and completed in a thorough manner. Ensure that your emergency equipment preflight duties are completed as well.

We will provide a further update regarding security sweeps in the coming weeks. Please contact an AFA representative with any questions, comments and concerns.

In Solidarity,

AFA-CWA
ARW Master Executive Council

Security Sweeps

On July 12 the MEC filed a grievance with Air Wisconsin regarding security sweeps. We will continue to keep you updated on the status of our grievance.

In the near future we will be asking all of you to participate in a short security sweep survey. If you have not been receiving Air Wisconsin-AFA specific emails, we may not have your email address. If you are not receiving our emails please send your email address to arwafanews@comcast.net.

As part of a layered approach to security, the TSA requires a search of the aircraft cabin prior to the first flight of the calendar day. The TSA requires someone familiar with the aircraft cabin perform the cabin security sweep.

As long as the Air Wisconsin flight attendants are required to perform the exhaustive cabin security searches it is important to keep in mind the following:

- Cabin Security searches must be taken seriously and not conducted in a hasty, haphazard manner.
 - Remember, you are conducting a potentially hazardous task, approach all areas of the cabin that are being touched or patted down with extreme caution.

- Aircraft are cleaned at night and all items left by passengers should have been removed by the cleaners.
 - One of the main goals of the security sweep is to identify items “not normally in the aircraft.” In the morning, you should have a “clean” aircraft, in essence all items not belonging in the aircraft should be treated as potentially hazardous/suspicious and dealt with accordingly.

- When you print your employee number on the “Aircraft Search Checklist,” you are in essence stating that you in fact have completed all the requirements of the search as outlined in the FAM and IIF-080.
 - When originating an aircraft in PHL, ORF, MKE, Air Wisconsin employees are to perform the security sweep and will put their information on the search checklist and leave it in the galley. Before boarding, check to ensure the checklist has been completed. If the areas of the checklist that require an employee number are blank, it will be necessary for you to complete the entire security sweep.
 - If someone else “familiar with the aircraft cabin,” such as a gate agent, ramper, mechanic, or pilot assists you, they too must print their employee number in the appropriate section of the checklist indicating what part of the search they have completed.

- It is possible boarding may need to be delayed to complete a thorough security sweep.
 - Contact a union rep. immediately if you are contacted by management regarding any delays.

- Report all paper cuts, sore backs, and all other ailments resulting from the security sweep immediately to your supervisor/manager. Follow up with an email if necessary.
 - Copy in a union representative when communicating via email.

- If you are being rushed by customer service or ground station personnel:
 - Politely advise them you are completing your required security sweep and will advise them when you are ready to board
 - Notify your supervisor/manager via written documentation or email of situations when ground/gate personnel are infringing on your sweeps by rushing or harassing you. Provide a copy of written documentation to a union rep. or copy in a union rep in all email communications.

If you have any questions regarding any of this information please contact one of your union officers.

CWA Convention in Toronto

By *Ginger Sterling*, MEC President

July 14-17 Adam Novish, Barb Neisen, Juli Biggar, Lynn Anderson, and myself (Ginger Sterling) attended the CWA Convention in Toronto. This brings together thousands of elected officers from many walks of life such as: airline agents, flight attendants (FA), journalists, health care workers, publishers, printers, and many more in the communication industry.

While at CWA, AFA held a sector meeting (only AFA officers) Pat Friend, International President, informed us on AFA specific issues. She began with recognition of Dianne Tamuk, United FA and LEC President in New York, who was in the Washington Post and the communication/website awards. We talked about the Southwest FA crew reduction on board during boarding that was FAA approved and the Southwest FA union supported. An electronic email was sent out to you, the members, on AFA's stand against this issue and the response by our members has been outrageous. A report was given by the legislative affairs head, Shane Larson, on the FAA Reauthorization Bill in the House of Representatives and Senate, which must be completed in September. This currently contains concerns regarding Return to the Cabin Program, OSHA for FA, Merger Protections, English Proficiency Language Requirements, Fatigue, and the Cabin Environment.

Your local President sat on the CWA delegate floor (holding each of your votes) to vote on important issues governing our union constitution with CWA. These issues are called resolutions and there were 8 presented this year, all of which passed. The delegates also heard reports from committees and the financial budget. After the reports were given a vote is held to accept them. Each CWA National officer addresses the delegates and various awards are distributed. Through the interaction with our fellow union brothers and sisters, your elected officers return to work with empowerment and support from across the U.S. and Canada.

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This team will be of support to Dispatch and Crew Scheduling in the future during such times to man phone lines, locate hotels, and provide cabs in hubs that are set up for direct bill to the company. This all is in hopes to prevent such a breakdown as experienced that weekend. Laurie also shared that some of this was new to them because our operation is based down the east coast. In the past when there was weather, it never affected our entire system; If Denver went down, then Chicago was still running, or vice versa. There are still a number of issues that need to be addressed, and the MEC looks forward to our next opportunity meet with Laurie.

In the middle of May I attended the Executive Board meeting for AFA. This meeting is a gathering of all MEC Presidents from the airlines AFA represents. At this meeting a status report of all AFA represented airlines is given by the MEC Presidents of each airline. We heard reports from the different International committees such as Budget, Merger Oversight, Government Affairs, and Organizing. The three International officers give a report on what they have done in the last several months and what goals and ideas they have for AFA in the months to come. I will just touch on a few important ones, but if you would like a full report please feel free to contact me. The International President Pat Friend has encouraged us all to reach out to ALPA and work together, as the industry is short on pilots. We should also be supportive to our brothers and sisters at Mesa Airlines as they are going through a very difficult fight for a new contract. We must bring them up to better work rules and wages.

Everyone should have received a *Union Dental* booklet in the mail. The book is a directory of dentists that will accept insurance and be willing to do the dental work at a lower cost to us. The list will be growing as AFA gets more dental providers involved.

At the Executive Board we also select the Scholarship winners for AFA's Scholarships. The applicants sent in their request to a committee that reviews the information. This committee then narrows down the applicants to 10, and a drawing is done at the Executive Board meeting. Council 03 President, Barb Neisen's daughter, Calesa, won the \$2,500 scholarship..

I hope this has not been information overload, but I want all of you to be informed of what your AFA Leaders are doing for you. We continue to fly the line while representing you on an international and local level. We encourage any and all involvement on your behalf for as little and as much time you may have to devote. Your dues are always put to good work and we would like to keep you informed on what they do for you. If you ever have questions or concerns please contact any one of us.

In Solidarity,
Ginger Sterling
MEC President

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What you need to know.....AFA is on the WEB.
WWW.AFANET.ORG AFA International
WWW.ARWAFA.COM Air Wisconsin-AFA

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Safety Committee:

Adam Novish (MEC Chair) Cell: 302-249-7423 awacsafety@comcast.net

Employee Assistance (EAP):

Heather Healy (AFA Int't.) 800-424-2406 eapassist@afanet.org

FMLA/Worker's Compensation:

Glenda Moore Home: 303-428-7966 Jmoore3856@msn.com

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Susie Elkendier Home: 920-739-9770 SusieAW@aol.com

Council 28 Committees

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