

The Grapevine

2012 • Issue 1



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AMFA PROUD!

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National Executive Council

Louie Key	National Director
Floyd Looney	Assistant National Director
Steven Nowak	National Secretary/ Treasurer
Fred Digne	National Safety and Standards Director
Earl Clark	Region I Director
Jack Coonrod	Region II Director

Mission Statement

Disseminate news in any manner to keep the membership alert and well informed.
– an Association Objective, AMFA Constitution

AMFA National produces this publication because it is our firm belief that an informed union membership creates a strong union. AMFA inalterably places the control of the Association with the membership. Every member has a responsibility to stay informed and involved.

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Printing: Fosdick Printing Company

The Grapevine's editorial content must be generally consistent with Association policies. The guiding principle governing all submissions is respect for one's fellow member and for the Association. Submitted articles should address issues pertinent to the Association and its members, and must avoid references of a personal nature.

All articles, including guest editorials, should conform with policy positions of the Association as established by the AMFA National Executive Council, AMFA Constitution, and National Policy Manual. The responsibility for monitoring editorial consistency is shared by National Officers.

2012 Adventures



By: Louie Key, National Director

As we begin our adventure in 2012 we look forward to another year filled with promises of better things to come in our public, work, and private lives – we should all take a moment to reflect on the role we play in those changes. From the political campaigns that are underway, to union meetings, to elections and referenda, to the decisions we make day-to-day, we collectively have a responsibility to ourselves and those we influence to participate in order to achieve positive outcomes.



We all share expectations of things we would like to see improve. While we may have various ideas of what those improvements look like, participation and positive action are required to make a difference. We cannot wait for the other guy to anticipate what we think needs to be changed and sit back hoping he will get it done.

Toward that end, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank those in our union who have stepped up to the various union positions to help make positive changes for our members. Without their dedication to their fellow union members and their craft, we would not be as good as we are. It takes a lot of commitment on their behalf to serve in those positions as more often times than not they are helping address matters in times of conflict.

The Shop, Area, Airline, and Safety (including ASAP and Accident Investigation “Go-Team”) Representatives work directly with our members to hear and address their concerns. They are all there to help and represent our members when the need arises. These representatives are all backed and supported by the Local Officers that make up your Local Executive Council. The Locals, in turn, are then supported by your National Officers of the National Executive Council. Each of these positions is elected by, and accountable to, you the members.

As I have met and worked with all of those who have stepped up into these positions, I am consistently amazed at what a fantastic job they all do. It is reassuring to know we have such able, diligent, and dedicated members in our class and craft. To all of them and to you, thank you!

With last year’s bankruptcy filing by American Airlines, Mesaba and Southwest involved in mergers or acquisitions, and the Alaska negotiations, 2011 was an interesting year. With Section 6 Negotiations commencing and the integration issues with AirTran at Southwest Airlines, there will be much to work through. Additionally, the challenges at Mesaba and the potential growth opportunities at other carriers, there will likewise be opportunities for our outstanding team to continue to excel in 2012. Please be sure to do your part this year by participating to help influence the best possible outcome for yourselves individually and our union collectively.

Alaska Contract Signed



By: Earl Clark, Region I Director

On December 1, 2011, AMFA and Alaska Airlines Representatives met in Seattle, WA to sign the five-year contract the Alaska membership ratified on November 15, 2011. This agreement was achieved after a year of negotiations with Alaska Airlines and before the amendable date of the old agreement.

This agreement includes a 7.1% pay increase that was retroactive back to October 17, 2011. The new rate of pay places the majority of our Alaska members as the second highest paid among commercial passenger carriers. Other highlights of the agreement include: annual pay increases for out years, with a annual wage review for possible additional percentage increases; job protection provision for all members employed as of October 17, 2011; reset caps on employee's premiums for their medical, dental and vision insurance; a vacation buy back program; and a long term contract commitment bonus.

