

PCN Services – High Life *Newsletter, News, Events, Deaths, Illness Notices & PCN Ads & Calendar.* Note: Notices from major sections are distributed by separate email address to allow our subscribers the ability to customize and filter notices not desired.

*Large web community for one of world's largest airlines*

# High Life

facebook

For all Delta people who have truly touched the *High Life!*

SLC on final 34L.

## Pilot Communication Net - Group Section.....

**Dear PCN** (of over 2500 subscribers),

### Mark's Remarks

Hope all Veterans had a great day on Friday!!!

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Please remember, those interested in just **one or two** services from the PCN may limit one-two or all, completely as you wish. If you have forgotten how to customize your notices received please read below for a review:

FAQ's **16.** Can I limit **the type** of emails that I get from the group? **Yes. We purposely use separate email accounts for different types of notices and consistent title words in the subject line.** For example "Death Notice" from the "PCN Illness Mgr" for Illness notices. If one didn't want to receive those emails in your inbox, the control is completely yours. We cannot stop all our notices from going out. But you can very easily set your incoming message rules to place notices with certain "subjects" or from certain addresses to be placed in a folder of your choice, including the trash bin. Ie. PCN will appear in every subject line. You may direct messages that have PCN Illness Notice to a particular folder or even the trash folder.

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Published FAQ's:

We used to have a page on our Google Group's site that contained our FAQ's. As most of you know Google has suspended pages from groups so now we exclusively use our group for one thing only which is distributing and archiving email notices.

That leaves our FAQs without access and not online until now. I have re-published them on our PCN website at this URL: <http://pcn.homestead.com/FAQs.html>

Note: All the various links to our FAQ's will be updated shortly.

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Email sent to new interested subscribers:

Dear

Thanks for your interest in the PCN an online community of over 2500 retired Delta pilots, survivors, and employees. I want to get you signed up and on the list but first may I ask you to help me out. We protect our membership and need to know just a little *behind* the email address so we request of everyone who joins to "signup" with our brief online form. So please signup by clicking the link below.

Click: [Sign Up](#)

Secondly, we use Google Groups to distribute our email notices so in response to your signup, expect an INVITE to join our PCN Google Group. That simply involves "accepting" the invitation like you would with a Facebook invite by clicking on the link. In addition, Google group will ask you to "verify" (not changing) your email address by clicking on a link also. Once done you will be part of our Google Group email distribution list and receive email notices.

Note: we use separate email addresses like the following for our notices:

[mark@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:mark@pilotcommunication.net) - High Life newsletter

[misc@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:misc@pilotcommunication.net) - for news flashes, and special notices

[death@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:death@pilotcommunication.net) - for death notices and death notice updates

[illness@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:illness@pilotcommunication.net) - for illness notices and updates

[pcn.calendare@gmail.com](mailto:pcn.calendare@gmail.com) - for calendar event notices

These separate email addresses are purposely used so that you can choose to "block" any notices not wanted.

If you desire all PCN notices than simply assure that your email filter accepts all emails from the domain of @pilotcommunication.net. That assures that we will be handled as friendly when your inbox receives our notices.

Thanks again for connecting and staying connected with this extraordinary pilot group.

**Mark**

Mark Sztanyo, PCN Dir

[mark@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:mark@pilotcommunication.net)

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### Tools for our members:

PCN Main Website: <http://pcn.homestead.com/home01.html>  
PCN Google Group archives: <http://groups.google.com/group/PilotCommunicationNet>  
PCN Ads — <http://pilotcommunication.net/Ads/> *Updates temporarily suspended*  
PCN Tool Bar (for IE browser) - <http://pcntools.ourtoolbar.com/>  
PCN Calendar - <http://pcn.homestead.com/Calendar.html>  
PCN specific emails: [misc@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:misc@pilotcommunication.net)  
[pcn.calendar@gmail.com](mailto:pcn.calendar@gmail.com)  
[signup@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:signup@pilotcommunication.net)  
[illness@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:illness@pilotcommunication.net)  
[death@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:death@pilotcommunication.net)  
[ads@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:ads@pilotcommunication.net)  
[mark@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:mark@pilotcommunication.net)

## News Section.....

**Delta News** (Recent stories of interest): [Yahoo](#), [AJC](#)

**From:** [Michael Magon](#)

**Date:** 11/12/11 03:13:44

**To:** [Mark Sztanyo](#)

**Subject:** Delta closing Memphis pilot domicile

From the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*

## Delta to Close Memphis Pilot Base

Memphis will lose its Delta pilot base by the end of 2012, sending about 200 Memphis-based pilots to Delta's other bases. It will be the first time in at least 25 years that the airport's hub carrier hasn't had a pilot base in the city, and some say further evidence of Delta's long-term plan for a diminished Memphis hub. Delta has ramped down flying from the Memphis hub since last spring, reducing passenger capacity by 8-10 percent and total flights by 25 percent. It's part of a plan to eliminate routes that aren't profitable at higher fuel prices. Delta's other U.S. pilot bases are at Atlanta, Cincinnati, Detroit, Los Angeles, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York City, Salt Lake City and Seattle.

