



The ^{airplane} Air Traffic Controller

December 1998, Volume 12, Issue 10

84 percent of NATCA-endorsed candidates win

NATCA contributed \$591,000 to 217 campaigns during the 1997-98 congressional election cycle—178 of those culminated in victory. A large part of this success was due to the high turnout of union voters on Election Day.

In fact, NBC polls showed 49 percent of union households went to the voting booth, as compared to only 34 percent of non-union families. More importantly, 84 percent of the key candidates outlined in NATCA's 1998 voter guide were elected on Nov. 3. At the start of the 106th Congress, the Republicans' edge over the Democrats in House seats (with one independent) slips to 223-211-1, while across the Capitol, in the Senate, Republicans maintain the 55-45 majority.

Virtually every major congressional player in aviation politics will return to Washington next year. Negotiations on funding, capacity and competition disputes will resume along the familiar lines. House Transportation Committee Chairman Bud Shuster, R-Pa., and his Aviation Subcommittee Chairman John Duncan, R-Tenn., among others, have proclaimed 1999 to be the "year of aviation," so NATCA members can expect to see familiar issues prevalent in national politics and in the media.

A policy to force airlines to serve those communities and states which lost air service due to the 1978 airline deregulation bill will be another hot issue sure to surface again. This could create unusual political alliances, as seen in the final days of the 105th Congress when Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., gained Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, as an ally in perimeter-rule exemptions for Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. Despite the generally smaller government bias of Republicans, Grassley has expressed sympathy for federal action boosting service to rural America.

Shuster succeeded in commissioning a study of the Department of Transportation's competition policy before it goes into effect, but to what extent this will slow or kill the plan is another unknown.

Other key issues in-

Outstanding Campaign Volunteers

Eastern	Barrett Byrnes	JKF
	Beverley Cook	ZDC
	Maureen Donnelly	CDW
Great Lakes	Raymond Barnowski	MKE
	Jody Davis	ENW
	Jim Doyle	CAK
	Howard Hall	ZOB
	John Hermes	MKE
	Tom Hjelmgren	MKE
New England	Ed Locke	ZID
	Mike Bencal	ZBW
NW Min.	Tom Callahan	Y90
	Randy Kienitz	HLN
Southern	Chuck Allen	CVG
	Brad Burtner	CVG
	Ross Espey	MGM
	Matt Lambert	FLO
Southwest	Mike McEntee	ZAB
	Ron Scott	ZAB
Western Pacific	Ron Aquilina	ZOA
	Woody Diaz	Engineer
	Ron Gagner	U90
	Frank Haelle	VGT
	Mike Martin	Engineer
	Howie Rifas	SNA
	Eric Strickland	OGG
	Jeff Valentino	FAT
Sharon Wilkins	SDM	

clude the status of the aviation trust fund, a higher cap for passenger facility charges and new slot exemptions at high-density airports. Shuster will attempt to take the trust fund off budget by limiting it to aviation expenditures, rather than holding money in reserve to help balance the federal budget. Representatives tried

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Contract Towers

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Union and agency aspire to transform relationship

Dear Friends:

In NATCA's early years, we established a traditional relationship with the agency – fundamentally, a legal one based on collective bargaining agreements. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, we moved closer to the agency through quality through partnership.

Although QTP at least partially lived up to its name, internal and external forces undermined it to the point of elimination. After the program's demise, we returned to the familiar, legal-centered relationship, although we expanded our range to include Capitol Hill and the media.

I firmly believe most members do not wish a continuous confrontational relationship with their employer. As such, it has always been my objective to lead NATCA and the FAA back into an alternative, collaborative working style.

Remember, we – controllers, engineers and new categories of air traffic membership – are in aviation for the long haul.

As all organizational research and trends are proving, conventional butting of heads and gnashing of teeth between workers and managers are largely ineffective. Even though when we are forced into that hole we do well.

NATCA and the agency met Nov. 9 and 10 in an initial meeting to start transforming our relationship. Leadership of both organizations was in full attendance, inclusive of the administrator and deputy administrator. During these two days in Washington, we began forging a new way of

doing business.

We do not know the final shape these early initiatives will take. But, it was evident both parties are willing to explore more cohesion between employer and employees.

Because Administrator Garvey and I believe change begins at the top, we will continue to build upon our already collaborative working relationship in hopes of modeling the tenets of cooperation to others.

Ongoing meetings are planned in the near term to further define our new working alliance. Identifying a sound structure and process will not happen overnight.

We must evaluate the pros and cons of QTP and learn from those experiences, as well as from the contemporary team approach so evident and successful in private industry.

Our goal? NATCA and FAA leaders hope to truly change the historic culture of air traffic labor-management relations. With much to gain, we can't afford NOT to make the effort.

In solidarity,



Michael McNally
President



Q & A

Q: *Who should members contact in the national office if they want the password for NATCA's Members Only website?*

A: Call Candi Derr or Wilma Gilsala in Field Services at 202/223-2900 or email cderr@natcad.org / wgisala@natcad.org.

WANTED

Facility Photos

The Communications Team is interested in starting a photo gallery for the www.natca.org website. Please send in your pictures to Communications Associate Maureen McGaffin in the national office. This is a great opportunity to showcase your facility with the rest of the membership.

President
Michael McNally

Executive Vice President
Randy Schwitz

The Air Traffic Controller

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Garvey contacts controller at home to discuss issues

A funny thing happened Sept. 17. I was sitting at my kitchen table painting some shirts with my boys for a school trip, when my phone rang. I turned around, glanced at the caller ID display and couldn't believe my eyes. It said "Garvey, Jane," with a Washington, D.C., number.

