

INSIDER



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Local 512 Welcomes All - Pages 8-9

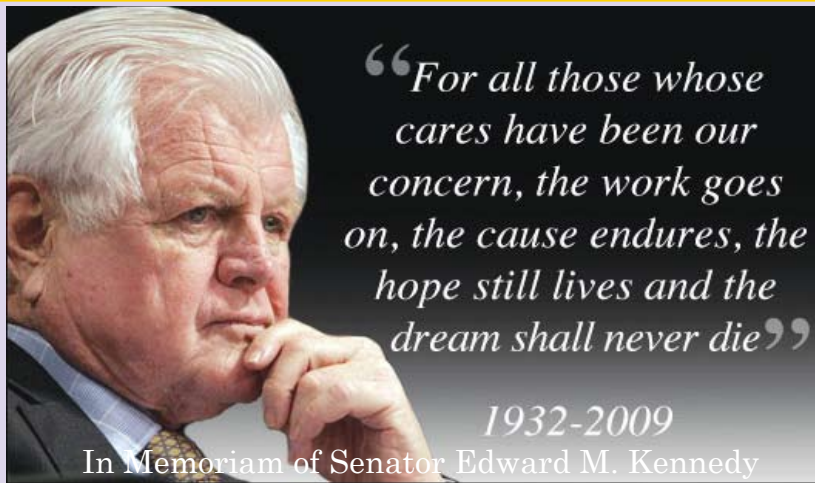


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Summer Time Picnic In Chicago



Senator Kennedy was always an advocate for the underprivileged and uninsured. He supported Civil and Human Rights when it was unpopular to do so, and he courageously fought in support of organized labor and our rights to organize and thus bargain collectively for a better life.

ATD Directors Corner



John M. Conley

Unparalleled Stamina

By the time you read this article, we will have recognized the eighth anniversary of September 11. Certainly and unquestionably the most devastating and horrific event of my lifetime, others include; the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, November 22, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. April 4, 1968 and Robert F. Kennedy June 5, 1968.

I will never forget where I was and what I was doing when United Flight 175 was flown into the South Tower of the World Trade Center at 0903 which, as we remember, was preceded by American Flight 11 at 0846 into the North Tower.

The attacks debatably ignited an economic malaise, creating a downward spiral of global proportions, from which we have yet to recover. Since that day our Division has endured one “body blow” after another,

indiscriminately affecting virtually every local and discipline, Government, Public and Private alike. Coupled with a dreadful economy, bank and lending collapses, industry failures, housing slumps, loan foreclosures, untold bankruptcies and of course the epic proportion of financial fraud by Bernie Madoff. He is just one of many, some have yet to be brought to justice but the damage is obvious to our nation’s financial psyche.

Overcoming perpetual obstacles, transforming challenges into opportunities and snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, seem to have become the order of the day. Make no mistake; this is not a light hearted micro observation. Many of our member’s lives, their families, homes and communities have been irrevocably altered. The testament lies in the fortitude, courage, tenacity and unyielding will, exhibited by you!

A marathoner paces and relies upon endurance, after all the start is irrelevant – the finish is all that matters.

The near term challenges will include solidifying a viable FAA Re-authorization Bill. One that addresses congestion and tarmac delays (ATC), technology advances

with NextGen GPS tracking, foreign maintenance and repair standards, etc. Monitoring the Federal Register for Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) modifications, providing comments and insisting upon direct participation are essential, visit www.ed.gov for more information. FMLA and OSHA reforms are necessary and must be secured further testing our perseverance and stamina.

Other venues requiring due diligence are the Open Skies II agreement, and pending anti-trust immunity for legacy carriers. By partnering and combining services in appropriate markets, these carriers will enhance and thus share in the

growth of profitable routes. An ever present threat is the consolidation and or bankruptcy of air carriers. There is always a boomerang affect in



this business, some positive but oftentimes not. We must remain engaged to have our needs addressed as the business continues morphing around us. There will be many more challenges ahead.