*Following is the most recent Advance Entitlement Bid that did the damage:*

**Subject:** other stuff

Latest bid came out yesterday (11/09/11). We have a net 0 advancements, with 362 each of advancements and displacements. With this one, MEM is done. The 9s were being retired anyway, and with the slot swap in NYC, they are funding the new category of 320s there from MEM. In case you're curious, here are the numbers.

#### Vacancies

ATL765CAPT 2  
ATL330CAPT 39  
ATL7ERCAPT 25  
ATL320CAPT 19  
ATLM88CAPT 5  
ATL330F/O 39  
ATL320 F/O 25

LAX73NCAPT 5

MSPM88CAPT 20

NYC765CAPT 4  
NYC7ERCAPT 15  
NYC73NCAPT 10  
NYC320CAPT 53  
NYC320F/O 54  
NYCM88F/O 32

SEA7ERCAPT 10

SLC73NCAPT 5

#### Surpluses

ATL777CAPT 15  
ATL767CAPT 50  
ATL777F/O 10  
ATL767F/O 50

DTW744CAPT 6  
DTW744F/O 20

MEM320CAPT 73  
MEMDC9CAPT 26  
MEM320F/O 85  
MEMDC9F/O 27

## American Pilots Union Says Talks End for Week Without Agreement

By Mary Jane Credeur - Nov 12, 2011 12:01 AM ETSat Nov 12 05:01:00 GMT 2011

[American Airlines](#)' pilots union said talks on a new contract recessed for the weekend, after bargaining that was both "productive" and "discouraging."

Leaders for the [Allied Pilots Association](#) will take a break until Monday, Tom Hoban, a union spokesman, said yesterday. Union members received an update on the negotiations with [AMR Corp.](#) ([AMR](#))'s American in an e-mail.

Both parties said earlier this week that an agreement could be near. They have been negotiating a new contract for more than five years.

"Our team began the week with a goal of getting a tentative agreement into the hands of our pilots," Sue Gordon, an AMR spokeswoman, said in an e-mail. "We've made significant movement to meet pilots' interests in virtually all contract areas."

Pilots and management still have "gaps" in their proposals for compensation, domestic code-sharing, phased-in productivity, pension for new hires, sick time and vacation, the APA said in the note to members.

"Talks were productive in some respects, as we narrowed the gap on issues that are close to agreement, such as the daily filling of open time and a new premium pay structure," APA said in the e-mail. "But they have been discouraging in other ways, as senior management is still entrenched in their desire for more domestic codesharing exceptions" and substandard pay.

The [Fort Worth](#), Texas-based airline is proposing pay raises of 3.2 percent in the first year and 1 percent in each of the next three years, while proposals for work rules amount to a \$100 million reduction in annual costs, APA said in the e-mail to its 10,000 members.

The APA board has a meeting starting on Nov. 15, and the negotiating committee plans to take a break during the week of the Thanksgiving holiday, the e-mail said.

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## This Interview Exposes What United's CEO Doesn't Get About Customer Service

### BUSINESS

**INSIDER** By Kim Bhasin | Business Insider – Fri, Nov 11, 2011 11:50 AM EST

Just because something is cheap, doesn't mean it has to suck. That's something the airline industry doesn't seem to get.

[Airlines have changed immensely](#) in the past decade, and with each shift, it seems its image just keeps getting worse and worse.

And these [statements by United CEO Jeff Smisek](#) show exactly why, from a recent AP interview:

*Q: A lot of people love to hate the airlines. Do they expect too much from you?*

*A: We're in the business of getting people safely from point A to point B, on time, with their underwear. That's what we do for a living and we are really good at it. The mental image people have of the glamour of flying was when flying was unaffordable. When I was a child, I didn't fly - we couldn't afford to fly. Flying was for rich people. Today, flying is for everybody.*

*Q: Is there anything that will make airfare pricing less complicated?*

*A: No. I think what you're going to see is more choice. And choice can become complex.*

Flying may be for everybody, but does everybody have to be treated like a herd of cattle in order to experience it? That's why people hate flying, and that's one of many reasons the airlines are getting massacred. Flying doesn't have to be glamorous, but it has to be human, and customers have to be acknowledged that their experience matters.

Read more: <http://finance.yahoo.com/news/This-Interview-Exposes-What-siliconalley-3401362853.html?x=0&l=1>

**Finance Section** ((Claims, PBGC, HCTC, Insurance, Planning, Tax, Estate) - section containing items with financial consequence to our group)):

**From:** [jim munton](#)

**Date:** 11/3/2011 11:42:41 PM

**To:** [Mark Sztanyo](#)

**Subject:** 04 Nov 2011 - 2007 Amended Return Update

Mark...Would you please publish this update in your next PCN...thanks, jim munton

04 November 2011

### 2007 AMENDED RETURN UPDATE

About three weeks ago I met with Bill Whalen and requested an update. Whalen advised me that his doctors told him that stress is the worst thing he could do in his open heart surgery recovery; therefore, he was going

to postpone the IRS lawsuit he had planned for all his clients until at least the end of January 2012, or possibly a couple of months past that date depending on the statute of limitations issue. I told Whalen that if this was the plan he had to follow, it was imperative that he communicate his plan with his client group. Whalen said he would do that. At this time, he has not accomplished any communication with the pilot group.

