



Business Agent Report

October 2009

By: Paul Molenberg and Rich Petrovsky

Joint Board of Adjustment: During the October 8th negotiations, an agreement was reached over the Unions proposal to immediately implement a Joint Board of Adjustment (JBA) on a trial basis to replace the current third step of the grievance procedure. This agreement was reached through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was signed by both parties, which can be viewed at www.IBTUALNegotiations.com.

The MOU states that at this time, 3rd step grievances concerning attendance will be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the attendance subcommittee. This subcommittee has been meeting in an effort to reach an agreement that resolves the issues over “dependability” and its resulting discipline. Since any decision from this subcommittee could affect the outcome of these grievances, they need to be held in abeyance. However, the Company has agreed that attendance disciplines at levels 4 and 5 will be heard at the JBA. The third step grievances that are being held in abeyance will remain in effect and will not go away until a resolution is reached, one way or another. Additionally, the attendance case that has been appealed to arbitration is still in the line-up to be heard.

Due to the importance of repairing the current broken grievance procedure, this MOU was a key non-economic proposal for the Union. We will now have the ability to present our cases to a panel that will consist of two Union officials and two Company officials; replacing the current procedure which relies on a single individual from the Labor Relations Department to hear and decide on the cases. The current Union officials on the board are Airline Division Representative Clacy Griswold and IAD Coordinator Bob Fisher. The current Company designees are Labor Relations Director Marcel Delhommeau, plus another Company representative that is yet to be announced.

At this time, there will be no more hearings using the old third step procedure. The first JBA has been scheduled for December 1st in SFO. These JBA’s will occur once a month and will alternate between SFO and Chicago, with Denver and all eastern stations heard in Chicago; and every western station heard in SFO.

The goal is to hear at least four cases per session day. Prioritization will be in the following order: Discharge cases; loss of pay cases; cases with system wide implications (e.g. language interpretation cases); and then all other cases.

In all four of these categories, a chronological order will generally be adhered to. At this time, the western grievances will be coordinated by Business Agent Paul Molenberg, and the eastern cases coordinated by ORD Chief Steward Kevin Giegoldt. Although this very important change to the grievance procedure will translate to changes at the first and second steps, it is not the only work that needs to be done.

Currently, grievances entering the first step are not assigned a grievance number and are not being tracked. In fact, a number is not assigned to the grievance until it has been answered by a Supervisor...and then accepted by the Union Grievance Committee. This process has been in place for decades, but we feel it could be revised to support the legitimacy of the first step. We are currently working on ideas to rectify this problem which includes a system wide, comprehensive grievance tracking program, immediate assignment of a grievance number, and earlier acceptance by a Coordinator or Chief Steward. The IBT and your local Union officials are committed to clearing the backlog of grievances and implementing changes that will lead to a grievance system that is both fair and greatly expedited.

Third Step Grievances: Over the last couple of months we have been reviewing our oldest third step grievances that we have on file and have now closed 23 of them. In these cases, there were a variety of reasons that led us to the decision to close them. Some because they lacked merit or supporting data, others because the Company has since ceased the practice, and others because the discipline had been removed due to time. One of them was an overtime bypass that has been paid.

Today, the grievance count at the third step in SFO stands at 89. Of those, 42 are for attendance discipline. We are absolutely committed to finding resolution to these grievances and clearing this large backlog. In doing this, grievants will then be able to have their case brought to a JBA hearing in a reasonable amount of time.

Administrative Support Center: We have had meetings with the Administrative Support Centers Management along with Labor Relations to discuss our concerns over the procedures and actions of the ASC employees. We were able to express the multiple problems that our members have encountered, along with issues that Union officials have had with this group.

A number of the issues that we had brought up needs follow up work to be done by both the ASC and by LR. One of the things we had asked for in our first meeting was a flow chart that shows exactly how a sick call goes through the process of becoming discipline. In the second meeting we saw a draft copy of a chart for this process that they were putting together. It was still work in progress and we were promised a finalized copy in the near future. Once we have that we will share it with the Stewards.

Airline Division Director David Bourne Visit: An unannounced visit by Captain David Bourne to the SFO maintenance base on October 20th brought a chance for many of our Shop Stewards and Members to meet him and hear his report on the activities of the Airline Division.

After meeting with the day shift Shop Stewards in the main committee room, Director Bourne went to the floor to visit with as many mechanics as his schedule would allow. He made assurances to the members that he will take the issues that are most important to the membership as a whole to the Company for resolution. He has also made a promise to meet with us in SFO for “on base” quarterly meetings, something we have been trying to re-instate since the Teamsters were voted in as our representatives. Accompanying Director Bourne was TAMC Chairman Chris Moore and our TAMC representative for United Airlines mechanics, SEA Chief Steward Dave Saucedo.

Plating Shop: An attempt to outsource the Plating Shop work has been put on hold for the time being. A problem that involved disagreements between production and engineering management had led to chrome plating process errors that produced substandard chrome plating. Sadly, it was due to this squabble between management personnel that a decision was made to outsource the chrome plating to a vendor, rather than to correct the issue. The outsourcing of this work could also include tear down, cleaning, machining and build of the landing gear assemblies. With the help of our members, the Union will be keeping a very close eye on this issue.

PW 2000 Engine: The outsourced PW 2000 engine that stirred so much controversy is back from Delta and into fleet service. In a follow up dialogue with Vice President of Base Maintenance, Mark Mounsey, he indicated that “We were able to ascertain the magnitude of potential materials discounts that we can use in the near future.”

Advanced Steward Training: Advanced Grievance Handling and Railway Labor Act Workshop classes taught by Labor Attorney Jason Rabinowitz will take place on November 14th at Local 856 (453 San Mateo Ave., San Bruno). The Advanced Grievance Handling class will be from 9 a.m. until 12 noon, and the Railway Labor Act Workshop will be from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Participants may attend one or both classes. To enroll, contact Rudy Gonzalez at (650) 635-0111 x7730 or rgonzalez@ibt856.org.

Fleet Week: The Fleet Week Maintenance Base Open House was a success again this year with an estimated 13,000 people in attendance. All of us from your local Teamsters SFO Committee would like to thank Donna Culwell, our Sister who drove the Joint Council 42 Peterbilt truck up from Covina (Southern Cal) for the event. We would also like to thank her for the many “free-bees” she brought with her including frisbees, back massagers, bumper stickers, “green” bags, and inflatable “Thunder Sticks” (which were the biggest hit of the day with the kids).

Thanks also to our brothers and sisters from the Broadmoor, Atherton, and Union City Police Departments who brought out several vehicles for display, along with many gifts for the members and their guests who came out for the event. Once again, a great time was had by all.

Performance Incentive Passes: Just a reminder when planning your vacations for next year, you may want to keep in mind that if you have any remaining Performance Incentive Passes, they are set to expire next August and November. As you know, this program was ended by the Company. Please check Skynet to find out what your remaining allotment is.

Negotiating Committee: Counting only the UAL Mechanics on the Union Negotiating Committee, there is a total of 349 years of Company seniority. When you add to this the total number of years included in the entire Steering Committee, you add another 400 years, for a total of 749 years of experience. Add to this the well over one hundred years of the IBT negotiating experience of the Teamster Business Agents, Airline Division Advisors and Legal Counsel, and you are closing in on one thousand years of Airline related experience. All of this experience is working for our members to get the best possible contract that is both fair and equitable, and is a group that all of our members can be proud of in these negotiations.