The Jedi Master – Yoda, a Star Wars character said, “Do or do not, there is no try.”

**567 Member Elected to Texas
AFL-CIO District 8**

Gary Moffitt has been a strong advocate for labor most of his adult life. He started his career working for American Airlines in Chicago, Illinois in 1988 as an aircraft mechanic, now known as Aviation Maintenance Technicians (AMT's.) In 1996 Gary transferred to Texas bidding a Crew Chief vacancy at the Alliance Maintenance Base just north of Ft. Worth, Texas. He enjoys working avionics and was elected as the Technical Specialist Section Chairman in 1998 for Local 567.

Moffitt has served his local over the years - Shop Steward, COPE volunteer and legislative community activist, he is currently Technical Specialist Section Vice President. He has always been involved in local and national politics to some degree. Tom Carlin helped mentor Gary to the ways of a notoriously unorthodox Texas political system. But being from Chicago, Gary had experienced similar shenanigans before; Cook County politics have a

history of voter fraud and their share of repugnant politicians. From the beginning Gary and Carlin worked well together and became good friends. Tom is a seasoned Vice President of the Texas Chapter AFL-CIO. Gary was elected to District 8 Vice President for the Texas AFL-CIO at their Convention in Irving this summer. Together, Gary and Tom provide unions and their members a distinct voice in local politics. They are true advocates for the working men and women of the state.



Gary works the phone – a "man on a mission"

In 2007, Local 567 members' re-elected Gary as Technical Specialist Section Vice President. He is involved with the current contract negotiations under mediation with American Airlines. During the 2006 and – 08 national elections, Moffitt

volunteered many hours, working hard for labor and its platform. He volunteered his free time for neighborhood door knock campaigns, phone banks, drove routes putting out yard signs and volunteered to work the Democratic primaries and caucuses in Denton County.

Gary is an ardent supporter of and participant in the Tarrant County Central Labor Council. The CLC's protect union members' interests in this traditionally red state. Moffitt said, "I am all for union jobs in the United States, but before you can have union jobs you have to have jobs. This is why it is so important to get a version of the FAA Reauthorization Bill passed, that restricts work at foreign repair stations." He has participated in the candidate screening process that the TCCLC holds prior to endorsing any candidates - a vital process in determining which politicians truly have labor's interest at heart. There are over 45 delegates that make up the Texas AFL-CIO and they are organized as Central Labor Council Districts. Delegates are elected for two year terms, representing union labor interests in their districts. The

number of delegates does fluctuate based on the number of union jobs within the district. It is important for the members to realize the work these men and women do for organized labor, often with very little recognition.

Congratulations Gary - thank you for your devotion and passion in broadcasting labor's initiatives.



"We have learned that a labor union is not a gambling table; it is not a bingo game where you hit the jackpot once in a lifetime. Membership in a union is a way of life. Dues payment is not enough. You must attend meetings, prepare yourself for leadership...you must invest part of yourself."

~ Michael J. Quill



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Editor - ATD Insider





By: Kyle Whiteley

Communications Coordinator
Editor - *Unity Magazine*

Training For The Future

This summer has been exceptionally busy for Transport Workers Union Local 556, the Union of Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants. We continue to work with Southwest to implement the changes specified in our latest industry-leading contract, which was formally signed by both parties at the end of July.

Educating our Shop Stewards has been a major focus over the last several months, to ensure that they have the most up-to-date information and tools to represent our members. They need to be familiar with the new and updated provisions of our contract. Local 556 hosted a two-day Shop Steward training workshop in Dallas, Texas at the beginning of July. The workshop was facilitated by Cuyler Thompson and Susan Kern, co-chairs of our Shop Steward Committee—the first such system-wide training seminar in three years. Their primary focus was the role our Shop Stewards play during

meetings with management. “I really enjoyed the training class,” said Cobia Gould, a Las Vegas based Flight Attendant and newly-elected Shop Steward. “It provided me with a glimpse of not only what to expect from the Flight Attendant I’m representing, but it also made me aware of some of the tactics used by management in fact finding meetings.” Our Shop Stewards come from eight separate Crew Bases, so bringing them together allowed them to share ideas with their colleagues, and form networks within the group, which ultimately will strengthen our “on-the-ground” representatives and the Flight Attendants of Southwest Airlines as a whole.