In the past I've mentioned Merrily Probst/Whalen (Bill Whalen's ex-wife – they met when they both worked for the IRS on the same audit committee). Merrily realizes the problems that Bill's health issues has caused and has offered to help. She has most of the records from the inception of this project. She is working with IRS Advocates (you can GOOGLE for more information on them) to get a resolution for those who have not yet won their IRS cases. It is her understanding that if this issue is won with the IRS Advocates she will be able to present the cases of all other pilots in the same position (including those pilots who aren't Whalen clients).

I realize this is not the ideal way to handle the situation, but Bill's unexpected health issues created anything but an ideal situation. It should also be noted that Merrily has advised me that she is not getting paid by Bill for this effort, so she will be doing this along with her regular accounting practice workload. She has authorized me to give out her email address so that pilots can communicate with her ( [merrily3@cox.net](mailto:merrily3@cox.net) ).

This is the email Merrily sent to me after our telecom. She informed me that...

*" I have two cases (one on East coast and one on the West coast) that I am going (sic) work with IRS Advocates who are trying to get a resolution to the cases. My position will be that the 1040 treatment should be triggered by the 843 (which should cover those whose 1040X's didn't get filed). Everyone's issue is the same and if I can resolve these I think we can get all of them settled without a lawsuit... Tell them please be patient, that I know their problem is important, and that I am going to do my very best to protect their interest. If they have not already sent the copies of the IRS correspondence please send me one of the copies they received (the IRS usually sends 2 copies) to: PO Box 751150, Las Vegas, NV 89136-1150."*

We are continuing to win pilot 2007 Amended IRS Return cases, but at a slower pace than before.

Jim Munton

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### **Remaining financial items for retirees to watch:**

After Aug 2007 these are retirement items remaining with financial consequence.

1. PBGC 2nd look re-calc at qualified annuity benefits - **completed 8/24/07**
2. PBGC make up lump payment for underpayments since termination: **most reported received 1/31/08**
3. ~~Final claim distribution by DAL through BSI~~ – distributed at or around Mar 23, 2011.
4. Class Action suit against DAL concerning 5 yr look back worth in excess of \$100 million - **withdrawn**
5. Appeal of Final Benefit Determination Letters (BDL's) PBGC re-calc "determination" of qualified annuity (likely after claim stock sale) – **in process until end of year (only 45 days to appeal) Appeal extensions generally granted in Nov 2010 now extended by our law firm for all to: revised to Feb 18, 2011 Now Mar 18, 2011, April 29, 2011, July 29, 2011, Aug 29, 2011, Filed with PBGC on Oct 28, 2011**
6. Pension reinstatement/contribution request by DP3 representing the retired pilots. **very long shot....pending**
7. Roth IRA creation as per Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008—deadline June 22nd, 2009
8. Expiration of HCTC 80% premium subsidy will expire on December 31, 2010. ~~Action has continued 80% for Jan & Feb. Action expired and subsidy effective Mar 2011 is now back to 65%.~~

9. Financial condition of the D&S Plan--a plan that pays benefits to eligible survivors of deceased pilots as well as to disabled pilots. A form 5500 for the D&S Plan is filed annually.

10. Formation of a VEBA Health Insurance plan by DP3 – VEBA has been created and in effect.

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## **Insurance** (issues about health, life or disability that are of interest):

**From:** [Yorkieatl@aol.com](mailto:Yorkieatl@aol.com)

**Date:** 11/10/2011 8:32:44 PM

**To:** [yorkieatl@aol.com](mailto:yorkieatl@aol.com)

**Subject:** News off DeltaNet ... open enrollment, verify your info, 1-800-MyDelta...

Open Enrollment is your opportunity to enroll in or change your health and insurance coverage.

### **Q. With Benefits Enrollment now open, I want the same benefits for 2012 that I had in 2011. If I don't make a new election for 2012 coverage, will my current election roll over to next year?**

A. Generally, yes, you will default to your current coverage, or the plan most similar to what you have today, if you do not make an active election during Open Enrollment. Exceptions to this include flexible spending account and health savings account contribution elections (available only to active employees). These contributions do not automatically continue and must be elected each year.

### **Benefits Open Enrollment period has started**

The Open Enrollment period for 2012 healthcare and other benefits is open until 11:59 p.m. ET on Nov. 18. This will be the only opportunity for employees to elect 2012 benefit coverage for medical, dental, vision, flexible spending accounts, optional disability insurance, and life and accident insurance.

All the necessary enrollment tools and resources are available online at the 2012 Open Enrollment Headquarters site. See the link on the DeltaNet home page. Information includes the 2012 Benefits Enrollment On the Horizon magazine, which notes any 2012 benefit changes and enhancements, healthcare premiums and other enrollment resources such as a schedule of meetings for active employees and information about planning tools.

