



The Air Traffic Controller

April 1998, Volume 12, Issue 3

NATCA pride echoes throughout Congress' halls

The overwhelming success of NATCA's recent lobby week can clearly be attributed to, as Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

Over 250 activists gathered in Washington, D.C., to participate in *NATCA in Washington '98* Feb. 22-25, 1998. NATCA members attended training sessions, listened to speeches and met with members of Congress, all in an effort to improve the livelihood of air traffic controllers and engineers.

Heather Booth, Democratic National Committee; Karen Delheim, Office of Special Counsel, Department of Transportation; *Congressional Quarterly*; Andy Lewis, Ruth Marlin, Mike McNally, Ken Montoya, and Jim Poole, all of NATCA, gave speeches that enhanced NATCA members' knowledge of legislation, politics and campaigns, and prepared them for their Capitol Hill appointments. McNally, president, remarked, "*NATCA in Wash-*

ington '98's focus was not on one specific issue but on training people how to be effective in grass roots lobbying. Our legislative initiative is one of the most powerful tools in representing air traffic controllers and engineers."

This year, members continued to develop and concentrate on bringing local messages about safety, staffing and equipment to Congress. Discussing these issues with Congress has a substantial, positive impact on many of the facilities. For instance, last year NATCA representatives from Sioux Falls Tower met with Sen. Thomas Daschle, D-S.D., regarding their staffing needs. At the time, it was understaffed by three controllers. A month after meeting with Daschle, the tower was overstaffed by two. "Lobby week gave us the

necessary training and ideas on how to build a relationship with our members of Congress. Building the actual relationship takes a lot of effort. We developed our protocol by actively working on the campaigns," commented Glen Rice, NATCA facility representative.

Campaign activism can help controllers and engineers reach their goals, whether that's obtaining more staff or better equipment. "The issue of working on campaigns is the most important grass roots activity members can participate in," commented Great Lakes Region Legislative Committee Chairman John Hermes. Members of Congress will not forget people who volunteer during an election year. In return, they will be more inclined to resolve issues pertinent to the volunteers' professions.

Two NATCA supporters, Rep. Neal Abercrombie, D-Hawaii, and Rep. Robert Weygand, D-R.I., gave speeches during lobby week. Randy Weiland, chairman of the Southern Region Legislative Committee, elaborated, "Abercrombie is one of the

most motivating speakers I have ever heard. We were ready to pass the hat around to help him on his next campaign." Steve Fletcher, National Legislative Committee Northwest Mountain Region member, agreed, "We need to give our support to these men, and keep them in Washington, D.C. Both will benefit NATCA in

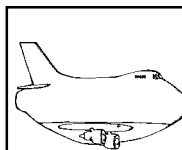
continued on page 6



NATCA President Mike McNally presents Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Jane Garvey with a union jacket.

Preview

Presidential Perspective	2
Feedback	3
One on One	4
Engineers Update	5
Lobby Week	6
Contract Towers	7
Year 2000	7
STARS Hearing	8
Fac Rep Training	8
Paycheck	
Protection	9
Newswire	10
LR Report	11
Bulletin Board	12



On March 20, 1998, the AFL-CIO Executive Council unanimously voted NATCA as a direct affiliate.

Affiliation Status

Reclassification initiative draws closer to completion

Dear friends and members,

NATCA's reclassification initiative for federal air traffic controllers is like the tip of an iceberg. Looking back, I see our most visible activities have been during the past two years: Regional or local briefings, massive nationwide data collection, membership mailings, web page updates, numerous news-letter stories and so on.

In reality, a relatively small group of controllers poured over an enormous quantity and variety of information, details on top of details, scrutinized rationales and constructed equations during the earliest years – and their work has become the unseen solid foundation of a defensible, fair pay system we will soon present to you and our employer.

Amazingly, we've threaded our way through a bureaucratic maze with Federal Aviation Administration counterparts for two of the three phases essential to reclass's success: First, creating an equitable standard; second, collecting comprehensive and accurate automated data. Now, we're on the brink of the third and most difficult, funding for the pay system structure.

This final stage is living up to its advanced billing. Its success depends on political complexities and, not coincidentally, our own contract negotiations with the agency. A key uncertainty has been how personnel practices and policies transfer into a new pay system.

The negotiating teams are dealing with the many tentacles of reclass. Everything from how to promote people, to retention of pay, training, permanent change of station moves, to you name it.

Clearly, with personnel reform's unprecedented opening for all encompassing negotiations, the FAA does not have a map. As a result, it is understandably but unnecessarily cautious in following the shiny new needle of reform's compass.