At the same time, TWU Local 556 has been working closely with Southwest management in order to define an appropriate



Local 556 Flight Attendants attend Shop Steward seminar

implementation schedule for the changes and upgrades, including technology enhancements, agreed upon during our negotiations. Local 556 President Thom McDaniel said, “Our new contract created several win-win scenarios for both the Flight Attendants and Southwest Airlines.” He added, “Many of the changes we fought for improved our members’ quality of life and were relatively simple enhancements that can be put into place for little or no additional costs.” While certainly many of the new work rules and policies were put in effect on the date of ratification,

the remaining items include nearly 280 technological changes that will be implemented by November of this year. “We would love to have these upgrades in place immediately,” Thom said, “but we know from experience that it’s sometimes better to be patient and wait for a product that is complete and works correctly.”

In the meantime, our local has been working to improve our own internal technological resources in order to better serve our members. Notably, First Vice President Michael Massoni has worked over the summer months to finalize improvements to our phone system that will allow us to implement weekend hours beginning this fall. Audrey Stone, our Baltimore Domicile Executive Board Member, helped make this planned

service enhancement a reality by setting up appropriate staffing and administrative details. The enhancement was originally planned for by the previous Executive Board.

While we have made many accomplishments this summer, 2010 is just around the corner, and TWU Local 556 is already

looking forward to serving our member’s in the future. “We’re not going to be able to please everyone,” said Thom McDaniel, “but we are committed to each and every one of our members. We hope that the work we have done through educating our Shop Stewards, through working with the company to implement the new and updated provisions in our contract and by improving our own internal technology, we can provide the best value possible for the Flight Attendants of Southwest Airlines.”

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EdMail-2/08

The FAA Reauthorization Bill, if signed by President Obama, has OSHA protections for Flight Attendants. Presently, the House has passed H.R. 915 the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2009 which among other things, proscribes a new OSHA standard for aircraft cabins and creates new Cabin Occupational Safety and Health Inspectors, solely devoted to OSHA inspections.

Section 307 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2009 affects Flight Attendants directly and provides for greater safety and labor protections.

~ TWU Health Safety News

New Officers for Local 574 MQT



On Right: Jose Galarza International Representative and American Eagle System Coordinator administers the oath of office to Scott Olinske new President of Local 574 in Marquette, Michigan. Not pictured: Scott Casey Vice President, Leonard Olgren Treasurer; Chriss Ohnmeiss Recording Secretary and Richard Wood Executive Board member

Local 514 Veterans Committee Comes Through for USO

The ATD Veterans Committee met on August 20-21 in Hurst, Texas. On Friday after the meeting had adjourned the Tulsa Veterans delivered 140 pounds of beef jerky to the USO lounge at DFW International Airport. The USO was tickled to get the donation. Local 514 members contributed what they could despite today's economic conditions. Jenni Proctor-Timms commented saying, "These are tough times for our members, but think about how tough things are for our deployed military men and women going overseas?" Jenni is a veteran too and serves on the ATD Veterans Committee as Recording Secretary. She was proud of her local's accomplishment and wanted them to know it, she added, "we delivered what we set out to do and couldn't have pulled it off without our fantastic members!"

In September the Tulsa Veterans Committee will begin collecting winter items for the Stand Down being held on October 24, 2009. The Stand Down helps homeless veterans with medical care, haircuts, clothing, food and sometimes jobs and a place to live. Contact Local 514 if you have items to contribute.

Local 514 members will be involved in the Veterans Day Parade scheduled this November 11th. Please remember to fly your flag that day and thank a veteran for their service to our country.

Celebrate Veterans Day November 11th

Local 514 Veterans deliver their donations to the USO at Dallas - Ft. Worth International Airport.