I answered it, and sure enough it was Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Jane Garvey responding to a message I sent her two days prior. She was calling me from home at 9:30 at night to discuss with me what "I" thought could be done in the field to help the contract implementation process along.

I relayed to her all the things that I heard were occur-

ring in management in the field and particularly the Alaskan Region, and to put it mildly she was quite upset. I told her repeatedly her division, hub and local managers were not living up to the expectations she had laid down for them. I knew that she wanted to improve things, but her managers obviously saw things differently.

So if you went to work, and the management team seemed a little recalcitrant, perhaps they received a phone call from Jane. At least I hope they did!

*Ed Morris
Omaha TRACON*

word teaser

Winston Churchill once wrote, "There is nothing to fear but fear itself."

What would you write? Fill in the blank with one or more words: "There is nothing to fear but...."
Mail answers to Courtney Barron at the national office or email cbarron@natcad.org by Jan. 8, 1999.

PUZZLE PLACE

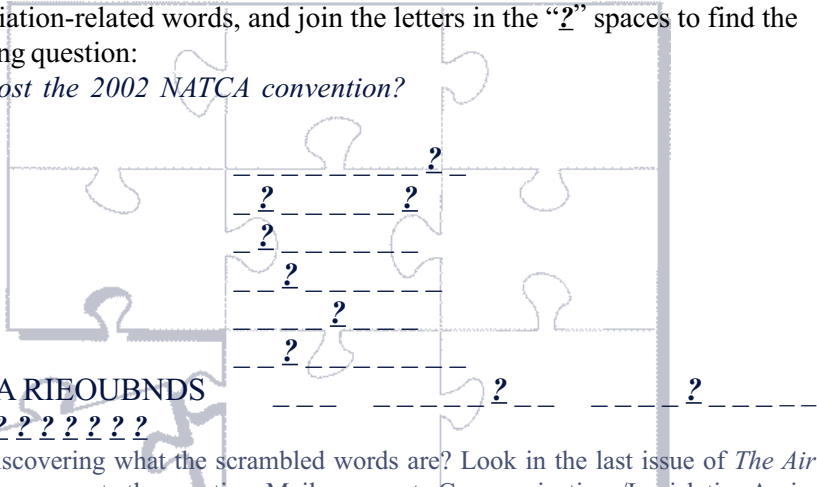
Unscramble these aviation-related words, and join the letters in the "?" spaces to find the answer to the following question:

Which city will host the 2002 NATCA convention?

- BURLETUNEC
- ELTIADTU
- IOAITVNA
- QUREFCYNE
- LACIFYIT
- SROTOSGAS
- AFA GINOERLA RIEOUBNDS

Answer: ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?

Having problems discovering what the scrambled words are? Look in the last issue of *The Air Traffic Controller* for the answer to the question. Mail answers to Communications/Legislative Assistant Katie Wittig in the national office or email at kwittig@natcad.org. Like creating crossword puzzles or other games? Submit ideas to Communications Associate Courtney Barron in the national office, cbarron@natcad.org, and attribution will be given to the ones selected.



viewpoint

Member



We want to hear from YOU!

Do you think the FAM program should be maintained, changed or abolished?

Mail
Courtney Barron
at the national office
Email
cbarron@natcad.org
Fax
202/659-3991

January 8
Respond Today!
Selected answers will appear in future issues.

Deadline

Say What?

Express yourself!

Wearing union jackets, shirts and buttons are just a few of the ways many individuals express their NATCA pride. But some take it a step further by personalizing their license plates. Mail in a photo of your "NATCA" plate to Courtney Barron at the national office or email cbarron@natcad.org today!



Controllers' input is vital to maintain agency's livelihood

Federal Aviation Administration Air Traffic Operations Program Director Jeff Griffith recently sat down with *The Air Traffic Controller* to share his views on the agency and its relationship with the union.

The Air Traffic Controller: What is your background in air traffic control?

Griffith: I initially became a controller in the U.S. Air Force, and after I was discharged I worked for the Federal Aviation Administration in several facilities, including Atlanta Tower and TRACON. I later moved into management at towers ranging from a very small tower in St. Simon's Island, Ga., and to the large Chicago O'Hare. I was then employed in the Great Lakes regional office and afterwards came to FAA headquarters, where I have been involved in two program areas, airspace and operations.

The Air Traffic Controller: What is the role of the Air Traffic Operation Program?

Griffith: This department is responsible for the daily operation of all 575 air traffic control facilities. In a collaborative process, involving regions and unions, we write the procedures in the agency's hand books. Through the air traffic control command system center in Herndon, Va., we are also responsible for traffic management.

We further define and articulate the aviation industry's equipment needs, and develop the procedures for the equipment created to fulfill those areas. Our group also does all liaison work with military organizations and other government institutions, such as the Secret Service, Customs Service and the Drug Enforcement Agency.

The Air Traffic Controller: How would you rate the agency's efforts to modernize projects and obtain new equipment?

Griffith: Today, I think the FAA is working hard at modernization and purchasing new systems. In April 1996, the agency implemented a new acquisition management program, creating a whole new change in how it modernized. Since its inception, we have learned a tremendous amount.