NATCA is either at or about to enter the final end game on reclass. And, because we are at this juncture, I want to remind you that reclass is not only about money. Its purpose is much more broadly defined. We are trying to correct a dysfunctional classification system implemented over 30 years ago – one never on

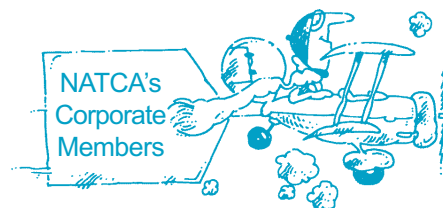
target for the highly specialized work and complicated levels of expertise required of air traffic controllers.

Our goals for reclass are the same as always. One, it must be logical. Two, it must be as fair as possible. Three, it must compensate controllers for the skills and knowledge possessed and for work performed. As I write this, the jury is still out. Rest assured, if the time comes, we will call upon you for help – the all important nudge from a mighty membership dedicated to the implementation of reclass.

In solidarity,



Michael P. McNally
President



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CHARACTER NAMES AND TRANSMITS BY THE LOS ANGELES TIMES
 A PUBLIC CALL TO ACTION FOR TRANSPARENCY, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
 RIGHTS AND A STRONG CONTRACT WITH WORKERS AND PASSENGERS

Ronald Reagan Airport is insult

To rename Washington National Airport to honor Ronald Reagan is an insult to organized labor.

Ronald Reagan is notorious for doing more than anyone to damage organized labor by firing 11,000 air traffic controllers in the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization in 1981. Regardless if you agree or disagree with that adverse action, it set the stage for the union-busting that followed.

Considering the anti-union mood of the Republican-dominated Congress, this initiative is no surprise.

National Air Traffic Controllers Association Vice President Randy Schwitz colorfully and accurately expressed the feeling of unionists in both the federal and the private sectors when he said, "I'd rather have a hot poker in my eye than an airport named after him."

Doug Byron

*National Association of Government Employees
 Fernandina Beach, Fla.*

Member concerned about lack of support for NATCA

As a 16-year veteran air traffic controller with tower, TRACON and center experience, I was very disappointed in the NBC movie *Blackout Effect*.

Not only was it not 100 percent technically perfect, it was not even 40 percent technically correct.

The focus of this letter is simple. Is anyone at *The Air Traffic Controller* or at NATCA concerned about the lack of support and representation afforded the unfortunate controller featured in the movie?

As a charter member, I have benefited from NATCA representation on many occasions at the local, regional and national level.

Am I the only one bothered by the public's perception that NATCA, and fellow controllers, shun anyone under investigation for a deal? Where was his representation? What was Bob Marks doing there?

I would not have been associated with a movie depicting NATCA in such a poor light. If this is fictional license, I was not entertained.

I must commend Barry Rosenbush for trying and succeeding better than others at portraying real life ATC. However, I feel NATCA missed a unique opportunity to highlight how NATCA membership benefits the individual and how controllers support each other. Or do we?

*Carlos Contreras
 Leaf River, Ill.*

Controller viewpoint

New legislation introduced in Congress and on several state ballot initiatives would forbid unions from spending dues money on political activity and communications. This means NATCA could not inform members of various legislation affecting controllers, lobby decision makers or present congressional testimony. What do you think of these proposals? Selected answers will appear in a future issue of *The Air Traffic Controller*. Send all responses to Courtney Barron at the national office by U.S. mail, email (cbarron@natcad.org), or fax (202/659-3991) by the 25th of each month. Please include name and facility with responses.



NATCA's perspective and priorities regain buoyancy

The Federal Aviation Administration faces numerous challenges in the near future. New FAA Administrator Jane Garvey has the challenging task of leading the way. Garvey recently spoke with *The Air Traffic Controller* to discuss her vision for the agency and how she views her relationship with NATCA.

The Air Traffic Controller: What do you see as the advantages of being the first administrator serving a five-year term?

Garvey: It is very liberating and wonderful to know you are going to be here long enough to set an agenda and see it through. I hope and believe it gives employees a sense of continuity. Even in dealing with our outside stakeholders, partners and customers. Being able to let them know I'm here for the long term and want to see an agenda through with them. I think the continuity is a very positive step.

The Air Traffic Controller: What will be some of your high priorities within your first year of office?

Garvey: I've spent a lot of time talking with our management team and people here at the FAA and I really think the American people are going to judge us on three areas. Safety, first and foremost, security, and system efficiency. Ultimately, the American public will ask us, "Is our system safe, is it secure and is it efficient?" So from my perspective, this is where all of our agenda ought to be focused. Establishing goals in those three areas is critical and important. Seeing them through is equally as critical and important.