From left: Donald Johnson, Jack Fink USO volunteer, Jenny Timms ATD Veterans Committee Recording Secretary and Rick Wilson



One Determined Woman



Vicki Cousineau AMT Local 574

A country girl at heart, Vicki Cousineau arrived in Dallas for two weeks of Embraer aircraft familiarization school in April of 2005. She was excited about her trip to Texas but filled with anxiety awaiting test results from her doctor back home in Michigan. Vicki had a surgical biopsy procedure done just days before heading to Texas and she was worried – what would it reveal?

In early April she had found a lump in her breast during a self exam and immediately called her doctor. The doctor ordered mammograms and ultrasound tests and later two needle biopsies for lab testing. Those test results were inconclusive and gave Vicki a false sense of security – she just knew that she didn't have breast cancer; after all she was only thirty six. But her doctor recommended that she see a specialist - just to be sure; so she did and the oncologist ordered a surgical biopsy. Vicki needed confirmation of her medical situation because her career with American Eagle as an Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT) meant the world to her. She didn't want to miss the mandatory class, so on very short notice; she went ahead with the surgery just days before going to Texas.

Sore and painful, Vicki arrived in Dallas, she found herself in a strange town attending technical training classes with twenty other AMT's, all of them men, and very far away from family and friends. She had no one to confide in, her anxiety level was high and it was hard to concentrate in class - a good night's rest was almost impossible.

Cousineau was born in Marquette, Michigan and the family moved around during her formative years, and later returned home to Marquette. Marquette is located on the Upper Peninsula (U.P.) of Michigan. Inhabitants there are proudly known as "yoopers," - a self imposed geographic slang spun from the acronym U.P. – which, to most, sounds like it's your turn to go relieve yourself. Yooper's are a steadfastly independent lot with a freewheeling spirit and sincere fondness for their geographic disconnect and isolation from the rest of the state. That distinct independent spirit would help Vicki Cousineau endure the loneliness and anxiety while far from home and waiting for her test results.

The second day in Dallas she was in her room when the phone rang, it was Vicki's oncologist; she sat down on the side of the bed to listen, he explained in detail the diagnosis. Her worst fears had come true; she had stage II metaplastic carcinoma of her right breast. She asked him so many questions about the cancer and how best to treat it – but her options were few, however the chances of recovery were deemed good. Vicki told the Insider, "When I talked with my

doctor that day I was devastated, and started balling like a little baby. I went through rapid fire phases of denial, anger, self pity and then panic for a few hours." Then she made up her mind.

As the second week of class started another AMT from Marquette arrived in Dallas, her good friend Pamela

Kurtz was welcome company. Pam's presence in Dallas helped Vicki immeasurably. She finally had a woman, a yooper woman, to talk to about her decision. Pam helped her settle down staying focused, Vicki said, "I came to the determination that I needed to complete my training and secure my future which I had studied so hard for. That kept me centered on the class and kept me from feeling sorry for myself, or dwelling on my medical condition."

Pamela helped confirm Vicki's decision to tackle her cancer treatment head-on when she returned home.



"When Vicki was feeling really down, we'd bring her to Flanigans (a local watering hole) and sing bad karaoke."

She completed her training and returned to Marquette having a modified radical mastectomy performed just days after her return. Vicki was in the hospital three days and then sought the comfort of her parent's home. Every two weeks she had chemo-therapy treatments as a precaution against any free floating cancer cells surgery may have missed. Within a few weeks she was losing her hair and she kept her spirits up by jokingly saying, "After a while fuzzy wuzzy wasn't fuzzy anymore." Vicki enjoys sports and the outdoors – hockey to softball, kayaking to camping, the chemo took that kind of energy away from her. But her good friends Toby and Haley Smith brought over food and stayed with her when she was having a down day. Haley remarked, "When Vicki was



(Cont.) One Determined Woman

feeling really down, we'd bring her to Flanigans (a local watering hole) and sing bad karaoke." Vicki laughs about it now saying, "Those karaoke outings were a welcome release from being stuck at home" - she and her friends still sing there regularly. Flanigans is owned by Vicki's friends Pam and Don Marple and bartender Michelle Bratonia is Vicki's best friend in the world. Michelle visited and talked with her often during her recovery and cancer treatment.