Now the agency realizes it is important to involve its controllers in the development of new equipment early on, and to include them through the process, especially on computer human interface, so it understands from their point of view what is needed to operate the system. We are attempting to implement changes to make things easier on controllers, such as

providing them access to more information, so they can concentrate on higher priorities, like separation of aircraft, and make better decisions on safety issues.

The Air Traffic Controller: Do you think the agency will fulfill its year 2000 compliance deadline?

Griffith: Yes, I do. The FAA has put a lot of time and effort into this project. It has a task force with an action plan and I believe its dedication will make it successful.

As of Sept. 30, 99 percent of all our critical National Air Space systems had been renovated. Validation of our year 2000 solutions for all NAS systems is scheduled to be completed by June 1999. The FAA is also developing contingency plans to deal with any unexpected issues.

The Air Traffic Controller: What are the benefits derived from contracting out towers? Has this program helped the agency meet its goals?

Griffith: This process actually began in 1983 and, in 1994, Congress allocated \$15.8 million for the FAA to contract out 99 Level I towers. Research indicated it costs the agency \$508,000 to run one of these facilities, and it could contract it out for \$253,000.

We followed the recommendation, and today there is a culmination of 158 contract towers and 26 remaining to be converted out of the original 99. I believe one of the successes is the Direct Placement Program we negotiated with NATCA, which allows controllers affected by this transition to move, by bidding, to a higher level. Will more Level I towers be contracted out in the future? Facilities will become a candidate if they meet specified

criteria and the benefit/cost analysis indicates it is necessary.

The Air Traffic Controller: What is your philosophy in dealing with NATCA? How important is union involvement in the design of new equipment, developing operational requirements and training for new systems?

Griffith: It is important and critical to attain controllers' first hand knowledge to meet the objectives and goals of air traffic operations. As NATCA has developed, so has management.

The agency has learned collaboration and inclusion of the union is important, and we must work hard to build a good, solid relationship with our NATCA counterparts. In terms of new equipment and develop-

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	A Closer Look
Motto	
Work hard and do a good job.	
Hobby	
Cross Country Running	
Favorite Vacation Spot	
Anywhere with his family.	
Favorite Food	
Italian	
Person Admired Most	
His wife	

Engineers battle for local recognition from the agency

Doug Hintz

Southern Region engineer local president

The engineers and architects have unsuccessfully fought for the Federal Aviation Administration to recognize their local presidents since December 1997. Even though NATCA Executive Vice President Randy Schwitz notified the agency about these union representatives, and the FAA signed a memorandum of understanding with them, the agency only wants to acknowledge them during formal meetings.

As a result, many local issues are stalled. In some cases, the FAA even bypassed NATCA and proceeded with changes to the engineers and architects' working environments. To resolve this unworkable situation, I filed several unfair labor practices, claiming the FAA did not properly negotiate with us prior to implementing a change, and ignored legally recognized local union officials.

We cannot accept this arrangement because it stifles local coordination and further hurts the already fragile relationship we have with management. I hope the agency will recognize its mistake and change its policy. If not, I can only wait until we receive a finding from the Federal Labor Relations Authority to wake up the FAA.

An engineer's reflections on Seattle convention

Doug Hintz

Southern Region engineer local president

The Seattle convention was the first such event for this Atlanta engineer. All of the descriptions given by my NATCA controller brothers did not come close to describing the event. I was prepared for a very dry, business-like proceeding with some discussion on a few contentious subjects, instead I witnessed a very heated, respectful debate on some very important considerations.

We were all very pleased with the support we received, both in the votes on our issues and in the help we received getting our issues to the floor. While we were glad our issues successfully passed, we also recognized the opposition's concerns had some merit, and we should address them before the next convention. Since this is a new relationship for engineers and controllers, we have the luxury of seeing how this arrange-

ment works for two years, and then making some adjustments at the next convention to correct any problems discovered.

On behalf of the engineers, I want to thank the National Executive Board and controllers for their support to us during our first year. The convention demonstrated we made the right choice when joining NATCA, and the match should be beneficial for both of us. One of the engineer representatives commented to me, "The thing that stood out the most to me about the convention was when one of the controllers who had strongly opposed us on some issues came up to me to shake my hand at the banquet. It kind of summed up for me that even though there were some different opinions in the room, NATCA is all one big family."

NATCA Membership Benefits

A SAMPLE OF A FEW OF THE UNION'S PERKS

Dental Benefits

For savings members can really sink their teeth into, sign up for the Union Member Dental Program. At just \$29.95 a year, individuals may choose any dentist or specialist from Union Privilege's list of over 9,000 qualified professionals, and receive discounts with every visit. Routine oral exams and bitewing x-rays are offered at no additional charge, and biannual cleaning and other procedures are significantly reduced. The program offers a 100 percent no risk, money-back guarantee within the first year of membership, no deductible to pay and no exclusion of pre-existing conditions. Want to enroll or learn which dentists participate in the program? Call UMDP Customer Service at 1-800/257/8352. NATCA Field Services, at 202/223-2900, also maintains a directory of participating dentists.

Pre-Paid Legal Benefits

Wake up! Now is a good time to prepare a will. Many have the misconception they only need one if they own a sizeable estate or want to make an unusual bequest; not true. NATCA Group Legal Plan provides the named member with a comprehensive will, annual reviews and changes at no additional cost, all designed to specifically meet his or her needs. Spouses may obtain one with free annual reviews for only \$20. New clients are provided with a worksheet to complete at their leisure. Watch for more details in fac rep mailings. To obtain more information contact NATCA's Group Legal Plan Administrator Steve Buchkovich at 1-888/803-3382 or Field Services at 202/223-2900.