I have to say that all of those issues can be achieved only with a workforce in partnership with management. I like to say, and I really believe this, that the strength of any organization is really based on the strength of the individuals who make it up. You hear a lot about the FAA, and it's kind of an amorphous vision in a way. It's the hundreds of decisions each employee makes on a daily basis that really determines the success of this agency.

The Air Traffic Controller: Do you agree Congress has been very critical regarding the culture within the FAA and its lack of responsiveness to critical safety and hardware issues?


Garvey: Let me speak about an immediate issue: and that's the Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System. I think Congress and the unions raised a very good point. For us to succeed, we must work closely with controllers and the union to make sure we are putting something in place controllers are comfortable with, that will work and can be deployed in a way that will make some sense. I think the kind of collaboration we've had most recently with STARS has been very productive and positive. My hope would be that it is a model we can look to. In talking with (NATCA) President (Mike) McNally, I see he places a high premium on the partnership and the collaborative effort with the agency. I applaud that and look forward to working very closely with the union members to make sure that happens.

The Air Traffic Controller: What is the FAA's strategy to deal with workplace safety and health problems at all FAA facilities?

Garvey: That was an issue I met almost right away when I joined the agency. I think the first point worthy of mention is responding quickly. Having union and management working collaboratively, looking at the issue, laying out an action plan and seeing it through together. I also think keeping the lines of communication open is important. We are not always going to agree on every issue, but I think talking about it and identifying those areas where we can move forward is very critical.

The Air Traffic Controller: Do you see a continued movement in establishing a user fee system as an alternative funding mechanism?

Garvey: It is certainly something we've heard a great deal of, and we will hear more about it as we debate the issue of reauthorization. That is something Chairman Norman Mineta's National Civil Aviation Review Commission has pointed to as a possible alternative, and there is some appeal to the idea of user fees. But, I think it has to be thought through carefully and deliberately. I believe there is going to be a lot of discussion on it. Fundamentally, we need a good cost accounting and cost management system in place before we really move aggressively on user fees, of course, that is what we're working on right now. From a management point of view, just knowing what the costs are to any services we provide is essential to any good agency's business strategy.



A Closer Look

Hobbies
tennis, bicycling and reading
Ideal Vacation
spending time with family in Maine
Greatest Strength
good listener, management skills
Inspiration
strong commitment to public service

continued on page 9

Engineers join controllers in attacking legislative issues

Curt Howe

Northwest Mountain Region engineer local president

For the first time, engineers joined controllers at NATCA in Washington '98 Feb. 22-25, 1998, so we could work together in attacking our legislative issues. After talking with several members, I realized many are unaware of what we do. I thought it might be helpful to give a brief overview.

The engineers, who sweepingly approved joining NATCA in October 1997, are a very diverse group, composed of around 1,100 people. Two groups from the Airway Facilities Divisions in each region comprise the bargaining unit. One works in the operations (OPS) engineering and the other bunch are in the facilities and equipment (F&E) arena. Generally, the OPS personnel provide first line maintenance support and the F&E individuals carry out the implementation of all the new systems.

The OPS engineers' jobs includes a variety of tasks, such as, providing technical support to airway facilities maintenance technicians, designing telecommunications, installing new systems, maintaining access roads, calibrating equipment and testing and restoring navigational aids. (I apologize if I left anything off of the list. I am an F&E engineer, so I am more familiar with those duties.) You'd be surprised how much impact this group truly has in your region. Whether they are correcting a very high frequency omni-range radio navigational aid problem, helping flight check a facility, or working to restore a communications outage, their work goes largely unnoticed to the public.

These individuals may be civil, electrical, environmental or mechanical engineers. Most are in engineers with high degrees of expertise in many defined systems. A very rare and awesome individual would be a

combination of a degreed, professional OPS engineer who also carries equipment certifications. Find one if you can; I've met only one.

Like the OPS group, electrical, mechanical, civil, and electronics engineers comprise the F&E category; however, we build mostly new facilities and install the latest equipment (it might be old, but at least some of it's unused.) Also, within the ranks are architects, environmental engineers, engineering technicians and drafters. One interesting fact is F&E engineers are the only employees in airway facilities, and possibly the FAA, who are required to submit biweekly timecards in addition to normal time and attendance tracking. So I refer to this group as the Architect-Engineer (A-E) firm of the FAA.

Our job entails summarizing civil, architectural, electrical, structural, and mechanical category design as "plants engineering." "Plants construction" is exactly that, a building without the equipment yet. This explains why you may hear of the plants and the electronics part of a facility design.