From left: Toby and Haley Smith, Vicki, Brian Small, Michelle Bratoni, Pam and Don Marple - owners of Flanigans



Out at the American Eagle maintenance base TWU coworkers held a raffle to raise money and sent cards encouraging Vicki with humorous notes and cartoons. Vicki is a member of Local 574 and has an FAA issued airframe and powerplant license (A&P) and an associate's degree from Northern Michigan University located in Marquette. She started with American Eagle in 2003 with one license and went back to school for her power plant license in 2004. She enjoys aviation work and intends to be working on aircraft for a long time.



From left; Eric Nannestad, Brad Bessner, Angela Holtgard, Rod Rumohr, Vicki, Steve Paulson, Thomas Tulkki, Donald North, Brian Vandevort, Dave Jarvis, Shawn Liupakka

During her illness she was out of work from May to October of 2005. Susan and Garland Cousineau, Vicki's parents, paid her insurance deductible while she was out, and without them and the help from her many friends and coworkers, she would have been buried deep in debt.



American Eagle System Coordinator and International Representative Jose Galarza greets Vicki in her shop. Vicki and fellow co-workers collaborated on repairs that saved the company money and kept maintenance work in house.

Vicki knows all too well the value of good health care coverage, good

friends and especially family. She recommends using your health care benefits for preventative checkups frequently. By the way, men can have breast cancer too. As of now, Vicki has checkups every six months and next year that will drop to once annually. She wants others to know that it can happen to you and to be prepared to fight. Yooper spirit is alive and well in the U.P.

Marquette Agents Nab Ukrainian Flight Crew - Yooper Style!



Quarantined Russian IL-78 cargo plane is blocked by the airport snow plows and heavy trucks

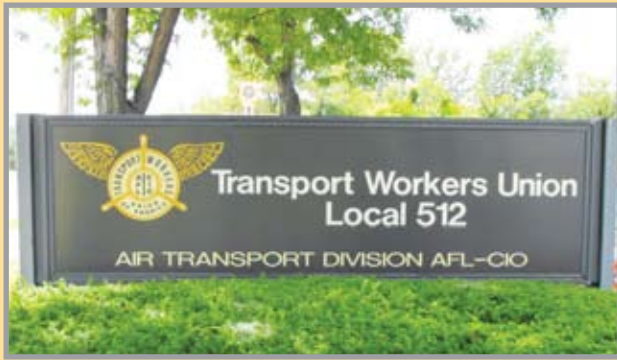
K.I. Sawyer - The Russian cargo jet that landed at Sawyer in mid July will not be going anywhere for at least a few more weeks.

Circuit Court Judge Thomas Solka extended the temporary restraining order on the plane until sometime in August. The defendants and plane owners owe the plaintiffs, Air One Flight Support, over \$62,000. The judge also ruled that the barricades surrounding the plane will remain in place until a further decision has been made.

"My client has an FAA lien against the aircraft in the amount that's owed," said Daniel Mead. "That's the whole entire hope is to gain a judgment according to what would be referred to as a breach of contract, then execute that judgment against the collateral that's secured through that lien."

Meanwhile, immigration officials have allowed the five Ukrainian crew members, originally taken into custody when the plane landed at Sawyer for fuel, to return to Kiev by commercial air transportation.

-From WLUC TV 6 Marquette, Michigan



**Local 512 Welcomes All
ORD-MSP-IND-MCI-DEN**

Summertime in Chicago is a much anticipated season and always cause for lively outdoor celebrations. Brutally cold Midwestern winters will do that to you. Members are ready to get outside and mingle, enjoying the warm sunshine, friends, and good cooking over a backyard grill. Like in previous years, Local 512 was more than ready for their picnic and they welcomed all to join in the festivities.