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this in the past, but now, because of the leadership's "year of aviation" pledge and Shuster's record of success in taking the massive highway trust fund off budget last year, there is a better chance of fulfillment.

Slot-control battles will resume, and slot-expansion advocate McCain will have some of the leverage he needs, thanks to the six-month Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization, which puts airport improvement funding at risk after the March 31 deadline. Slot-expansion foes are also returning, including many Virginia and Maryland legislators who oppose them at Ronald Reagan Washington National, and House Judiciary Chairman Henry Hyde, R-Ill., who objects to them at Chicago O'Hare.

Throughout Congress, support for FAA funding should remain strong in general, although specific programs such as the Wide Area Augmentation System will be challenged. The legislative body will also count on agency Administrator Jane Garvey to deliver on her year 2000 compliance schedule.

All of these controversial issues played a role in the demise of FAA reauthorization in October, causing the bill to lose all amendments, including the one giving NATCA members access to the Merit Systems Protection Board. Lobbying to regain the protection will

resume again early in the 106th Congress.

With all this said, 1999 should be a busy year in aviation and in politics. Several states, including the bellwether state of California, have moved primary elections to March causing the election cycle to begin even earlier as presidential candidates gear up for 2000. NATCA activists, get ready!



NATCA's (l to r) J. Fitzgerald, W. Johannes, S. Johnson, T. Roberts and S. Hayden attend a press conference endorsing Sen. J. Gregg, R-N.H., (center).

Legislative activists across the country worked countless hours to help NATCA-supported candidates. Because of their involvement in this election cycle, the union will continue to achieve unprecedented gains for its members and families.

Controllers and pilots gather to discuss safety issues

Recently at the Air Line Pilots Association's awards banquet, NATCA Safety and Technology Team Lead Bill Blackmer spoke with pilots about some of their concerns.

"I was talking to ALPA Safety Committee Member Capt. John Long and the subject came up about how controllers and pilots have similar issues over safety and equipment upgrades," he commented. It did not take long for both men to realize some collaboration was overdue.

"I can appreciate the hard work of controllers. But quite often, there is a breakdown in the communication. It can be as simple as not hearing what the controller said or as complicated as not being able to do what the controller asks us because physically the plane cannot handle it," Long offered.

Two ways controllers and pilots are bridging the gap is through liaison and familiarization training and utilizing flight simulators. "The best advice I could give them is to take full advantage of

FAM trips," stated Long. Blackmer agrees, but insists pilots need to visit a control tower or center more often. "Several times I have personally offered to pick up pilots and drive them to a facility, but they hardly ever take advantage of it."

"It would not hurt to meet with ALPA and share ideas in a more formal setting, but the Federal Aviation Administration always looks at the bottom line when it comes to costs," stated Blackmer. Congress as well as the inspector general's office would have to approve the collaboration. NATCA recognizes these challenges and hopes to work with ALPA in the future.

Some Current Issues Between Controllers and Pilots

Land and Hold Short Operations: Controllers direct pilots to hold short in many cases, but they will often decline because they do not think it is a safe procedure. Pilots recommend the Federal Aviation Administration build a good system allowing automation to assist the controller in protecting the intersection.

Language barriers: Non-English speaking pilots make communication between them and controllers difficult.

Controllers and pilots not understanding specifics of each-others jobs: Pilots complain controllers do not comprehend flight instruments inside the aircraft, but controllers insist pilots do not understand complexities involved in maneuvering air traffic.

Equipment upgrades: Both pilots and controllers are victims of radar outages and unreliable weather data.

Union sinks teeth into another equipment issue

Vance Kaufman

An analogy may be drawn between the Federal Aviation Administration and a broken record. Both continuously repeat the same thing over and over. NATCA patiently waits while it listens to the agency sing the same old tune again. Its song has become familiar to the union: the FAA is pondering whether it will address NATCA's concerns about certain deficiencies of new equipment before its deployment.

The development of the Enhanced Terminal Voice Switch, a mostly digital system integrating radio and land line systems, began in 1992 with the search for a single replacement terminal communication system. After numerous delays and setbacks Program Office Operational Testing and Evaluation was performed in Santa Barbara (SBA) and Colorado Springs Towers (COS), along with the tech centers in Atlantic City, N.J., and Oklahoma City, Okla., to adequately evaluate the equipment.

Is Enhanced Terminal Voice Switch ready for deployment?

10 unresolved issues the FAA must address for ETVS to be suitable for the aviation system

Audio Imbalance	Voice levels reaching the controller are not balanced, consistent or predictable, resulting in repeated coordination calls or miscommunication. *Deployment Critical*
Rebooting Position	A continuous "ring" signal is activated in a monitoring position, and processor rebooting is the only fix. *Deployment Critical*
Touch Entry Device	Does not display enough resources for a busy position.
Failure Rate	Outage problems with radio cards.
Training	Need hands-on, instructor led classroom.
Battery Bank Circuit	Does not have over-current protection.
Test Tones	When trouble shooting, aligning radio or telephone cards, no way to isolate test tones from controllers on position.
Static Discharge	High speed data link used in larger ETVS installations is vulnerable.
Inter-Facility Connections	Failed to function properly with other facilities' systems because connection media is not adequately inventoried.
Tracking System	FAA and/or manufacturer does not have a tracking system making it difficult to determine hardware and software status at any given time.