Overall, engineers are problem solvers.

Good ones are practical in-

ventors who use science and technology to turn ideas into reality. We have an amount of risk in our jobs that we hope is understood by everyone because we work on the edge of what's possible. If things go off track on a project, please give us the benefit of the doubt and try to avoid the "ready, fire, aim" management response to the occurrence.

Like controllers, we in the engineering ranks suffer from a lack of corporate memory and continuing transient leadership. There are more than 1.9 million engineers in the U.S., according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Yet our quiet, behind-the-scenes work has earned us the title of "the stealth profession." Please remember you now have about 1,100 FAA "stealth professional" engineers ready to serve you on any issue. Thanks to NATCA for continuing to support our organizing efforts!



Agency unsuccessfully attempts to remove engineers

"The Federal Aviation Administration tried to pull the wool over our eyes but it didn't succeed. We are too smart to not notice when it blatantly does something wrong," remarked Mike McNally, NATCA president.

Last year, NATCA's active, persistent approach defeated the FAA's attempt to remove several engineers from the union's bargaining unit without negotiations or notice. The agency altered the job descriptions of four engineers eligible to vote for ratification of NATCA. This manipulation meant they were technically no longer considered engineers. When

NATCA realized what occurred, it approached the Airways Facilities management to request the return of these four employees.

When the agency did not respond, the union filed an unfair labor charge. The two parties also met to discuss these matters. Shortly after this meeting, NATCA withdrew the complaint because Northwest Mountain Region Airway Facilities management quietly brought all the engineers back to the bargaining unit. NATCA played a vital role in maintaining the livelihood of its members.

Lobby Week

continued from page 1

the future.”

Jane Garvey, Federal Aviation Administration administrator, also delivered a promising speech. She spoke of the need for the FAA and NATCA to align as a cohesive body to promote a safe, efficient aviation system. Pete Healy, national engineers director, com-

“Air traffic controllers and engineers face many of the same equipment, staffing and working issues. When speaking on the Hill with a united voice, they will carry more weight than if alone.”

mented, “Ms. Garvey is a charming woman, with the right skills to provide the FAA with a optimistic outlook and future.”

“Everyone’s participation and excitement made this week a success. NATCA members and members of Congress gained a better understanding of the pertinent issues facing air traffic controllers and engineers,” remarked Stacy Trigler, legislative representative and coordinator of the event. Legislative Committee Chairman Alan Clendinin agreed, “This is an ongoing effort all year long. Now we ask members to go back in the field and build on what they learned.”

Air traffic controllers and engineers must work together, because they can accomplish more united than working alone. Ken Montoya, legislative director, elaborated, “Helen Keller learned she couldn’t do everything by herself the hard way. Let’s follow her example, and work together to create active grass roots legislation. Air traffic controllers and engineers face many of the same equipment, staffing and working issues. When speaking on the Hill with a united voice, they will carry more weight than if alone.”



Katie Wittig, national office’s communications/legislative assistant and Eastern Region Administrative Assistant Maria Broschart greet members as they register.



Glen Rice and Mark Wittmayer, Sioux Falls Tower, speak with Bradley Van Dam, legislative aide for Sen. Tom Daschle, D-S.D.



Engineers Jim D’Agati and Curt Howe discuss important issues with Sen. Robert Weygand, D-R.I.



Shelby Anders, Penny Lloyd and Melissa Ott strike a pose during the Great Lakes Region’s dinner.



Eastern Region controllers Kathleen Gough, Frank Savasta, Ray Maldonado, Barrett Byrnes, Dan D’Agostino, Eddy Craig and Harry Rafferty present Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., with a plaque as a token of appreciation for his continued support.

Court decision dissolves agency's privatization program

NATCA prevailed in its long-standing, four-year battle with the Department of Transportation over the privatizing of the Federal Aviation Administration operated Level I control towers. On March 2, 1998, an U.S. district court announced the agency must vacate its privatization program and reconsider its decision to contract out air traffic control services.

NATCA argued the FAA instituted this program without properly following the Office of Management and Budget's requirements for determining if the service is an inherent government function before contracting out. The fact the FAA exempted itself from the regulations under false pretenses was the basis for the suit. The agency contended private companies could provide the same quality service for a lower price, thereby allowing it to focus on the higher level facilities' needs.

"NATCA has always maintained air traffic services are inherently governmental," commented NATCA President Mike McNally.

This verdict will positively impact the FAA's employees because it will no longer be able to force them to relocate or retire. Between 1994 and 1998, NATCA calculated the agency disrupted 1,500

individuals' lives.