Local 512 invited their members, retirees and a host of TWU divisional leaders to attend their annual summertime picnic and open house on July 30th. The local is located in Elk Grove Village, not far from O'Hare International Airport and the union hall is named after William Lindner, Local 512's first President. Members, retirees and their family's started showing up early that morning and there were lots of retirees attending the picnic. Old friends always have lots to talk about and they enjoy a good conversation with one another.

The TWU motor coach made the trip too. The motor coach is TWU's latest addition to mobilized organizing and assists in political education efforts across the country. The motor coach doubles as a mobile activist center for union initiatives whenever needed. Remember, the TWU moves America in a number of ways! Many members got their first chance to tour the motor coach and they were impressed.



Children enjoyed playing games, eating ice cream and having their face painted by artist Ebony Tiggs. Ebony is Diana Tigg's daughter and she volunteered to face paint during the picnic. Diana is Vice President of Local 512 and always active with the Working Women's Committee. The families conversed with each other while the kids played, you could tell that members enjoyed the camaraderie and brotherhood.



Some of Local 512's retiree's



Danny Santiago with son Izaiah and daughter Amaya.



Center- John Soto with his family - son Justin, daughter Allison, daughter Audrey, wife Cynthia.



Retirees - Dan Orchowski and John Zakaras

Several Presidents on the negotiating committee stopped by enjoying the solidarity gathering and grabbed a bite to eat before catching a flight home. They had been in Chicago for another round of mediated contract talks - no



news there. If anyone needed to let off steam and relax, it was surely the negotiating committee.

Local 512 Safety Coordinator Jim Lorentz volunteered to drive a shuttle van transporting members to and from the airport. Many members came by immediately after their shift had ended, all members received ball caps and T-shirts emblazoned with the new, smart looking TWU 75th Anniversary logo.

The local hired Sweet Baby Ray's Barbeque to cater the affair, they're a well known local establishment, if you've never tried them, the next time you're in Chi-town - you should!

Kevin Hagn Local 512's Secretary/Treasurer contacted the Insider after the picnic with the final food tally. Those attending devoured 117 chickens 312 slabs of delicious ribs and 175 pounds of pulled pork barbeque, not to mention over 1,300 various grill items - brats, Italian

Local 512 Welcomes All



Ebony Tiggs was busy face painting most of the day

sausages and hot dogs! The ice cream box was a big draw for the kids. Kevin said, "Over 420 ice cream bars were served and we had to restock twice during the afternoon. Over eighty gallons of

side dishes were consumed during the picnic too. If you left hungry, you were at the wrong picnic!"



Late in the afternoon, Local President Sean Doyle said, "Our picnic was lots of fun and entertaining, you could

feel the solidarity from those who came today, our retiree's, our local members, and particularly the officers and families who volunteered to make it a success - thanks to each and every one of them." The Local also awarded eight college scholarships worth \$1,000 dollars each to qualified students. The local picnic was quite enjoyable and estimates were that 1,200 people attended the eleven hour marathon. The gathering personified the importance of family fun, friends and solidarity between TWU members.



Vitale Family - John and Debbie, baby Angelo, daughter Adrianna, son Anthony



From left; Mike King and Local 512 EAP Coordinator Mike Bland



From left; Katie Smith, Julia Spitelli, Daniel Spitelli, Patrick Smith, Anthony Forte, Christian Spitelli.



Local 512 President Sean Doyle and ATD Director John M. Conley

(Photos courtesy of Michael Brennan Local 512 and Angie Tucker ATD Media)



Enough Already

By: Tim Gillespie
International Representative

Having spent over thirty years in the airline industry, I've experienced the good times and the bad. Airline deregulation changed everything, that was in 1978, and for a while it looked promising. Airlines were growing, hiring people and buying new aircraft, working for one was considered a cool job with good pay and benefits. Smaller cities finally had air service they had long sought after. And, as a non-rev passenger, I experienced some really nice vacation destinations. I have to admit that back then I took it for granted, I don't feel that way anymore.