COS provided the perspective of a transition from an old to new system and, in May, the Independent Operational Testing Readiness Declaration was signed, allowing COS to utilize the equipment. SBA, a brand new, not commissioned facility, offered a favorable platform for performing a multitude of scenarios necessary to adequately evaluate a new system. Its test conducted in June unveiled a multitude of serious flaws. The final report resulted in a recommendation to not use the equipment until certain deficiencies are corrected, classifying 11 issues as high importance including two deployment critical matters, 30 medium and 16 low priority concerns.

The agency has not made its final decision, but in the mean time decided to delay the In Service Decision until further analysis is completed by the product team. Translation: the delivery and installation schedules will slip even further, adversely affecting new facilities nationwide awaiting ETVS. One option available to minimize the setback is to immediately press for Radio Deployment Voice Switch, but it's not without its own problems, many of which are similar to ETVS. If the agency decides to move ahead, it must address these issues for it to be suitable for the air traffic system.

Inside

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Controller feedback needed to catalyze safety changes

Jerry Naylor and Scott Voigt

Q: What venue allows controller procedural problems to be heard by users and the agency?

A: The Air Traffic Procedures Advisory Council

A TPAC, a group responsible for examining safety concerns through the aviation system, finished its 93rd session in early October. Controllers did not contribute any requests for changes, rather pilots and special interest groups submitted all the issues. We know many NATCA members attain opinions, and it's time they are heard in Washington, D.C. Simply fill out the issues form located in the union's safety manual, and submit the information with your viewpoint and requested resolution to your regional safety representative or the National Safety Committee Chairman Wade Stanfield. The addresses for these individuals are also in the book.

Below are notes from the recent meeting. There were a lot of issues talked about, almost all of them dealing with YOU and how YOU do your job. Stay tuned to this spot for more information gleaned from these sessions, and we hope to hear from all of you about where we need to go with these issues.

NO 250-Knot Rule (IAH/HOU)	Aircraft Conspicuity	Standby for TCAS RA
Pilots are concerned with the lack of FAA "test" criteria and what happens when they punch out the side or bottom of class B airspace going WARP5. The FAA wants to explore starting this in other areas.	Increase aircraft visibility through means such as turning on lights when taking a runway.	Some controllers are telling pilots to expect an RA. Just give the crew the traffics' intent and leave it at that. Most will have to respond to Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System RA no matter what.
Radio Antilocking Technology	Landing Roll Instructions	Slam Dunks/Wake Turbulence
The technology exists to ensure you don't step on others' transmissions, but everyone, from low-end aviation to corporate jets must have it to make it effective, which costs money.	Continuing pilot complaints about controllers issuing turnoff instructions while they are still in a high workload environment in the landing roll. Good rule of thumb: wait until thrust reversers stowed.	When giving a B-757 or larger aircraft a slam dunk, be aware of the wake turbulence smaller aircraft will be forced to fly through, it's been involved in aircraft upsets and accidents.
Precision Radar Monitoring	The Term, "Expedite"	Active Runway Taxi Instructions
Further testing will hopefully indicate previous issues are now fixed. Some concerns are lack of training and use of dual frequencies for shooting the approach.	Pilots would like a definition for expedite to clarify what controllers think they should be doing. Let us know what you think they should be doing.	Pilots are concerned with an increase in runway incursions due to taxiing aircraft. One option may be to hold short of all runways and get a clearance to cross each one.
Phraseology When No Glideslope	Canceling Take Off Clearance	International Standardization
Pilots desire phraseology emphasizing you are not to use the glideslope, a beam that shoots out from the runway indicating what degree a plane should descend.	Cancellations put strain on aircraft system which may lead to burst tires, hot brakes or brake fires. Consider option of sending the landing aircraft around.	Develop standardization in phraseology and procedures between the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United States.

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Executive Editor: Sherrod Shim, Planning Director

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Chairperson
Wade Stanfield

New database provides union with tool to track data

The National Safety Committee has completed the establishment of the National Unsatisfactory Condition Report database. It will be an invaluable tool for all facets of NATCA, as well as provide us with a way to track trend data, such as radar outages or unsafe procedures, in the air traffic control system. We will also have the ability to search for specific information.

The membership will receive a monthly report from the UCR database. Obviously, we hope this will provide an incentive for members to file and forward a copy of the UCR to the regional safety representative for inclusion in the system. We ask each facility to establish its own internal procedure for this process, after all, it will only be as good as NATCA makes it.



SAIDS-2 needs replacing: it is not Y2K compliant.

Year 2000 problem evolves

Wes Stoops

Ever tried to squeeze into a pair of jeans that were just a little too snug, or struggle to slide into last year's bathing suit? Frustrating moments such as these remind everyone sometimes things just don't fit as hoped or planned. One such example in the aviation system involves the Systems Atlanta Information Distribution System-2.

The Federal Aviation Administration identified this equipment as non-compliant for the year 2000, and

plans on replacing over 160 SAIDS-2s with SAIDS-4s. The new system comes complete with a Pentium processor, and will replace the current nine-inch monitor with one which is 14-inches. Although this seemed like the ideal solution, the agency learned the transformation may not flesh out as easily as presumed after a recent site survey to Orlando International Tower.

After close examination, controllers learned it wasn't feasible to enlarge the panel surrounding the monitors to accommodate the larger screens. The process would require cutting into the center post, which is not a feasible option. The question remained: How would 14-inch monitors fit into a hole five inches too small?

The answer: Move the location of the monitors to an area of the panel which can hold the SAIDS-4s.