"Despite the cost pressures on our business, we continue to invest in Delta people," said Rob Kight, v.p. - Compensation, Benefits and Resources. "Enhancements to our benefit options for 2012 include an improved approach to the clinical programs and services offered as part of your benefit coverage through UnitedHealthcare. Also, a new option is available to eligible active employees who are retired from a branch of the military."

Other changes for 2012 include some premium increases that will help offset the rising cost of providing these benefits while maintaining a competitive total compensation package. Also, some changes will occur to medical benefits as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as healthcare reform, Rob said.

Active and inactive employees may access the Health Plan Evaluator containing their updated 2012 health



plan information and personalized UnitedHealthcare claims data from May 1, 2010 through April 30, 2011, if available. To access the Health Plan Evaluator, click on Health Plan Evaluator from the Planning Tools page of the 2012 Open Enrollment Headquarters site.

Employees who have questions about Open Enrollment may contact the Employee Service Center at 1-800-MY-DELTA (1-800-693-3582), between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Please update your personal info (FYI...former WAL retirees with MN PPR #s are still limited and cannot access some self service functions in DeltaNet .... you are and remain to be very "special" ... paper forms are your friend!)

### **Q. Why do I have to e-Verify?**

A. All active employees based in the U.S. and U.S. territories, with hire dates after Nov. 6, 1986, need to complete the E-Verify process. As a condition of our federal contracts, and due to many upcoming state-mandated regulatory requirements, Delta is required to use E-Verify which electronically verifies the accuracy of personal information and validates documents required to work in the U.S. Compliance with the E-Verify government-mandated program. This includes validating the name on file with Delta is accurate and matches the government-issued documents and also requires the completion an electronic Form I-9.

### **Retirees and Survivors: Delta needs your email address!**

To receive important company information by email complete the Retiree and Survivor Email Address form below to send us your personal email address. You can also add or update your personal email address by completing the Permanent Address & Other Information transaction on Employee Self-Service (ESS).

Employee Self Service is the best method for updating personal information because ESS updates your HR records automatically overnight. However, a Delta Passport Password is required to access ESS, TravelNet and other important Delta information. If you do not have a Passport Password one will be created for you. Additional information will be mailed to your home address regarding this process. Delta will never share your personal information or email address.

### **IMPORTANT: COMING DECEMBER 1**

**Dependents:** Beginning December 1, all active and inactive domestic employees and retirees must certify their current relationship with dependents on file in Delta HR systems.

**My Buddy:** Beginning December 1, all active and inactive domestic employees and retirees must certify they understand and agree to follow Buddy Pass policy.

**Electronic Communication:** Beginning December 1, elect to go "paperless" and receive certain communications electronically.

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### **How to Contact 1-800 MY DELTA**

- A. Dial 1-800 MY DELTA (1-800-693-3582). For international access: 1-404-677-8000.
- B. Press 1 for Travel Line for flight listings and availability.
- C. Press 2 if you are a Delta employee, retiree or survivor.
- D. Enter your PPR (9-digit Passport ID/Delta employee number) and press, #
- E. Enter your 4-digit birth month and day (mm/dd) and press, #
- F. Select the desired topic from the following list:

Press 1) Speak to a provider (Fidelity, SHPSCOBR A, UHC etc.)

- 2) Retirement process questions
- 3) Pass Travel questions
- 4) Insurance or dependent questions
- 5) Pension check, W2 or 1099
- 6) Report the death of a Retiree
- 7) Employee Care Fund
- 8) Employment verification
- 9) Other benefits

Contact 1-800 MY DELTA via email at [esc.delta@delta.com](mailto:esc.delta@delta.com) Allow up to 5 business days for a response.  
ESC hours: Mon-Fri 8am to 5pm Eastern Standard Time, except holidays.

### **1-800 MY DELTA Submenu Prompts**

Speak to a Provider

- Press 1- Medical benefits and claim status (UHC, DALRC, BC/BS -PRIOR TO 2010, all others)
- 2- Dental benefits and claim status (Delta Dental, Cigna, MetLife -PRIOR TO 2010, all others)
- 3- Vision benefits and claim status (Davis Vision, UHC, all others)
- 4- COBRA managed by SHPS
- 5- Disability or workers compensation
- 6- Fidelity (401k)

### **Pass Travel**

- Press 1- TravelNet logon assistance
- 2- Travel dependents assistance
- 3- Travel billing, employee award travel, all other inquiries

### **Other Benefits**

- Press 1- Adoption assistance
- 2- Employee Care Fund
- 3- Expatriate or relocation

## **Pension:**

*Additional PBGC Appeal - Interest?*

**From:** [Denis Waldron](#)

**Date:** 11/13/2011 12:13:02 AM

**To:** [Mark Sztanyo](#)

**Subject:** Newsletter item submission

Mark - This is a submission for your next newsletter:

The majority members of the DP3 Board of Trustees are not affected by the PBGC 3 year lookback (retired outside the window or normal age 60), and have decided not to spend resources to directly appeal the added penalties for false ages and years of service. This three year lookback was put in place, in the original law, to keep nearly bankrupt companies from **improving** PBGC insured retirement plans in anticipation of bankruptcy – not to add false penalties. When I asked DP3 to take up my personal appeal on the issue, they declined but I did get this from them: “*DP3 welcomes any additional appeals and arguments that may be presented to the PBGC by other parties. . . We look forward to hearing the conclusions reached by your legal team. . . and we hope you are successful in your appeals*”. Contrary to popular opinion and many mentions on the DP3 website they only appealing "actuarial equivalence" which is a relatively small change to use the time value of money as a difference from actual retirement dates to 3 years prior to DOPT. The three year lookback bases your retirement on your years of service and age as of 9/1/2003 if you retired under age 60 after that. This is a huge cut in expected benefits via false years of earlier retirement/ years of service penalties, and a large cost savings for the PBGC. Whatever is lost by those of us inside the 3 year lookback flows into the excess PC5 which is split between ALL active and retired pilots along with the PBGC.

Prior DP3 Board Trustee, Bud Musser, resigned last January 1st over this decision not to appeal the 3 year added penalties, among the other published reasons. It is my contention that the lookbacks are meant only to remove contractual improvements, and not to apply false penalties. Thousands of us are so affected, and I did personally appeal it since it means \$475/month to me – see here: <http://ygtbsm2.informe.com/viewtopic.php?t=2618> . DP3 has a chart in their white paper (found here - <http://www.dp3.org/data/PBGC%20whitepaper%20executive%20summary.pdf> ) on the top of the second page showing the breakdown. You can figure out your individual loss by using DP3's calculator (found here:

<http://www.dp3.org/BenefitCalculator/BenefitCalculatorLite.aspx> ) to see what they say you might get back if they are successful – the difference between your previously earned qualified pension is what you lose to the 3 year lookback. Note that if actual retirement ages are someday considered instead of the age on 9/1/2003, it should move those who were between age 50 - 53 on DOPT back into the PC3 group.

I am hereby soliciting to see if there would be interest from others who would economically support hiring an additional/ parallel experienced law firm to argue this before the PBGC Appeals Board, and then possibly litigate the issue if/when the appeal is turned down. The lead attorney from a law firm familiar with related issues replied to my inquiry with the following: “***To conduct an initial review of the issues you outline, and render a preliminary opinion, we would require a retainer agreement. In terms of rendering a preliminary opinion, we might agree to a capped fee after I have had time to consult with my colleagues.***” I suggest an initial \$200 commitment from those who approve of this attempt to see if the level of interest would be high enough to engage this firm. This would be in addition to whatever you have paid or will pay to DP3. DP3 has in their FAQ's that the PBGC has stated that whatever appeals are won will be applied globally and not just to those who filed either consolidated or personal appeals. If we were to one day succeed in having our **actual** retirement ages and years of service used in PBGC benefit calculations, it would apply to everyone affected regardless whether they help offset the cost of professional help. That is why we have to see if the committed level of participation is great enough to proceed. More organizational work will only follow if there are enough commitments, so also consider helping there.

It will help if this solicitation is forwarded to others who might like to join such an effort. Please commit via posting or Private Messages via this board:

<http://ygtbsm2.informe.com/viewtopic.php?p=20814#20814>

Or send a note to this email address: [ralphbusdriver@gmail.com](mailto:ralphbusdriver@gmail.com) (spelled out to avoid spam-bots from picking it up).

As the PBGC appeals progresses the sensitivity of the information does as well. While the PCN has re-published many of DP3 general postings, we will refrain from re-publishing "private emails" in view of the nature of the process. So when there is a general update we will re-publish and when there is a private email we will help announce its existence.

To PCN subscribers these links are "hot" and will take you directly to the DP3 resource page or checklist for filing an appeal concerning your PBGC benefits.

Click for **Appeal info:**

<http://www.dp3.org/>

Call PBGC in DC- 1-800-400-7242

Link of explanation for BSW ([Benefit Statement Worksheet](#))

(Note: Must know your DP3 assigned passwords which cannot be shared in our newsletter!)

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## Commercial Section.....

**Investment** (Legitimate firms that have helped our group are encouraged to contact PCN to add articles here):

**Travel & Non-Revving** (share a quick reco):

UAL retirees don't appreciate their 800 VAC passes they'll still get! Poor things, now they can see what we've been encountering. Thank goodness for "fly confirmed for even less".

# United Airlines changes standby policy for retired workers

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**From:** [DWSkierven@aol.com](mailto:DWSkierven@aol.com)

**Date:** 11/13/2011 9:02:26 PM

**Subject:** Fwd: shopping for air fares

## The Airfare Money-Saving Bible

By [George Hobica](#)

Published November 12, 2011

It used to be all so simple, back when airfares changed so infrequently that airlines actually printed them on their schedules. You'd call your favorite travel agent to find the [best deal](#), pack your bags and jet off. And there were only two kinds of fares: coach and first class.