The glamour and lure of flying has lost its magic. Lately, it seems, all the airlines have contributed to passenger misery and outrage. The treatment they received from companies that tout their customer service experience as the best is simply pathetic. Last months Continental Express fumble in Rochester, Minnesota proved it again. They just gave Hollywood their next sequel - from "Snakes On a Plane" to "Locked On a Plane." Passengers were stranded on a tiny commuter jet for over six hours. The lavatories filled quickly and then wouldn't

work, infants were crying, and at first the crew didn't know what to tell the passengers. The aircraft was hot and crowded. No food or water available either, passengers were mad as hell, you can't blame them, they should have been allowed off that plane.

After an investigation by the airline - take that with a grain of salt, they told everyone "the Flight Crew had gone past their duty time per FAA regulations." That made the mothers of crying, hungry infants feel like it was all good - wrong! Maybe it's time for passengers to have their bill of rights. After all the TSA went home that night, the Rochester Airport employees went home when they were finished and the airline employees went home too. The Flight Crew had the FAA regulations mandating that they were out of time. If I were the pilot on that airplane I believe I would have broken a rule or two and opened the doors and let passengers at least stretch their legs. Who knows, somebody might have escaped and come back with doughnuts, coffee and water for everyone. It's happened before.

A funny thing though - the airline never mentioned if the pilots left the aircraft after going illegal, did they just sit up there playing pea-knuckle or what? It seems like common sense has left the industry. Maybe airline re-regulation is in order? And while they're at it - give the passengers a contract with limitations that airlines would have to abide by. If they don't comply, slap them senseless with a fine or jail time; make them sit in a tiny cramped airplane with no food, water or a working bathroom facility.

It's time for passengers to have some justice too; after all they're the ones who really pay our salaries. Have a nice flight.

47 Million Without Health Insurance

Health Care Glossary

Universal health insurance:

The goal of ensuring that every American has access to health coverage, regardless of the specific system used to achieve it.

Group health insurance:

The Traditional System in which employers or unions offer subsidized private insurance to employees or members and their dependents at discounted group rates.

Individual health insurance:

Private policies purchased by individuals or families who do not have access to group insurance. Applicants may be denied coverage or have to pay more because of age, gender, or preexisting medical conditions.

Public health insurance:

These include Medicare (for disabled or older people), Medicaid (for the poor), SCHIP (for children), the Veterans Affairs health system and some state programs. Care is subsidized by federal or state governments or both.

Single payer:

A centralized system used by several Western nations in which the government pays for every resident's health care as a basic social service, funded out of taxes.

Socialized medicine:

A single-payer system in which the government owns and runs health care facilities and pays salaries to doctors. (In the U.S., only the VA health care program would fit into this category.)

-from AARP Bulletin

Healthcare Rally in D.C.

By: Tom Lee President Local 568



Arlene Holt-Baker · Executive Vice-President AFL-CIO



Tom visits Florida Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-18th) while in town