If the relocation impedes any controller's viewpoint, the agency will purchase additional monitors to ensure individuals will have the same access as with the old system.

FAA Administrator Jane Garvey established April 1999 as the completion date for the year 2000-related issues. NATCA supports using the SAIDS-4 as the solution to this predicament, but does not advocate putting the SAIDS-4 data on the smaller screens.

For further information please call NATCA national liaison for the weather division Wes Stoops at 202/366-4389 or pager mailbox 10009.

System unleashes new, significant improvements

Jim Karlovich

Sequencing arrivals is one of the most complex and most frustrating challenges faced by en route controllers today. But the Center Terminal Radar Approach Control Automation System (CTAS), developed in 1992 at NASA's Ames Research Center, offers significant improvements in this arena.

By applying sufficient processing power, accurate adaptation data and sharing of information between centers and TRACONS, the air traffic control system has realized a significant improvement in the handling of complex arrival environments. Controllers' workloads have decreased and system efficiency increased because CTAS accurately assesses only the information representing actual, real time delays.

NATCA controllers are providing expert input to ensure these tools are user-responsive and user-friendly. They have actively participated in the research and development at NASA as a system design team. Denver Center and Denver TRACON were the first to field prototypes, later followed by the Fort Worth Center (ZFW) and Dallas Fort Worth TRACON (D10). These Texas facilities have become the research and operational home to CTAS for over two years.

The biggest benefit of all is the reduction in delay workload. We meter less than half the arrival rushes we used to. For those arrival rushes we do meter, there is significantly less delay imposed, and it is much more evenly distributed among the arrivals.

Editor's note: At press time, NATCA will test a conflict probe at ZFW. More information to follow.

Union aspires to rise as leader in safety and technology

Dear Friends:

As all organizations evolve, so is NATCA. Now in our 11th year, we have the benefit of experience, a building up of skills, and a successful track record to propel us into the 21st century.

NATCA's first three years were devoted to intensive organizing and establishing a national office. In years four through six, we developed a powerful labor relations machine to effectively deal with our employer on disputed issues. The next three years focused on putting savvy legislative and public relations components in place. In 1998, we are moving into the safety and technology arena.

With new equipment slowly being phased in, modernization of the U.S. air traffic control system is no longer an abstract notion. Furthermore, we sense the agency's billion dollar debacles of the past are less likely. By no means are we out of the woods. Controllers and engineers working with equipment – both old and new – often cite significant problems. The need for our input to shape our jobs is more critical now than at any time in the nation's history. Between 2000 and 2005, we will see more technological changes in the way we do our jobs than ever before. Already, precursors to free flight or flight 2000 are underway or imminent.

To meet challenges of the next century, we'll capitalize on strengths, learn from mistakes and capitalize

on opportunities. We will solidify inter-organizational human factors agreements with other industry groups such as NASA, the National Aviation Research Institute, and a yet-to-be-established NATCA technology spin-off.

We must revisit our current safety and technology structure to make a strong impact on the future of modernization projects. Just as we established NARI, I foresee another entity apart from NATCA, independent of its internal, political forces. An executive – perhaps a vice president for technology; elected, hired or appointed – would oversee its scope of work.

This entity would strongly ally with other influential aviation groups in Washington to more effectively influence technology advances. I envision the organization sponsoring a major annual conference to heighten awareness of many transformations on the horizon.

NATCA's metamorphosis into a world leader in aviation safety and technology won't happen overnight. Yes, risks – albeit calculated – exist, and skeptics will have a field day. But as NASA Astronaut Scott Carpenter says: "Anytime you try something new or different, you must remember nay-sayers are occupational hazards for people with vision." Said differently: "Even turtles stick their necks out when they want to go places."

Genuine progress will take time to plan, research, test, modify, retest, implement and for ongoing evaluation. By taking these steps, NATCA will go a long way toward securing our roles and preserving our occupations in the future national airspace system. In other words: Turtles, start your engines!

In solidarity,



Michael McNally
President

ARS

Air Traffic System Requirements: Spin-off of the agency's pre-reform Air Traffic Requirements Division. It seeks to ensure the Air Traffic Service Requirements' operational needs are satisfied through the timely, cost effective delivery of quality products and services, all fulfilling the FAA's mission.

Regional Safety Representatives

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Planes entangled in destructive bursts of invisible air

A real, unpredictable, invisible boogey man is haunting the aviation skies.

This giant wave, known as wake turbulence, disturbs aircraft following behind other planes. It is difficult to forecast because it doesn't exist continually, may later regenerate and is never visible on a radar screen. The hazard comes when trailing airplanes become entangled in the wake, blasts of air coming in destructive bursts, roll and may be hurled to the ground.

At least 56 accidents are attributed to the mysterious wake since 1982, and 166 wake turbulence encounters were reported since April 1995.

Controllers utilize the Federal Aviation Administration's separation standards, based on broad airplane weight categories, small, large, heavy and Boeing 757, to minimize the chances of one aircraft's wake turbulence affecting another. But NATCA claims the system requires major revisions, and has relentlessly asked the agency to address its concerns for the last two years.