The FAA also affected controllers' work environments because when the private companies took over, they drastically reduced the facilities' numbers. NATCA's victory will also improve these conditions. The FAA will inevitably need to augment staffing levels.

This decision's implications may also reach beyond the towers. It could also affect government agencies, which often contract out services because it saves money on the front end, "But cheaper is not always better or safer, as this case proved. This matter will place the spotlight on agencies' activities. The government must take

"Either side may also decide to appeal this judgment. It is premature and unfair to raise expectation by speculating as to whether any of the contract facilities or employees will soon become employed by the FAA."

responsibility and stop passing it off to private companies," remarked Jim Morin, NATCA's general counsel.

"This is a major victory for NATCA. Of course, we expect the FAA to appeal to the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, but it will be at least a year before it reaches a decision. Either side may also decide to appeal this judgment. It is premature and unfair to raise expectation by speculating as to whether any of the contract facilities or employees will soon become employed by the FAA," he concluded.

NATCA unleashes contingency theory proposal

As the year 2000 approaches, the aviation industry grows concerned about what will happen when the clock strikes one Jan. 1, 2000. Air traffic controllers and engineers depend on the reliability of their computers to successfully guide planes.

NATCA members are increasingly alarmed because the Federal Aviation Administration has not given a concerted effort to find the necessary resources, talent and tools to conduct an appropriate year 2000 assessment. Concurrent with the FAA's software modification, NATCA proposes development of a contingency plan, allowing planes to fly but not as

many at the same time.

Dick Swauger, NATCA's technology coordinator, recently presented this proposal in a Senate Banking Committee field hearing before Sen. Dodd, D-Conn. "Controllers must be taught to maintain air safety without the services the host computer provides for them," elaborated Swauger. Currently, "The agency has not developed its approach to the General Accounting Office's satisfaction," he added.

Given NATCA's proactive stance, it is the union's hope the agency will consider creating a contingency strategy sooner than later.

What's New on NATCA's Home Page

www.natca.org

- * Union representatives may complete NATCA's official time survey and submit it to national office right from their computer. Go to <http://home.natca.org/privatweb/laborrelations/officialtime.htm> on the Labor Relations page of the members' only area to fill out the form.
- * New Fact sheets on the year 2000 problem and the Federal Services Impasses Panel may be found in News Center and Legislative Affairs public site.

Air traffic controllers actively participate in evaluation and progression of equipment

NATCA's quest to play an active role in renovating the country's air traffic control system advances because the modernization inches higher up on the Federal Aviation Administration's priority list.

Consider the situation. The FAA highlighted four items of extreme importance: the year 2000 compliance, Standard Terminal Automation Replacement Systems, host computer replacement and the Wide Area Augmentation System.

NATCA actively participated in the evaluation and progression of STARS. "This project is the first project that benefited from the full and unlimited participation of air traffic controllers – key users of the technology," NATCA President Mike McNally testified at the House aviation subcommittee hearing on March 5, 1998.

McNally further believes the union should have a voice in all FAA projects, which could go a long way toward identifying and rectifying other potential problems, he said. Rep. Leonard Boswell, D-Iowa, elaborated, "Controllers need to be included in the decision process. They will help conclude if the equipment works, and alleviate any future problems."

"The best resources are air traffic controllers because they work with the equipment on a daily basis," remarked McNally. Rep. Pat Danner, D-Mo.,



NATCA President Mike McNally testifies before the House aviation subcommittee hearing with Jack Ryan, vice president of Air Transportation Association of America.

agreed, "Someone needs to listen to the people who have hands-on experience with these systems, rather than a consultant. We need to make sure that individuals take the controllers' suggestions seriously so we don't make the same mistakes twice."

The agency's plan to implement four new modernization programs in the next few years is a large undertaking. NATCA can assist the FAA in meeting its goal, if it provides the union with the opportunity.

Fac reps absorb and emit information during training

"The national fac rep curriculum is a Godsend! I walked away from a week of training with so much new knowledge, my head was swimming and my heart was on fire," remarked Ed Morris, Omaha TRACON.

Recently, 34 facility representatives gathered in Las Vegas, Nev., for NATCA's first national fac rep training course, since it established the Training Team. Individuals devoted as much as 11 hours a day to attending seminars and discussing relevant issues.

The members covered over a dozen topics including: Chapter 71 of the Federal Law Code, grievance procedures, critical incident stress management and information requests. Many of the attendees liked that the sections touched on a variety of different areas. "This was the best class I have ever attended because it compressed a multitude of issues," said Mitch Gilliam, Dayton, Ohio.