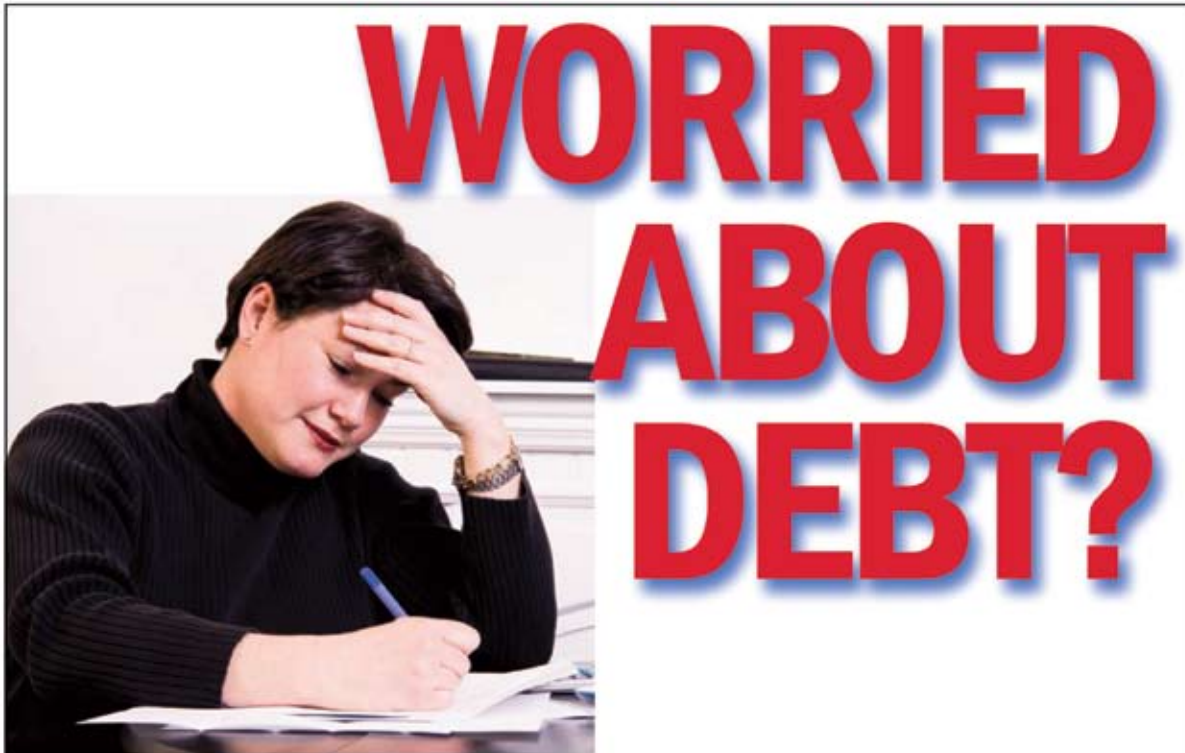
On June 25, I made a day trip from Miami to Washington D.C. to participate in the AFL-CIO Healthcare Reform Now Rally. I was met and guided to Upper Senate Park by TWU Senior Political Advisor, Maureen Abboud, who provided me with literature and maps that would prove valuable during my visit.

The literature outlined three components clarifying TWU’s position on healthcare reform: First, we must be allowed to keep our pre-existing healthcare plan or select a public healthcare plan option. Second, “Pay or Play” must be included to ensure coverage for all. Third, any proposal to tax our healthcare benefits is unacceptable. This was the message that I would carry to my Florida Congressional Leaders later in the day. The rally site was awesome! Thousands of union brothers and sisters awash in a sea of color - CWA members wore red, SEIU in purple and TWU members in navy blue; we as labor members blanketed the area surrounding the stage. I was proud to be a part of it!

With the capitol dome as a backdrop, a huge projection screen gave a visual reinforcement to the crowd gathered to hear passionate speakers address the healthcare dilemma our nation faces. Congressional representatives Charles Rangel, Robert Menendez, Charles Schumer, and Kirsten Gillibrand fired up the crowd. And, Democratic Party Chairman Howard Dean and Arlene Holt-Baker, the Executive Vice-President of the AFL-CIO gave inspiration to the audience, drawing loud chants in unison of “HEALTHCARE NOW!”

Union leaders and presidents spoke of the tragedy working men and women face that lack health care coverage, which often tragically leads to bankruptcy or even premature death. After the rally, many members from various states had planned town hall meetings with their legislators. Since Florida was not one of them, I used my remaining time to visit and meet our congressional representatives. I delivered the TWU position mentioned above. Healthcare should be a human right, and not an option. This country can fly a man to the moon, land a probe on Mars, and send ships to map the universe. Why can’t we find a way to provide decent healthcare for our citizens?

To sum it up, my day trip was time very well spent. It was truly a moving experience to see all unions present and supporting each other for a rightful cause. I urge all members to get involved, participate, and together strengthen our UNION VOICE in Washington D.C. Together, we can and will make a difference. The fight is on!



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For more information visit:

www.UnionDebtHelp.org



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