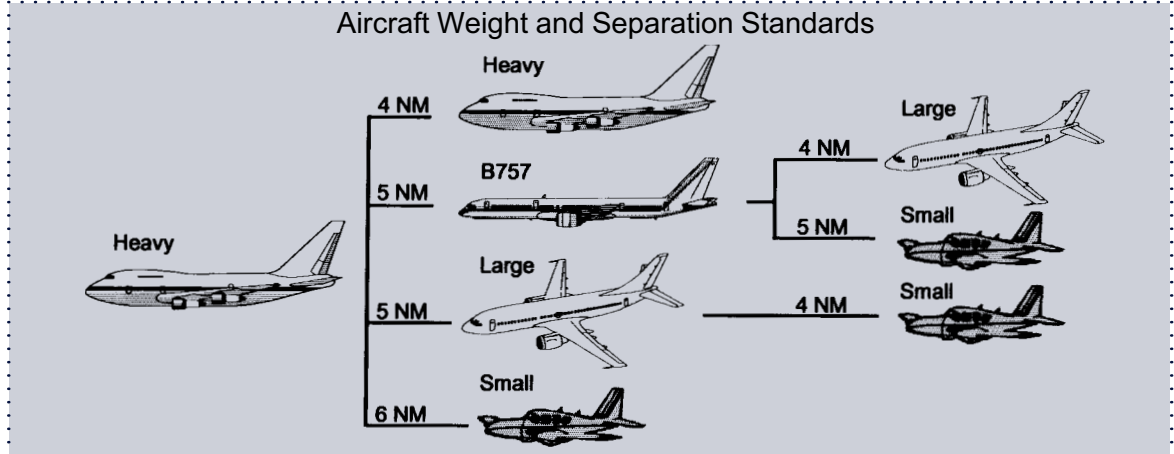
The categories are too complicated, and need to be simpler for controllers to utilize. "The fewer groups we have to think about, the easier it will be to memorize, which will inevitably decrease wake turbulence incidents," asserts National Safety Committee Chair Wade Stanfield. "Air traffic will flow more efficiently with more realistic divisions," added National Safety Coordinator Ben Phelps.

The union also believes the Boeing 757 should fall within the "heavy" group, rather than have its own classification for safety reasons. "The agency shies away from this issue because it is a political matter, involves many players, and has the potential to impact airlines, airports and Boeing," remarked Stanfield.

Right now, the 757s are one pound away from qualifying as a "heavy." If they were included in this section, then they or the 757s would lose their ability to land at airports they currently utilize at some airports. "This would negatively affect Boeing's ability to sell planes, the airlines who already own the 757s and depend on them to land at certain airports, and the airports which rely on them to maintain their capacity," elaborated Stanfield.

The union also claims the FAA's most recent 1996 changes to the standards didn't address the problems in the field. The agency increased the mileage separation between planes to four to six miles. But this does nothing for planes who follow an aircraft while on visual approach because they are still allowed to go less than the required distance. "Accidents occur because airplanes are permitted to trail too closely, and the agency is not attempting to remedy the situation," stated Stanfield.

"Unfortunately, it's a big guessing game for controllers. We tell the controllers to stick to the separation requirements, and hope everything will work out."



What's New on NATCA's Home Page

www.natca.org

Updated NATCA Committee Pages: The committee pages have been updated so they are easier to find. To view them, go to About NATCA on the public site and click on who's who. Committees include: constitution, finance, legislative, safety, OSHA and training.

Newsletter Survey: What kinds of articles would the membership like to see in *The Air Traffic Controller*? Take the newsletter survey and find out. NATCA's success depends on how it serves the members, so take a few moments to fill it out. Go to members only News Center and click on the newsletter survey.

Safety & Technology: The Independent Operation Testing & Evaluation posted its recommendations and conclusions on the Enhanced Terminal Voice Switch. Go to members only Safety & Technology and click on latest news.

Interactive website survey provides wide spectrum of opinion

by Katie Wittig

Would the flying public pay an additional fee on their airline tickets if they knew it helped acquire better air traffic control equipment? Are pilots, controllers and Congress keeping the skies safe?

Starting in July, NATCA placed an interactive survey with these types of questions on its website to garner a better understanding of the population's view of the aviation system. A wide spectrum of answers, from the casual web-surfer to the dedicated air traffic controller, poured in daily, totaling 170 responses.

The answers were categorized by individuals' age, gender, profession and union involvement. The number of men who generated feedback outnumbered women five to one. (Incredibly enough, the number of individuals who either are or had been involved in union activities was split exactly in half.) But when focusing on a specific profession, more union controllers responded. A summary of answers submitted up until October follows.

1

How many airline flights do you take in an average year?

52 percent fly between one to four times a year, with only three percent not flying at all in a common year.

2
What is your general feeling of safety?

76 percent answered between eight and 10 on a scale of zero to 10, 10 meaning they felt totally safe flying.

3
Do you think air traffic controllers' work is more, the same or less stressful and demanding than the average job?

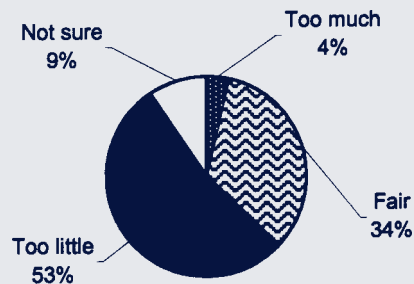
85 percent more stressful.

How well do you think the FAA, airlines, pilots, air traffic controllers, Congress and the White House ensures safety?

Opinions were split in half over the FAA's performance.

4
Do you think air traffic controllers are paid too much or too little for the services they provide?

Most believe controllers are paid too little.



• 47 percent said pilots are excellent and 51 percent offered good.

