

Dear APFA member,

As we wind down from a typical summer season of high loads and busy schedules and look ahead to the coming holiday months, I would like to take a few moments to address you directly with a number of updates and to also share with you some genuinely good news.

First, let me thank you for your enduring patience and your inspiring support. With so many distractions all vying for our attention nowadays, I and my fellow APFA Representatives applaud your efforts to stay informed and involved. Many of you give of your limited free time to share ideas and comments with us at your base and at headquarters. This remains ever vital to our serving your interests, especially as we continue bargaining for a new agreement.

I cannot convey enough the positive impact of your strike authorization ballot in the spring. In the face of this vote no one can doubt your resolve to do whatever is needed to reach our goals. It may appear that little progress has been made, and indeed we all wish a positive conclusion to talks had been reached long ago, but the process available to us—as lethargic as it may be—is what we must work with. Your Negotiating team is undaunted and unwavering in its determination to attain the improvements we need and deserve.

**“We must all support and learn from each other and fight against the predictable attempts by management to pit us against each other.”**

The challenges we have faced, within our own profession and in the general U.S. economy, have in many ways bolstered management's stalling tactics. Their decidedly poor performance on behalf of the traveling public, investors and employees alike, became a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts as poor leadership saw American fall behind our competitors while management placed all the blame on labor.

As a result of believing their own misleading press—posturing rather than managing with insight—AA lost its position as the industry leader, a status we'd all worked so long and so hard to build. Subsequently, it failed to “catch the wave” early when the industry started its inevitable recovery. Additionally, we have all suffered from an unstable political atmosphere and an unstable industry, with an entrenched, laissez-faire and pro-corporate model that has been broken for decades and only now shows signs of renewal and resurgence. As overwhelming as this all may sound, I firmly believe things can and will get better.

## Here is what your Union is doing:

**1 We are standing firm at the bargaining table.** APFA will not back down to this management that is set on taking what little we have left in this profession—those things that attracted us to this career in the first place, namely: our benefits; a layover that would allow us to see the world beyond an airport terminal or what can be seen from a van window on our way to a budget hotel; and, most importantly, a wage that recognizes and rewards our hard work, our sacrifices and the vital role our members play for this company, as both safety professionals and its most public and visible face.

**2 We will continue to plead our strong case to convince the National Mediation Board at our meeting on October 19th that it must put pressure on American.** This is what both the overall process, and the interminable state of our progress, clearly warrant. Unfortunately, external factors—the instability in Washington (midterm elections) and the lingering instability in the industry—have become undeniable factors in any decision on when to release us. Nonetheless, we continue to make our presence and plight known both in Congress and at the NMB. Again, we cannot and will not give up. That is exactly what management wants—to wear us down and marginalize us to the extent we just hang our heads and go home. I assure you that will not happen.

**3 We continue our work hand-in-hand with other unions at American, our sister Flight Attendant unions at other carriers, and with those at AA and elsewhere who seek to find their collective voice through unionization.** We must all support and learn from each other and fight against the predictable attempts by management to pit us against each other.

**4 We have renewed our efforts in the governmental halls of power, pushing Flight Attendant and labor-friendly legislation and supporting the candidates that support us on both the federal and state levels.** The industry is broken and airlines are in turn blaming labor in a never-ending attempt to break the will of front-line employees. In our lobbying, we have not met a single representative in Washington who does not recognize that the current model is failing and that all the pain has fallen onto the shoulders of labor. APFA continues to expand our instrumental role with committees and organizations, eg. the Demos report, and with the Department of Transportation and Secretary Ray Lahood, eg. the Future of Aviation Advisory Committee (FAAC). Of course, the changes we all seek to return strength to this industry will not follow this committee's recommendations overnight. However, we will have identified and agreed on the problems and APFA Flight Attendants will have been involved from the start.

## Now, let's review some of the objective and tangible good news that we've received lately:

**1** American has concluded the long-sought Joint Business Agreement with its major partners British Airways and Iberia. Evidence of the promised benefits—like those our competitors and our flying colleagues employed by them have already seen from their similar, long-held arrangements—are now beginning to appear with recently announced new AA service from JFK to Budapest and ORD to Helsinki plus increased service from JFK to Barcelona and MIA to Madrid. Additional service into China, with an application for flights from LAX to Shanghai, plus the potential of more expansion from our partnership with JAL and the growth of the oneworld Alliance (adding German carrier Air Berlin and Russian carrier S7), bode well for American's plan to remain a strong competitor around the globe and to offer increased flying opportunities.

**2** The Department of Transportation has granted antitrust immunity to American Airlines and Japan Airlines.

**3** Our continued delivery of new 737-800 aircraft bolsters not just American's service in major domestic markets but provides increased staffing by APFA members over the MD-80 aircraft they are replacing.

**4** And perhaps best of all, the announced recall of 545 of our furloughed members (and 250 pilots) underscores the palpable reversal of the years of retrenchment we've experienced and puts American back in a positive growth mode. This growth can only place more pressure on management to successfully conclude satisfactory agreements with our members and other unions on the property. They can no longer refuse to recognize that business is improving. This is an objective fact upon which we will clearly capitalize as we welcome back our returning colleagues and bring our members' skill and experience to new flights and new destinations.

APFA members form and exemplify a courageous and tenacious workforce of which we are all rightly proud. In an industry whose history is replete with failed enterprises, American has persevered largely, if not solely, on the strength of its front line workers and against some incredible odds. Our members have made tough decisions and have patiently awaited the promised gains. We have had to continually adjust and respond to many unforeseeable challenges yet your Union—as a reflection of you, the membership—has not lost sight of our goal, a new contract. We must hold our course and demand our due.

Not only are you the backbone of this company, but as a working, middle class American you are the backbone of this country. We must use our unity, strength and collective voice to better our lives. If we take up this challenge and continue this fight, we will win.

In unity,

*Laura Glading*  
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