Now, with airfares changing, literally by the second, and an alphabet soup of different offers, finding the "best" deal is a challenge.

### Related Stories

[8 Questions You'd Love to Ask an Airline Gate Agent](#)

[10 Ways to Not Be an Annoying Airline Passenger](#)

[Five Cheap Ways to Fly First Class](#)

This step-by-step guide will get you ready for takeoff.

**Sign up for free airfare alerts:** Why do all the work hunting down a low airfare yourself when you can have someone else do it for free? Many airfare search and listing sites, such as [TripAdvisor.com/flights](#), [Travelocity.com](#), [Hotwire.com](#), [Bing.com/travel](#) and, of course, [Airfarewatchdog.com](#) offer e-mail airfare alerts when prices go down. This chart compares many of the leading airfare alert sites. (By the way, only Airfarewatchdog lists fares on Southwest Airlines).

**Learn about sales on Twitter:** Because some of the best unadvertised airfare sales last only a few hours (even if they're good for travel over a long period), even the best-intentioned email alert can be too late. The beauty of Twitter is that it's instantaneous. Many airlines and alert sites now tweet this deals instead of emailing them.

**Get e-mail from your airlines:** Next: Sign up for e-mails and frequent flyer [programs](#). Airlines are trying to woo customers to book directly with them by offering special deals when you subscribe. Sign up for emails from foreign-based airlines and from U.S.-based carriers.

**Next step: are you a flexible travel date flyer?** Doesn't really matter when you go as long as it's cheap? Some [websites offer](#) flexible date search up to 330 days ahead; others (mostly those powered by a company called ITA Software) only do searches in 30-day increments. Read more about flexible travel date searching. These sites can be helpful if your dates are set, but you also might want to try "meta search" sites such as [Kayak.com](#), [Tripadvisor.com/Flights](#) and [Momondo.com](#). Warning: None of them include Southwest's fares, however, or fares on the smaller but growing Allegiant Airlines.

**"Meta search" vs. online travel agency:** So what's the difference? For one thing, [online travel](#) agencies such as Expedia have toll-free numbers with agents standing by to help you book or re-book a flight; meta-search sites don't. But there are many other differences. Airline websites sometimes have the best fares. Increasingly, airlines aren't sharing their very best fares with third-party sites such as Kayak. Case in point: recent fares to London from the West Coast for \$420 round-trip including tax that were only available on Spanish [airline](#) Iberia's website (similar fares were twice that elsewhere). So once you've found a fare, definitely check airline sites directly.

**Watch out for promo codes:** From time to time, you'll receive promo codes in your e-mail because you signed up for e-mail from your favorite airlines and online travel agencies. These codes can only be redeemed if you book directly on the airlines' websites, another way they try to cut out the middleman. ([Airfarewatchdog](#) lists any promo codes we find on the AirfarewatchBlog).

**When to use your miles:** Rather than cashing in 25,000 or even 50,000 miles for a domestic economy class ticket that might have cost you \$250 or \$300, why not splurge for a trip to Europe (50,000 miles on some airlines) that might cost many times more? Or upgrade your \$400 economy class seat to a \$2,800 business class fare for 30,000 miles on domestic routes? A general rule: if the economy class fare is \$400 or more, spending 25,000 miles is a good deal. Less than that, you might be better offering paying cash and saving your miles.

**Getting the best last-minute airfares:** You'll often get the best fares if you book at least 7 to 21 days ahead of departure. Otherwise, your best bet is [Priceline.com](#)'s "Name your own price" feature or [Hotwire.com](#). Also take a look at [Lastminute.com](#) which packages last minute airfares with hotel and rental car deals -- sometimes for less than what you'd pay for airfare alone.

**When to use a real live travel agent:** As good as do-it-yourself online sources can be, your friendly neighborhood travel agent may have some tricks up her sleeve to save you money. Let's say, for example, that you get an airfare alert that fares from Houston to Honolulu are \$800 round-trip. But who knew that Dallas to Honolulu, same dates, is \$300? Or that you can fly from Houston to Dallas for \$100 and connect onward? A savvy travel agent.

**Getting a refund when the fare drops after you buy:** Several domestic U.S. airlines will give you a full refund, in the form of a voucher good for future travel, if the airfare drops between the time you buy and time you fly -- if and only if you fly on the same itinerary. Find details in this chart.

**Factor in the fees:** A low fare on one airline could turn out to be not so low once fees are added on. Airlines are making most of their profits these days not from selling you airfares but with all those fees for baggage and other perks. In addition to checked bag fees (chart) there are even fees for using your frequent flyer miles and for other services such as changing a travel date or bringing a pet on board.

**Is there a "magic" hour or day to buy?** In a word, no. It's true that the airlines' weekend deals come out Monday to Wednesday, and some airlines announce their sales early in the week, but if you limit yourself to searching just on those days, you'll miss out. A good fare can pop up any moment of the week.

