

Those Who Ignore History Are Doomed To Repeat It

(The following was sent to us by a 20 year plus Delta baggage handler from SLC.)

Delta's playbook hasn't changed in 20 years. I got looking at the newly proposed pay restoration and had to laugh a good hard belly laugh. It got me thinking and visiting my old pay stubs from 20 years ago. They looked familiar to what's happening right now. I had just come off of 2 years of 'catching up' to Delta's rate of pay after working for another airline and was finally enjoying being a full member of the 'Delta Family'.

Delta's top-out rate of pay for ACS personnel the last month of 1989 was \$3036 a month. That was pretty good pay for back then and we seemed pretty happy to be getting it, especially considering the rest of our benefits package wasn't too shabby either. In the latter part of 1992 we received a modest 5% raise. All were happy, until of course, during the first part of 1993 when they took it all back.

But happy day, in February of 1996, they gave it back again. Yep, you guessed it! The same 5%! In mid 1997 they decided to give us another 5% and we wondered if it was because of the union talk that was starting to build. Here we were 10 years later making 3391 a month and happy again but getting dizzy from the rollercoaster ride that constitutes Delta's rate of pay.

In 1998 we got busy signing union cards and quite coincidentally, our pay took the biggest jump it ever had in my entire career at Delta. We received a 7% raise and jumped to \$3664. Many of us knew that Delta was simply playing the game and trying to blunt union efforts. As a matter of fact many 'fence sitter' would approach us union

supporters and quietly thank us for our efforts. They knew who was actually pushing the money agenda and it wasn't Delta. We finally topped out at \$3772 in the year 2000 and so did our union efforts. We continued for a couple of years but the steam had been taken out of our campaign and we knew it.

The first week of 2005 brought the first downward yo-yo after the union work went silent. Of course it was inevitable. We moved back to familiar territory and our monthly pay dropped to \$3394. Later that same year in November we moved to another low point in our careers - \$3040 a month. Yep, history repeating itself. We had arrived back to 1989, going nowhere fast without a contract.

In late 2006 we contacted the IAM for help in organizing a union at Delta and quite by magic, a few months later our pay started up the old familiar trail and we received a bump of just over 5%. Most Delta employees now know the entire history. When we are involved in making a case for ourselves and our fellow employees by utilizing the forces and power a union can muster, our pay is enhanced. When we sit back and act placid and powerless we barely receive little more than a few platitudes or maybe a hot dog now and again. This seems enough for the apologists who don't know Delta's real pay history. Yep, take a trip down memory lane with one of us who has actual pay stubs, so that you will know exactly what you're going to make in 10 years without a union backing you and providing a contract in your hands!

Chances are, if you are lucky enough to still have a job, you will top out at what we are topped out at 20 years ago and that's not progress.