

Roseanne Rosannadanna Was Right



*Chris Beebe
MEC Chairman*

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As I write this for the *US AIRWAVES*, I am also in the process of composing my response to the Company on its January 20 letter to me from Messrs. Wolf and Gangwal, which has been courteously copied to all of you. By the time this hits the streets for your view, we will probably have moved on to the next brush fire, but I felt I had to mention it here. Just as the MEC reauthorized negotiations on RJs, along comes this letter. Maybe it was really written three months ago and got lost in the mail. You know, Jane, it’s always something.

So where’s the beef?

In the first few weeks of January, the MEC held two special meetings. Just for the record, we normally have four quarterly meetings per year with a few special meetings thrown in as appropriate.

The first special meeting, held in PHL, was called so the MEC could deliberate on the agreement worked out by the Negotiating Committee with the Company for the purpose of resolving scheduling issues, including the Company’s unilateral implementation of the Reserve rest rules. This also had an impact on Letter of Agreement 72 (R to S transition), the ability under Section 25 for an R Reserve to volunteer for a Short Call trip, and what has become known as the Fly Now, Pay Later grievance.

Fly Now, Pay Later, in case you haven’t been keeping up, was filed to preclude a new Company policy of awarding a grievance and then not paying above 85 hours to the pilot whose

contractual rights were violated. Let’s face it: if you think your pay will be shorted due to an unpaid claim, most of us will go out and make up the difference until the issue is adjudicated. The Company’s position was, since the pilot made up the time, there was no need for a monetary award. Needless to say, the implications of this were HUGE and so it became a high priority for the MEC.

LOAs and more

As a result of their work, the Negotiating Committee presented the resolution to most of the scheduling issues as Letter of Agreement 78. This sideletter was modified by the MEC and returned to the Negotiating Committee to address areas that the MEC deemed unacceptable.

Now, this is where it gets interesting. The Negotiating Committee also presented LOA 77. LOA 77 was first shown to the MEC at the regular fourth quarter December meeting. It was developed to respond to the Company’s request for Scope relief to allow them to code share with American Eagle on the West Coast. The reason for the Scope relief was that Eagle operated ATR 72s. Since the ATR 72 has a *certificated* seating capacity in excess of 69 seats, US Airways is precluded from a code share with them. Our former feeder on the West Coast, Trans States Airlines, decided they no longer wanted to be our regional carrier of choice.

To make a long story even longer, the MEC decided that appropriate returns were necessary for allowing the Scope relief and that is

what LOA 78 became, in part. So, the MEC tied the two issues together and, if the Company would accept its changes, send both of these LOAs to you for ratification with a recommendation to ratify. That takes us to special meeting number two.

Two weeks later, a meeting was called to receive the Company's response to the MEC's modifications to LOA 78. This meeting was also held to determine if the Company has satisfactorily addressed the ongoing operational problems to again consider authorizing the Negotiating Committee to talk with the Company regarding RJs (also called SJs and AJs), and to consider acceptance of a grievance settlement to Section 25(F) Rescheduling. After careful deliberation, the MEC elected to send out both LOA 77 and 78 to you. The ballot will consist of one vote to either accept or reject both sideletters.

LOA 77 simply allows a code share with Eagle in the Western U.S. LOA 78:

- Allows Reserve pilots to voluntarily fly into a scheduled day off. A trial period is also provided for and allows either party to revisit the issue for further modification.
- Provides Vacation Line Adjustment for Secondary Lineholders.
- Allows greater flexibility for Lineholder monthly projection adjustments.
- Allows Lineholders to split for 30 in 7 either before or after a line trip as a matter of contractual right.
- Allows pilots to substitute for another pilot on the last live leg of a trip.

By the time you read this, my guess is that the balloting would already be underway. Each local Council should hold meetings prior to the ballot deadline and include a discussion of these sideletters.

Fly Now, Pay Later

The MEC accepted the Company's proposed settlement on this important grievance. That settlement essentially returns us to where we were prior to the Company's creative new interpretation of how these issues were paid.

Section 25(F) Rescheduling grievance

You might remember this grievance from long ago and far away. It was filed as a result of the lack of agreement on the meaning of this section as the Contract was about to be signed

two years ago. Since then, we have operated under the old Rescheduling section. This grievance settlement agrees to pay-protect pilots who are rescheduled. The terms will be sent to you soon and the MEC has asked for implementation prior to March 1.

Regional Jets

After studying all of the above issues, the MEC decided that it was satisfied that adequate progress had been made on these to reauthorize the Negotiating Committee to resume negotiations with the Company on Regional Jets. As I have said many times, any agreement regarding additional RJs will contain appropriate protections, limitations, and returns, to include but not be limited to:

- Reset of the minimum block hour guarantee.
- Enhanced minimum Captain/No Furlough language.
- Increased growth in both block hour and fleet plan projections.
- Bi-directional flow-through with our wholly-owned regional carriers.
- Parity review and modifications.

As always, this will be through membership ratification and will be your decision to make.

Flight Ops Task Force

At the June MEC meeting, it was decided to approach the Company and attempt to find ways to better deal with the day-to-day problems facing us. Consequently, a resolution was passed and the Company was approached on this issue. In fact, when the MEC met with Messrs. Wolf and Gangwal at Annapolis, they were asked to participate in this undertaking and responded favorably. As a result, the Flight Operations Task Force was formed with Jack Stephan (BWI) and Chip Mayer (DCA) from the MEC, as well as Steve Halpin (PHL) being appointed to this very important group. They began their work at the end of December and include under their present charge:

- A one-week observation of Crew Scheduling. In return, the Company sent one of its crew schedulers to observe scheduling issues as received by our Hotline at the MEC office.
- A review of Crew Scheduling training manuals to be consistent with the Contract.

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They have also met with other members of the Task Force including members of the Flight Ops and Crew Scheduling departments. Their preliminary report indicates a fundamental need for better communication and interpersonal skills to be developed, as well as enhanced technology. From this point on, they will develop, prioritize, and find solutions to these ideas and others that present themselves.

As their work progresses, either one of the Task Force members or I will be updating you on the issues.

ASAP A.S.A.P.

Finally, I want to close on a real “up” note. The Aviation Safety Action Program, which had its roots right here with the implementation of our very own Altitude Awareness Program, has now gone nationwide.

This enlightened approach to handling safety issues was borne from a demonstrated need for

both our pilot group and the FAA to provide a frank and open forum for the discussion of safety issues in a non-jeopardy setting. If you have been included in the Safety Program after an incident, you are familiar with the career-saving protections it affords. For the rest of us, I hope we never have the need but nevertheless have the comfort of this being in place if and when. The attached Tip of the Hat item gives you some additional information on two of the dedicated safety professionals we have working on our behalf and who were instrumental in the success of ASAP.



YOUR UNION NEEDS

YOU



• **Electronic Information Systems Committee—**

The Electronic Information Systems (EIS) Committee is looking for a few good volunteers for future committee vacancies. We are looking for pilots to work on the ALPA US Airways CompuServe Forum and the ALPA US Airways Web Site. We are looking for highly motivated pilot volunteers who would be willing to learn a new job and who could donate a few hours per week to work on either the forum or the web site. Previous experience is not required. You will be trained.

Contact EIS Committee Chairman William Stokes (PHL) at 818-286-8882, Craig Pinto (CLT) at 704-542-3094, or Steve Halpin (PHL) at 302-793-7794.