NATCA designed the program to be beneficial to both new and experienced representatives. Many of the attendees commented the instruction was exceptionally helpful because they recently attained their position. "This course gave me the grounding and tools that I need to get started," stated Roy Stansell, Little Rock, Ark.

The week's success may be attributed to the air traffic controllers who volunteered to teach. "I was

impressed with the teachers' wealth of knowledge and professionalism," elaborated Joy Aldrich, Albany, N. Y. "The instructors had an ability to share knowledge with us in a manner we could easily grasp and understand," agreed Gerry Davidson, Las Vegas TRACON. Mike Maikowski, Seattle, Wash., added, "The sections were great. They were well organized, lively and pertinent. I can't say enough good things about the week."

This achievement marks the beginning of facility representatives' standardized curriculum. As Morris concluded, "I encourage everyone to take the classes. I promise it will be a week you will never forget."

Do you know of any trade shows, conferences or conventions coming to your area?

We have a trade show booth you can use to gain support for NATCA!



Contact Katie Wittig at (202) 223-2900 or kwittig@natcadc.org

Groups attempt to silence unions and working families

Over the past 10 years NATCA's influence has grown into a strong voice on Capitol Hill. It has won many legislative victories, resulting in better working conditions, staffing and equipment. Imagine a union that couldn't testify before Congress, lobby decision makers, or educate members on issues. It probably wouldn't be very effective.

Several groups are working hard to single out unions for burdensome restrictions that limit working families' participation in the political process. New bills facing Congress and ballot initiatives introduced in many states threaten to reduce these organizations to performing nothing other than collective bargaining and labor relations. They could not utilize dues money to conduct legislative or political activities, without receiving written permission from members for each expenditure.

These bills are being introduced in retaliation for the labor movement's contributions to Democratic candidates in the 1996 elections. According to the AFL-CIO, corporations already outspend unions 11 to one — accounting for more than 40 percent of the \$1.6 billion raised by political candidates and parties in the 1996 election cycle. Unions contributed less than four percent of the money donated.

Under the proposals, commonly referred to as the Paycheck Protection Act or Worker Paycheck Fairness Act, "political activities" is a broadly defined term including all communications with members regarding legislative and political matters, giving testimony at hearings and commenting on regulations, lobbying, and producing voter education guides.

The Senate struck down one of the proposed federal bills and NATCA expects the House to defeat the other

in March. (At press time, no vote had taken place). "Even if it had passed Congress, the president was sure to veto the legislation," said NATCA's Legislative Director Ken Montoya. "The state initiatives are more dangerous because every uneducated voter on this issue will have a say in what your union can do with its money."

The Federal Election Campaign Act already forbids unions to spend dues money on political campaigns, but these organizations are allowed to set up political action committees for this purpose. NATCA members may give to the union's PAC — these contributions are voluntary and separate from dues payments. PAC funds, however, are not sufficient to run effective legislative campaigns.

"If we had to finance our legislative activities solely through the PAC — it would only be a matter of months until NATCA's political representation withered away," said Montoya.

"The supporters of these bills are painting it as though members do not want to engage in political activities," said NATCA Miami Center Member Ruth Marlin. "Nothing could be further from the truth. Isn't joining a union whose constitution requires this type of action essentially giving permission? Political representation is one of the main reasons I joined, and I think many others will agree." A 1996 poll by Peter Hart Research and Associates concludes, a six to one margin of members want their union to speak about politics and legislation.

"Members expect NATCA to be involved in political activities," remarked NATCA President Mike McNally. "If we weren't, they would wonder what we were doing to improve controllers' situations. It is how we've accomplished much of our success to date. Voters must realize these initiatives are hurting the labor movement, and harming working families."



One on One

continued from page 4

The Air Traffic Controller: NATCA feels it offered many solutions to the agency's problems that have fallen on deaf ears. Have you formulated any ideas on how to capture employees' involvement?

Garvey: I think that is one of the most challenging issues for anyone who is managing an agency of this size. I have learned an enormous amount every time I have gone to a facility and sat and listened to employees. I've heard specific examples on where we might make improvements. So again, keeping those lines of communication open is essential. NATCA's leadership — President McNally and the board — has been exceedingly collaborative in coming forward with

ideas and I think we are just beginning in that area. I look forward to ways we can work together.

McNally has been a strong member of our modernization task force. It is very important to me as we think about modernization that the union is at the table with us offering a perspective that I think we don't always see in those discussions. So that is clearly an area we've had strong collaboration. STARS is another recent example we can point to. And I think there will be many other opportunities. We've certainly touched on a few and I look forward to working on others.



