

Afa's FIGHTING OPPOSITION WITH AGGRAVATION

With the afa apparently making its last stand, a self-appointed general Custer has emerged. He's a US Airways F/A who is so disturbed by the number of us saying we don't want a union that via e-mail he is ordering pro-afa F/As to use high pressure tactics in an effort to get us to change our minds. ***"I charge you all not to let your co-workers GET AWAY WITH saying 'I don't want a union'"*** [note: the capital letters used here and in other quotes of his are apparently his way of screaming in print. The bold highlighting is ours]. We're going to ignore the fact that he isn't a Delta employee, that he doesn't know diddly about Delta, and that he sounds like a panicked used New York taxicab salesman and discuss some of the nonsense he's trying to peddle. He commands ***"...MAKE THEM [us] ADMIT TO THE FOLLOWING:"***

"I DO NOT WANT A BINDING SAY IN HOW WE'RE PAID! I WILL LET DELTA DECIDE"

If afa represented F/As have a *"binding say"* in how they're paid, they must be terribly frustrated with it, because Delta has always "decided" to pay us considerably more than they get with their *"binding say."* Furthermore, a *"binding say"* can work both ways. United F/As *"binding say"* froze their pay ranges for the first four years of their current ten-year contract and committed them to average pay for the last five. US Airway F/As' *"binding say"* left general Custer and his F/A cohorts in the lurch for four years between contracts.

"I DON'T CARE IF DELTA TELLS ME I AM THE BEST PAID AND NO ONE ELSE IS OUT THERE WORKING HARD TO MAKE SURE THAT IS TRUE. I AM WILLING TO TAKE THEIR WORD FOR IT."

Was the afa *"out there working hard"* for US Airways F/As when it took years to re-negotiate their contract? No. At best, it was *"hardly working"* for them while it devoted its energy and their dues money trying to organize us.

We're willing to take Delta's word that we're best paid, but we haven't had to because we have copies of other F/A labor agreements. We might also mention that even Pat Friend has acknowledged, tearfully no doubt, that *"Delta has always kept its pay and benefits equal to or a little better than the union carriers..."*

"I DON'T CARE THAT IN MANY CASES DELTA DOESN'T PROVIDE ME WITH THE MOST ACCURATE INFORMATION ON HOW OTHER FLIGHT ATTENDANTS ARE BEING PAID AT OTHER AIRLINES. THEY HAVE THEIR AIRLINE TO RUN AND IT IS JUST BIG BUSINESS."

He, of course, doesn't (and cannot) name a single case when Delta has provided us inaccurate information about other F/As' compensation. Nonetheless, he's trying to convince us we only *think* we're best paid because Delta doesn't give us *"accurate information on how other flight attendants are being paid."* In *Vicious Truths #73* we pointed out that we make 15% more than US Airways F/As and 18 ½ % more than United F/As for 75 hour months and 18 ½% and 21 ½ % more respectively for 85 hour months. Care to know our source? It was the afa's slick but ditzy brochure *"Our Time...who controls what it is worth?"* [All that litters is not literature]. Frankly, we did not check the labor contracts to confirm the rates because we were absolutely certain the afa would not understate any of our competitors' compensation.

"I DON'T MIND THAT SCHEDULING USES THE GUIDELINES WHEN IT IS CONVENIENT FOR THEM YET ASKS ME TO DO THINGS I AM NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE TO DO IF THEY ARE SHORT PEOPLE OR THE WEATHER GETS BAD. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN ALL THE TIME."

What, pray tell, is scheduling supposed to do - cancel flights and leave pax stranded?! What is it that F/As are *"not supposed to have to do"* - help out in emergencies?! General Custer doesn't think service employees should have to serve the people who ultimately provide our jobs and pay our salaries. That's the union version of post-graduate economic ignorance! No wonder congress is contemplating passenger rights legislation.

“I DO NOT CARE IF I GET CALLED INTO THE OFFICE AND THEY ACCUSE ME OF THIS OR THAT AND I CAN’T FIND OUT WHO ACCUSED ME. I WILL TRUST DELTA TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION ABOUT MY CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT.”

This, and other points Custer makes are classic examples of what we were referring to in *Vicious Truths* #66 when we said **the afa is “trying to convince us of what *MIGHT* happen if something that *WILL NOT* happen, *SHOULD* happen.** There are more items on the general’s list, but they’re academic in light of his conclusion –

“AFTER ALL, ISN’T THAT [i.e. these things] WHAT YOUR FELLOW FLIGHT ATTENDANTS ARE SAYING TO YOU WHEN YOU ASK THEM TO SUPPORT AFA AT DELTA AND SIGN A CARD AND THEY RESPOND WITH NO?”

No! Every issue of *Vicious Truths* and its predecessors has been devoted to reasons for rejecting the afa. General Custer goes on to say “*Maybe you can’t convince them [i.e. us] of the benefits, but by asking them to tell you what it is they don’t want instead of just letting them get away with saying ‘I don’t want the union,’ you will help them see what a great opportunity this is and how sad it would be to pass it up!*” This is almost too easy. Here are just a few of the things **we do not want**:

- We do not want to stop receiving top pay for top performance – i.e. more than the union carriers.
- We do not want to go three or four years without increases – initially or subsequently.
- We do not want to be furloughed when business is bad.
- We do not want our relationship with Delta poisoned.
- We do not want an egregiously inept organization that has continually tried to deceive us to represent us.
- We do not want to belong to an organization so vilified by its own members that F/As at both American and Northwest abandoned it.
- We do not want to belong to an organization whose remaining members are either trying to replace it as their representative (FAIR) or wearing black ribbons under their pins to show their irritation with it.
- We do not want to lose the greatest leverage we have, namely being union-free.

If some afa zealots follow Custer’s advice, you might want to turn the tables on them and ask “Do you want to stop getting top pay for top performance? Do you want to go three or four years without an increase? Do you want to get furloughed when business is bad? [etc., etc.], because that’s what you’re saying when you say you want to hire the afa.” Alternatively, you may prefer to advise them to make a prompt and prolonged trip to an incomparably hot place.

THIS JUST IN...

In the past we’ve mentioned how unions can levy special assessments without their members’ consent. We’ve just received word that it has happened. Delta Pilots who are ALPA members are now being assessed to pay Comair Pilots who are on strike. They didn’t vote on it and a lot of them are angry because Comair pilots are suing to get on the Delta seniority list.

VICIOUS e-TRUTHS

Only those F/As who have sent us their e-mail addresses will be receiving e-Truths promptly. Others will get copies later via snail mail. We need to make this change in order to respond promptly to afa initiatives during this critical time. We’re starting now because “general Custer” is urging the afa gaggle to start using the tactics we’ve mentioned in its blitz **this week** (by the time we could get out a snail mailing, the blitz would be over). The downside, of course, is that there are still hundreds of F/As we cannot reach by e-mail. Consequently, we hope everyone else will help compensate for this by distributing this and other issues as widely and quickly as you reasonably can. Thanks!!