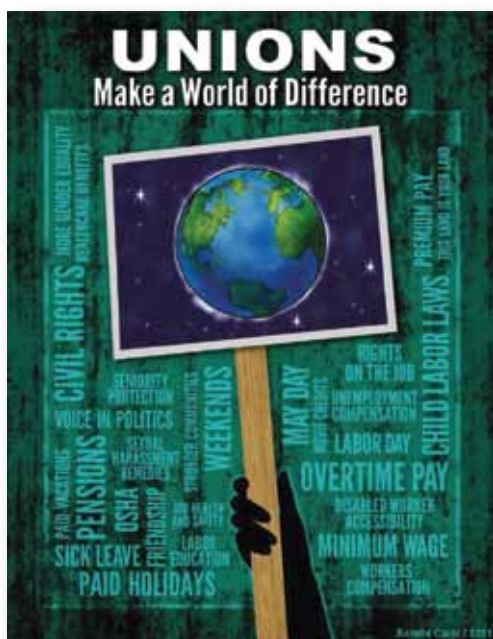


At the signing, pictured seated (from left): Louie Key, AMFA National Director; Earl Clark, AMFA Region I Director; Fred Mohr, Vice President of Maintenance & Engineering; and Shane Tackett, Vice President of Labor relations. Standing (from left): Bob Harnett, Director of Labor Relations Ground Operations; Mark Dahl, AMFA Local 32 Airline Representative; Kurt Kinder, Managing Director of Line Maintenance; Sonia Alvarado, Manager of Labor Services; Marie Underwood, Maintenance Division Controller; and Tim Cullen, AMFA Local 14 Airline Representative.

Member Tips



Member Tip: Eternal Vigilance is The Price of Liberty



Don't make the mistake of thinking that the existence of rights on a page somewhere means that you'll always be able to count on those protections. Rights that aren't exercised can in fact disappear over time; you can lose what you don't protect. So you need to know where your rights come from, and how to use your union to protect them. In practical terms, this means that when your employer breaks the rules, you need to make sure that your union steward knows about it. A steward's job is to be the "eyes and ears" of the union, but a steward can't be everywhere at once, and that's why individual members have the responsibility to be the steward's "eyes and ears." That way, the union/employer structures that are in place can be used to prevent changes for the worse in the day-to-day conditions of the workplace.

– Adapted from *The Union Members Complete Guide*,
By: Michael Mauer

Member Tip: Your Role in Organizing

There are two reasons for you to become personally involved in organizing activity outside of your workplace. First, a healthy, effective union is one in which the members pitch in to do the work, greatly increasing the people-resources of the union. Second, no matter how skilled professional union staff may be -- if there is one at all -- there is an extra measure of credibility when an already-organized employee speaks directly to an unorganized worker about day-to-day experiences. The successes of member-to-member organizing are clear: one study issued by the AFL-CIO, for example, documents that unions win representation elections in 73 percent of the organizing drives conducted by ordinary members but in only 17 percent of those conducted by professional staff.

– Adapted from *The Union Members Complete Guide*, By: Michael Mauer

AEI Congress – Istanbul, Turkey

By: Timothy Cullen, Local 14 ASA Airline Representative

I was honored to attend the AEI Congress in Istanbul, Turkey, as a delegate for the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association. The Congress was hosted by the Turkish Airlines Technicians Association, and I would like to thank Mustafa Colak Bucan for his gracious hospitality.

The Congress began on October 5, and concluded October 9, 2011. It was attended by delegates from 43 countries, and observers and guests from several more. This four day Congress covered a wide variety of topics that, even when they were specifically regarding European regulations, have a direct effect on, and are relevant to us. In addition to the presentation of minutes and reports of a standard meeting, the AEI Congress included a litany of presentations from various unions and organizations world-wide. I had the opportunity to give a comprehensive presentation on the FAA licensing system in the US, the Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP), and our continuing fight to improve standards. I concluded with a PowerPoint presentation on vendor errors and the use of unlicensed personnel.

Just a few of the other topics addressed were: AMFA National Safety and Standards Director Fred Digne was elected as the AEI Secretary of the Americas; reports on and by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), an update on the EASA/FAA meeting in Vienna; an update on the strike at Air France; an update on negotiation difficulties at Qantas; licensing requirements; outsourcing; and many more. While observing these presentations, it was clear that carries in foreign countries are battling the same issues that we are here in the United States with the FAA.



Aside from attending as a delegate, I was asked to answer one simple question from our National Executive Council and Local Officers: What do we get from our affiliation?

We get a connection with aircraft Technician/Engineer Union groups from around the world who share the same values as we do, and are prepared to act should any of our organization be threatened. With continued globalization, we are on the ground floor to influence regulations imposed by EASA and the FAA, and to effect changes that positively impact our membership. We have a wealth of knowledge regarding regulations, and



with the AEI affiliation we have the ability to make determinations on any potential rule change and act accordingly with multi-national support. We have an organization ready to assist with strikes and work actions. If we choose to actively participate, we have the ability to push our agenda on a global scale; but, we must participate. The current AEI dues are capped at 5000 euro (6439.00 as of this morning) per year, the actual cost is based on the headcount of licensed technicians.