*FAA Administrator
Jane Garvey*

■ NATCA members' work environments may soon change as a result of a study conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration. Trish Gilbert, Houston Center fac rep, attended a conference in December 1997, which focused on how to improve air traffic controllers' work atmosphere. Gilbert, along with four other NATCA members, will provide their recommendation to the FAA. The group will look at equal employment opportunity issues, such as discrimination and sexual harassment.

■ The lack of openings at the radar training facility in Oklahoma City, Okla., has negatively affected the training of College Training Initiative students. The Federal Aviation Administration delayed its courses for incidental amount of time, because former Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization members will enter the academy first for a refresher course.

After NATCA receives notification of how long the delay will last, it will enter negotiations with the agency. The union will attempt to obtain a waiver, allowing the CTI students to attend radar training in their respective facilities, rather than in Oklahoma City. Ultimately, this would allow these individuals to receive their certification quicker.

■ NATCA will release the latest safety manual as soon as the Safety Committee finishes compiling the revisions. The safety and facility representatives use this book as a reference guide. NATCA will distribute it as soon as it's printed.

■ Effective June 1, 1998, the total annual reimbursement member may apply for, to further his or her education in areas that benefit the union, is \$500, down from \$2,500. Reducing this figure allows more individuals to participate in the program.

■ The national office must receive any proposed amendments to the NATCA Constitution by close of business, May 8, 1998. These amendments will receive consideration during the convention in Seattle, Wash.

■ The brief disappearance of Air Force One on the controllers' scopes at New York Center on March 10, 1998, brought national attention to the poor condition of the equipment. Employees filed complaints in October 1997, reporting phantom targets and disappearing aircraft. The agency turned off the radar site but turned it back on three weeks ago without notifying anyone. After this incident, it decided to switch the site off for an indefinite time period.

■ Recently, Atlanta Air Traffic Control Tower, Delta Air Lines and Atlantic Southeast Airlines donated \$4,500 to Griffin Area Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry.

Atlanta Air Traffic Controller Mark Staples is very

active in the project. When the Federal Aviation Administration awarded the tower with \$1,500 for successfully handling the heavy traffic flow during the 1996 Olympic Games, Staples suggested donating the money to the charity's local chapter. Staples then catalyzed Delta Air Lines and Atlantic Southeast Airlines to match its donation, producing a grand total of \$4,500.

■ Members may now order Random House's new book, *Power Sleep*, directly from its warehouse by calling 800-793-2665. The book is also available at bookstores.

■ Congratulations to Tim Helsing, NATCA's STARS representative, for a job well done. He also received a personal phone call from Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Jane Garvey for human factors work his team completed. Garvey commended him and the other controllers for their hard, diligent effort.

■ The lack of official time has negatively impacted NATCA's engineers, because this group must use either annual leave or compensatory time for union business. In their first memorandum of understanding proposal, they asked the Federal Aviation Administration for official time.

The agency proposed only two hours per bargaining unit member, to be tracked from a national account. Currently, the engineers drafted a response to FAA's counterproposal and plan on settling the issue as soon as possible. This issue continues to drag along without much progress.

■ Extend a helping hand to a fellow controller. David Barker, from Corpus Christi International Airport, recently relocated his family to the Houston area to obtain medical treatment for his wife who has cancer. Several NATCA members organized a raffle to assist Dave with medical bills. The prize is a 1998 Ford F-150 truck.

Tickets are \$50, and money orders or checks may be mailed to CRP NATCA, Attention Kevin or Tina, 900 International Blvd., Corpus Christi, Texas 78406. For more information on how individuals can help, contact Tina Keeling or Kevin Allsop at 512-299-4318 or 512-980-1145.

**Congratulations
100 percent
Facility**

Good job to
Guam CERAP
Fac Rep Rick
Bailey and the rest of the group
for achieving 100 percent!



New assignment list created for Oshkosh Air Show

An arbitration took place regarding the selection of employees to work at the 1998 Oshkosh Air Show. NATCA contended the national seniority policy adopted at its 1996 convention must be used as a basis for selecting individuals to fill the show's temporary assignments. The agency disagreed, arguing the employment date with the Federal Aviation Administration determines seniority, and should be utilized to determine who attends. The arbitrator found in favor of the union, and ordered the FAA to create a new list utilizing NATCA's 1996 seniority policy.

Back pay for missed meal premium policy awarded

NATCA won its arbitration asking for back pay for the missed meal premium policy. Previously, the Federal Aviation Administration amended the policy yet refused to compensate employees with back pay. The new arbitration holds the agency liable for payment dating back to Aug. 1, 1993.