**Best days to travel:** Although a low airfare can appear at any time, one thing's for certain: it's cheaper to fly on a Tuesday or Wednesday. Saturday is also a low-fare day. If traveling internationally, Monday to Wednesday is often the sweet spot.

**Airfare predictions:** Speaking of "when to buy," [Bing.com/travel](#) purports to offer accurate airfare predictions, indicating whether the site thinks a fare will go up or down, and it's certainly worth a try, but it's not always accurate. To see if an airfare is currently on the high or low side, do a web search for "historic airfares" to see airfare trends on a particular route. Two useful sites: [Farereport.com](#) and [Kayak.com/trends](#).

*George Hobica is a syndicated travel journalist and founder of the low-airfarelisting site [Airfarewatchdog.com](#). Follow Airfarewatchdog on [Twitter](#) @airfarewatchdog for late-breaking unadvertised airfare sales and air travel advice.*

Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/travel/2011/11/12/tools-to-help-save-money-on-airfares/?test=faces#ixzz1dX9NNCRg>

## Life Section...

### Misc Posts:

*Updated Flight West Page:*

Comprehensive lists of those who have made the final flight west, has been updated faithfully and with care by David Roberts through Oct 2011. Those lists have been published on our site. Should you wish to do a search for an old friend or two, please click on this link for our page of honor. Note separate lists for NWA and WAL pilots who never flew for Delta may be published in the future.

For the PCN Flight West page Click Here: <http://pcn.homestead.com/FlightWest.html>

### Human Interest:

**Good Read** (Good book recommendation & Community Author's blurbs):

**From:** [hoogerwerf@bellsouth.net](mailto:hoogerwerf@bellsouth.net)

**Date:** 10/24/2011 10:25:01 AM

**To:** [mark@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:mark@pilotcommunication.net)

Mark:

I finished (finally!) my studies at Auburn University and received a PhD in History. The subject of my dissertation is **the origins of Delta Air Lines**. Doctoral dissertations are now "published" online and most (with the candidate's approval) assessable to the public; mine is available to anyone.

The paper may be of interest to Delta folks who have wondered about their company's early years. Since it's free, I suspect on that basis alone it is an appropriate candidate for inclusion in your "shared writings, *free of charge*" section. Whether any one will wade through it or not, is another issue!

The title is:

**"Roots: From Crop Duster to Airline; the Origins of Delta Air Lines to World War II"**

<http://etd.auburn.edu/etd/bitstream/handle/10415/2408/AUETD%20submission%20120510.pdf?sequence=2>

This is a PDF file and can be downloaded to Kindle or PC.

James "Jim" Hoogerwerf, PhD

Boeing 767 Capt. (retired 2001)

Auburn '10

**Event Announcements** (Click here for [Calendar](#)): to post [pcn.calendar@gmail.com](mailto:pcn.calendar@gmail.com)

This is the PCN Calendar designed for you to publish your 2011 event dates. Please send them in to Kim.  
Click here for our PCN [Calendar](#).

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**Get your holiday events in to be listed!**

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**From:** [Roger Lewis](#)

**Date:** 11/9/2011 7:15:54 PM

**To:** [DFW Bum Group X](#); [DFW Bum Group Y](#)

**Subject:** Christmas Party

**Twenty Second Annual**

**DFW 60th Bum Group**

**Christmas Party**

**Wednesday, December 14, 2011**

**Marriott Hotel DFW Airport**

**State Hwy 114 and Freeport Pkwy**

**8440 Freeport Parkway**

**Irving, Texas 75063**

**972-929-8800**

**6 P.M. Cocktails and Hors d' Oeuvres**

For reservation application email [Roger Lewis](#) and request one emailed to you.

+++++

**From:** [DWSkjerven@aol.com](mailto:DWSkjerven@aol.com)

**Date:** 11/13/2011 9:14:38 PM

**Subject:** 3rd Thursday of the Month ORD DC-9 Layover

This coming **Thursday the 17th**, is the 3rd Thursday of the month and time to see if you can still layover the old ORD Delta DC-9 way. As always, this fun filled gathering is at Nick's Pizza and Pub, 856 Pyott Rd, Crystal Lake, IL or about 1/2 mile north of the Lake In The Hills airport at 19:00. Everyone and anyone is welcome so bring a friend or two. Happy Thanksgiving, David W. Skjerven

P.S. Last month the Flight Attendants almost outnumbered the pilots. It was a great fun filled turn out!!