The continued marginalization of our licenses on a global scale is extremely concerning. We have active license mills that churn out A&P certificates like so much confetti. With the past attempts to change licensing requirements to something more similar to the European standard, we must be diligent as we move forward and actively engage all regulatory agencies to insure the best outcome for our future and the safety of the flying public. The corporations that we work for have little dedication to our class and craft. They would gladly sell off our jobs for corporate profit by farming out our work, and hiding behind statistics.

I shall end this by conveying to you the mantra that I carried home from this meeting: Solidarity knows no border. Language and cultural differences do not overshadow the common bond that we have as Aircraft Maintenance Technicians. This is but an overview of the Congress, and I invite anyone who has additional questions to contact me directly at tcullen@amfa14.org.



ASAP in the Courts?



By: Fred Digne, National Safety and Standards Director

The Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) continues to be the center of controversy as individual stakeholders re-interpret the program to satisfy their own agenda and mechanics are progressively finding themselves in an unfair position as their exposure to discipline or litigation increases. More specifically, the interpretation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and its guidance vary immensely. While carriers and the FAA continue to test the boundaries of the MOU's language by enforcing "disciplinary action," attorneys and their plaintiffs have successfully convinced the courts that confidential reports are not immune to litigation and should be admissible in court.

ASAP reports are routinely sought in litigation following aviation accidents while airlines, pilot unions, and other organizations in the industry vigorously fight to protect the information from being disclosed for fear of stifling the voluntary reporting process. Despite the emphasis on confidentiality and the recognition by the FAA of the confidential nature of these reports, courts have generally been reluctant to recognize an unqualified privilege that completely protects ASAP reports from discovery in litigation.

Most recently, I was contacted by one of our ASAP representatives concerning a case that was being heard in federal court. The attorney asked for, "All documents that showed evidence, relating or referring to any and all ASAP reports submitted by technicians." The carrier objected to this document request, and so the attorney sought an order from the court requiring the carrier to produce the requested documents. The judge ruled that the carrier must produce ASAP reports submitted by technicians who have submitted three or more ASAP reports, whether accepted or rejected by the ASAP ERC, during a specific period.

On behalf of all AMFA members I consulted with our attorneys, and together we quickly drafted a response objecting to the disclosure of any reports and argued that the disclosure of ASAP reports to litigants would contradict the intent of Congress as expressed in 49 U.S.C. 40123 and the intent and goals of the FAA as expressed in both 14 CFR 193 and FAA Order 8000.82. Furthermore, we strongly expressed that the admission of ASAP reports would have far reaching implications and consequences not just at AMFA represented carriers but for the entire industry, and the admission will adversely affect the safety reporting benefits the program has proven to provide.

In the end, it was determined that the carrier would produce redacted documents in which all identifying information had been removed to the extent that they will provide no discernable information as to the identity of the submitter, dates of the events, location of events, or aircraft identifiers. We are keeping a close eye on this as we continue to fight for the rights of our members, and to protect the integrity of the ASAP program pursuant to the MOU.

Member Tip



Member Tip: Talkin' Union

One of your union steward's responsibilities is to greet new employees and fill them in on the union. But as a rank-and-file member you can help out very effectively by making a point of talking to newly hired workers about your own personal experiences with the union. Having the union talked up by someone who is not a union official can go a long way toward showing members that the union is "us," not some separate organization. Your role as an unofficial union ambassador is perhaps even more critical outside the workplace, where there are a lot of popular misconceptions about what unions are and what they do.

– Adapted from *The Union Members Complete Guide*,
By: Michael Mauer



2012 Dues Objector Notice

Federal law requires that the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) notify all AMFA represented employees annually of its dues objector procedures. These procedures require that you notify AMFA between January 1 and February 15, 2012, if you intend to be a dues objector for that year. Dues objector requests received either before or after these dates will not be accepted and you will not have dues objector status for that year.

Dues objectors are required to pay only the portion of dues that is germane to collective bargaining, including, but not limited to, grievance adjustment and contract administration. The non-germane percentage of dues is set annually by June 1 and is based on an independent CPA's verification of germane/ non-germane expenses for the prior year. A compilation of 2010 expenses was conducted, and the fees paid by dues objectors in 2011 were 98.81% percent of full membership dues.

If a dues objector disagrees with the calculation of the percentage of the reduction, the policy allows for an appeal before an independent arbitrator. Costs of the arbitrator are paid by the Association. Objectors bear the costs of presenting their appeal.