Arbitration denying advanced scheduling appealed

NATCA appealed to the Federal Labor Relations Authority an arbitration decision denying the union advanced scheduling of official time on Sundays. The arbitrator found the collective bargaining history of the parties precluded advanced scheduling, but simultaneously held the use of official time on Sundays can be granted on a discretionary basis.

Several memoranda of understanding signed

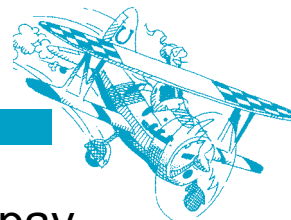
Recently, NATCA and the Federal Aviation Administration signed several memoranda of understanding regarding issues such as Display Systems Replacement training and preliminary ground rules, Common Automated Terminal Radar System IIE and 3D User Preferred Trajectory Flight Trials Project. Memoranda may be found on the labor relations page of NATCA's web site.

Members accept collective bargaining agreement

NATCA members employed by Midwest Air Traffic Control Service, Inc. accepted the first negotiated collective bargaining agreement by a 73 percent vote in favor of ratification. The agreement took effect March 1, 1998 and will remain in force for a period of two years or until parties reach a new agreement. NATCA represents controllers employed by Midwest at the Alton, Ill., Marion, Ill., Central Wisconsin, Wis., and Kenosha, Wis. towers. The agreement will extend to any Midwest facility in which the employees elect representation by NATCA.

Tentative decision reached

Representatives of NATCA and Barton ATC International reached a tentative decision for a collective bargaining agreement on Feb. 21, 1998. NATCA members are reviewing it and a ratification vote will be conducted by early April 1998. NATCA represents controllers in Barton's Williams Gateway, Ariz., Glendale, Ariz., Hailey, Idaho and Molokai, Hawaii facilities.



Featuring the lighter side of Labor Relations...

Agency slices four minutes off members' pay

David Sandbach, Labor Relations Representative

One payday, a few members came to me in a surprised uproar because their pay was short. Without their knowledge, they had been charged leave without pay.

Upon investigation, we discovered the acting assistant air traffic manager, a veteran of the position for an entire month, one of the FAA's fast risers who went through a temporary staff position, first line supervisor, and on into the upper crust of management faster than Hitler went through Poland, had decided that we lowly bums were taking advantage of our gracious employer and attempting to steal from the government.

It was explained to me that these members had been observed entering the IFR room at a different time than that which they entered on the 7230-4 and that, by so doing, they had falsified government documents and we should be grateful that management had such high

regard for us and only charged these thieves with LWOP.

The most blatant of these wrongdoers was charged with 4 minutes of leave without pay. **Four MINUTES!!!!** The scoundrel had been "observed" by management entering the IFR room at 0704 and signing on at 0700. They didn't seem to care that he'd been in the building for close to a half an hour. "You've got to be kidding!" I gasped, "don't you people have anything better to do?" "You should feel lucky we're not going to discipline them for being AWOL," was the reply.

It took regional intervention and two pay periods to get the records straight. I wonder how much the agency had to spend to fix this model of efficiency? And the fast riser? No longer working anywhere near operations. Go figure.

This is a new feature of our labor relations report. Please submit articles (200 words) to NATCA, attn: D. Sandbach, or e-mail to dsandbach@natcad.org.

Bulletin Board

April

- 1-2 Drug & Alcohol Representative Training, Nashville, Tenn.
- 8 National arbitration, PATCO rehires pay rate
- 9 Arbitration in the Northwest Mountain Region, training failure.
- 21-24 NEB Meeting, Phoenix, Ariz.
- 23 Arbitration in the Northwest Mountain Region, shift changes.
- 27- May 1 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.

May

- 2 Pensacola Tower & TRACON Charity Golf Tournament
- 4 Eastern Region Facility Representative Meeting, Atlantic City, N.J.
- 5 Engineers receive and count local ballots for elected officers
- 6 Engineer officers installed.
- 8 Proposed constitutional amendments due to the national office.
- 18-22 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 19-20 Communicating for Safety Conference, Orlando, Fla.
- 25 Memorial Day, offices closed

June

- 8 Western Pacific Preconvention Meeting, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 9-11 Northwest Mountain Region Facility Rep. Meeting, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 15-19 NEB Meeting, St. Louis, Mo
- 22-26 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.

July

- 7-8 Alaskan Region Facility Representative Meeting, Anchorage, Ala.
- 20-24 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.

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