**I am looking for.....”** (Share a post of who you are seeking, if one sought answers....wallah):

**Good Deal/Bad Deal** (Share a quick good deal or bad deal you have found – no commercials here!)

**Hangar Flying** (Share a bit of ole hangar flying with the net. Need a sim buddy? Use PCN for request) :

**From:** [DWSkierven@aol.com](mailto:DWSkierven@aol.com)  
**Date:** 11/2/2011 9:37:27 PM  
**To:** [mark@pilotcommunication.net](mailto:mark@pilotcommunication.net)  
**Subject:** Aviation job web sites

Don't know if you have put this out before but it **Might be helpful and of interest.**

**Useful compilation of Aviation Sites:**

<http://www.thirtythousandfeet.com/employe.htm>

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**From:** [Steve Rodmon](mailto:Steve.Rodmon)  
**Date:** 11/4/2011 7:48:35 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Two USA pilots

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agwnwqCdwI8>

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**From:** [John B](mailto:John.B)  
**Date:** 11/13/2011 12:20:43 AM  
**Subject:** DAL275 DTW-NRT  
DAL #275...23 OCT 11 DTW-NRT

747400 NWA'Thought you may want to see some of these pictures.  
Climbing out of @ 5,000', # 2 engine had a catasrophic, uncontained turbine failure...loud boom, engine rolled back, followed by fire warnings. We went through the checklists, and the fire went out. I could see no damage, smoke, or fire to

the engine while in the air (because all the damage was on the outboard side). We took off @ 865,000# (max 870,000#) with about 350,000# of fuel.... for a 12:50 flight to Tokyo. It took 0:50 min to dump 120,000#.

We returned to DTW...after dumping and doing all checklists. Thank God, it wasn't as bad as it could have been! It all turned out text-I've attached pics. One shows shrapnel into the inboard aileron. Another shows the pylon twisting that occurred.





**Political (food for thought):**

**Humor/Sobering or Fun** (Share some humor with the net):

*From:* [robert moser](#)  
*Date:* 11/1/2011 1:25:48 PM  
*To: Subject:* Fwd: harmonica in Carnegie Hall

**[A harmonica in Carnegie Hall. \[VIDEO\]](#)**

**<http://www.wimp.com/harmonicacarnegie/>**

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*From:* [robert moser](#)  
*Date:* 11/8/2011 8:20:02 AM  
*To:*  
*Subject:* philosophy of flying

If you want to learn to fly .... remember this ....

Most of us have seen these before, but they are still fun to read.

1. Every takeoff is optional. Every landing is mandatory
2. If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. That is, unless you keep pulling the stick all the way back, then they get bigger again.
3. Flying isn't dangerous. Crashing is what's dangerous.
4. It's always better to be down here wishing you were up there than up there wishing you were down here.
5. The ONLY time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.
6. The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool. When it stops, you can actually watch the pilot start sweating.
7. When in doubt, hold on to your altitude. No one has ever collided with the sky.
8. A 'good' landing is one from which you can walk away. A 'great' landing is one after which they can use the plane again.
9. Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.
10. You know you've landed with the wheels up if it takes full power to taxi to the ramp.
11. The probability of survival is inversely proportional to the angle of arrival. Large angle of arrival, small probability of survival and vice versa.
12. Never let an aircraft take you somewhere your brain didn't get to five minutes earlier.
13. Stay out of clouds. The silver lining everyone keeps talking about might be another airplane going in the opposite direction. Reliable sources also report that mountains have been known to hide out in clouds.
14. Always try to keep the number of landing you make equal to the number of takeoffs you've made.
15. There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing. Unfortunately no one knows what these are.
16. You start with a bag full of luck and an empty bag of experience. The trick is to fill the bag of experience before you empty the bag of luck.
17. Helicopters can't fly; they're just so ugly the earth repels them.
18. If all you can see out of the window is ground that's going round and round and all you can hear is commotion coming from the passenger compartment, things are not at all as they should be.
19. In the ongoing battle between objects made of aluminum going hundreds of miles per hour and the ground going zero miles per hour, the ground has yet to lose.

20. Good judgment comes from experience. Unfortunately, the experience usually comes from bad judgment.
21. It's always a good idea to keep the pointy end going forward as much as possible.
22. Keep looking around. There's always something you've missed.
23. Remember, gravity is not just a good idea. It's the law. And it's not subject to repeal.

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True story that just happened:

On my last trip I visited Greece and Papandreou resigned.

Then I visited Italy and Berlusconi resigned.

When I mentioned that to my airplane seat mates, they said,

“Can you visit Washington next?”

Just put it on my list.

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## Mark

Mark Sztanyo (Stän'yō), PCN Dir & HL Editor  
[Pilot Communication Net](#) from Aug 2009  
[Contact the Net](#)

*Life on earth will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last!*

Serving the Delta community, and pilots (active and retired) and their families, *including original Delta*, and former: C&S, Northeast, Pan-Am, Western, NWA, Republic, North-Central, Southern Airways, Hughes- Airwest, and all the Delta Connection carriers.

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**Delta Pilots Pension Preservation Organization - <http://www.dp3.org>**  
Delta Museum & Fly-in information - <http://www.deltamuseum.org>  
Delta Pioneers - <http://www.deltapioneersinc.com/>  
Delta Golden Wings - <http://www.deltagoldenwings.com/>  
Delta Retiree Connection - <http://www.dlretiree.info>  
Delta Retirement Committee - <http://www.dalrc.org/>  
DAL Pilots DDPSA - <http://www.ddpsa.com/>  
Delta Extra Net Portal - <http://dlnet.delta.com/>  
National Retiree Legislative Network - <http://www.nrln.org/>

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