It is important to know that if you elect to become a dues objector you will no longer be entitled to the rights and privileges of membership, including, but not limited to, the right to hold a National or Local office, vote in National or Local elections, attend union meetings, participate in contract negotiations, or vote on a contract ratification. We suggest you consider these restrictions before deciding whether or not you wish to become a dues objector. To receive more information on filing for dues objector status, please call the AMFA National Office at: (303) 752-2632 or write to: AMFA National Office 14001 E. Iliff Ave, Suite 217, Aurora, CO 80014.

Member Tips



Member Tip: The Steps of a Grievance

Before just about any workplace complaint is put into writing, as a formal grievance, an attempt should be made to work through the problem at the lowest level. Even if your contract's grievance procedure doesn't specifically call for an informal oral step to start out with, you and/or your union steward should talk to a supervisor in an attempt to clear up any misunderstandings, or to resolve any disagreement. This is almost always a good idea, in part because once a complaint is committed to writing, parties' positions tend to harden. And even if an informal attempt to address a problem does not in fact resolve it, it generally has the beneficial effect of clarifying what the problem is and how the parties may see it differently. But if informal attempts don't work, the next step consists of formally putting the grievance in writing. Generally the idea is simply to lay out, at least in general terms, that an identified action taken by the employer is being challenged, and that certain relief is sought. Your contract booklet itself may contain a sample form to be used to initiate a grievance. One or more face-to-face meetings take place following the filing of a formal written grievance. At these meetings, the union and the employer representatives try to hash out whether they agree on what the facts are, whether the contract has in fact been violated, and if so, what it will take to resolve the grievance.

– Adapted from *The Union Members Complete Guide*, By: Michael Mauer

Member Tip: The Law and Union Membership

Because of actions taken by state legislatures, twenty-two states -- in the South, Midwest and Southwest -- are "right to work" states. This commonly used term is actually quite misleading since the "right" given by these laws is not in any sense the right to be employed. Rather, those working in a "right to work" state have the "right" to enjoy some of the benefits of union protection without paying a cent for them.

– Adapted from *The Union Members Complete Guide*,
By: Michael Mauer



Why do you Need a Union?



By: Steven Nowak,
National Secretary/Treasurer

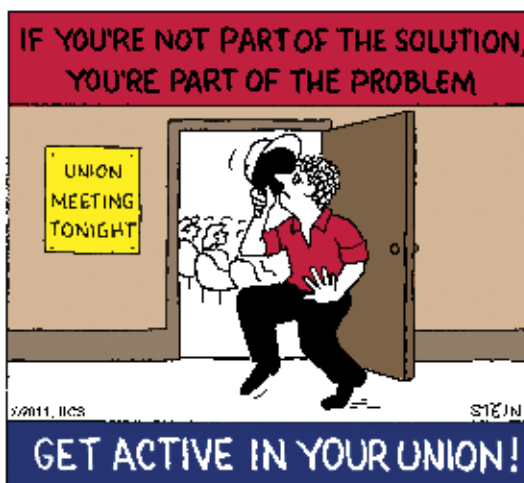
By definition a Union is: An organization of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members' interests in respect to wages, benefits, and working conditions. Unions provide workers the ability to collectively bargain to set things like: wages, work rules, vacation, benefits, etc... These things and many more become part of a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) also known as a contract.

Without a Union:

- **There is no contract!** Even if you previously had a contract, it means nothing without a Union to enforce it.
- Work rules, wages and benefits are all **subject to change** at the employer's sole discretion. Some of the biggest complaints from non-union represented employees revolve around favoritism to certain employees when it comes to wages, job assignment, etc.
- You are an **"at will" employee** with no recourse or representation if you are disciplined or terminated.

In the airline industry, unions are made up of members of a particular craft and class, which is determined by the National Mediation Board (NMB). Industrial unions will represent any and all crafts. On the other hand, there are craft unions, like AMFA, that will represent only a specific craft and are focused on the needs of their specific members.

As an Aircraft Mechanic, there is no better choice for a Union than **AMFA!**



AMFA Files for Representation Election at Horizon Air



On Tuesday, January 17, 2012, the AMFA Horizon Air Organizing Committee filed with the National Mediation Board (NMB) for an election. A majority of the Horizon Air Mechanics have submitted cards to AMFA; we now await word from the NMB on the schedule of the vote. We are excited about the potential opportunity for the Horizon Mechanics to once again be represented by AMFA.

Go Horizon Air!

AMFA National

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