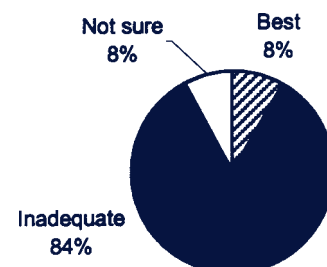
• 13 percent evaluated airlines as excellent and 63 percent marked them as good.

• 62 percent stated controllers are doing an excellent job contributing to safety, and 30 percent remarked a good performance. Only one-third of the votes for excellent came from controllers.

• 70 percent agreed Congress and the White House are doing a poor job of ensuring aviation safety.

5
Do you think the federal government supplies air traffic controllers with the best equipment possible or is much of it inadequate and outdated?

The majority holds a dim view of the equipment's reliability.



ns on aviation industry and air traffic controllers

6 Would you pay a one dollar fee on each airline ticket you buy to provide the best equipment possible for air traffic control?

Respondents are more interested in safety than watching their pennies. Half of all answers said they would pay more than one dollar. Almost 10 percent would expense over \$10 per ticket.

Describe your overall opinion of the benefits of trade unions to employees.

Union members shared stronger positive feelings toward the union. **11**

Questions 7-10 all dealt with issues of privatizing the air traffic control system.

- ▶ 15 percent believed private companies would run the system more efficiently than the federal government.
- ▶ 60 percent hold private companies would threaten air safety by cutting corners to make a profit.
- ▶ 14 percent weren't sure.

Do you believe unions help employees gain pay, overtime or premium pay, benefits, work schedules, influence with Congress & public support?

- ▶ 80 percent believe unions help employees with pay, overtime pay, benefits and work schedules.
- ▶ 74 percent think unions influence Congress.
- ▶ Less than half believe unions gain public support. **12**

8 70 percent answered turning the control system to private companies was a bad idea

- ▶ 65 percent felt flying would become more dangerous if a private organization took control.

Do you have a favorable, fair or not favorable opinion of air traffic controllers?

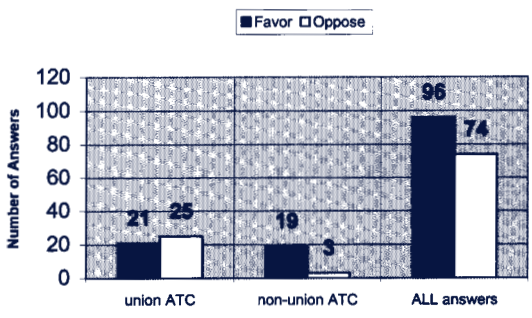
- ▶ 88 percent have a favorable opinion of controllers. **13**
- ▶ Only three individuals expressed a negative point of view.

9 & 10

▶ Vocational groups were nearly split in half when asked if people would favor or oppose the responsibility of day-to-day operations given to a private organization. But more union controllers opposed this measure, while 86 percent of non-union controllers supported it.

Do you have a positive, negative or neutral reaction when you hear the term PATCO?

- ▶ 46 percent voiced a neutral reaction.
- ▶ 28 percent voiced a negative reaction.
- ▶ Those surveyed under 25 had the most positive reaction to PATCO. **14**



Do you have a positive, negative or neutral reaction when you hear the term NATCA?

- ▶ As a whole, 94 percent of all respondents had a positive/neutral reaction.
- ▶ Controllers had the highest number, seven out of 10, of people unhappy with NATCA. **15**

Although NATCA succeeded in getting the Merit Systems Protection Board language exemption from Title V accepted in both the House and Senate versions of FAA Reauthorization, the language never made it into law. MSPB was a proposed amendment to the Airport Improvement Program, but the conference committee stripped the bill of all its legislative language, passing only an omnibus spending bill providing the agency with a \$9.56 billion budget. "NATCA anticipates it should be fairly easy to get it replaced on Capitol Hill next year, although this also opens the doors for people to possibly take potshots at this one more time," remarked NATCA President Mike McNally.



Arbitration training II participants take a break.

They might not be lawyers, but they hope to be the next best thing. With a goal of building up its advocate base, NATCA recently held two arbitration training sessions attracting 20 individuals who aspire to learn the litigation process in Las Vegas, Nev. The group endured intense, challenging material by practicing opening statements, researching the contract, interviewing people and giving closing remarks.

Some of NATCA's Organizing Committee members gathered at the national office on Oct. 9, to discuss issues surrounding the organization of Department of Defense civilian controllers. For their years of dedication to the union, Organizing Team Lead Lew Zietz presented Organizing Committee Members Joe Hennessey, Cherry Point Marine Corps. Air Station Tower, and Tony Masters, Bush Houston Intercontinental Tower, with plaques.



(standing l to r) L. Zietz, J. Cole (sitting l to r) J. Hennessey and T. Masters gather for a photo.

Just a reminder: don't forget to set up the mailboxes for the new pagers. Until this is complete, individuals will not be able to leave messages. Want to check voicemail, but not in the Washington, D.C., area? Utilize NATCA's 1-800 number, 1-800/266-0895, to avoid paying a long distance charge.

Many are aware of Department of Transportation Inspector General Ken Meade's report attacking the "Liaison and Familiarization Training." Meade has placed a lot of pressure on Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Jane Garvey to deal with this issue, and recently advised her she is in violation of the law and personally liable. NATCA has done a lot of work on Capitol Hill with Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Rep. Ray LaHood, R-Ill., backing them off from taking any legislative corrective action. NATCA President Mike McNally commented, "Hill activity is nothing we need to worry about right now. I've had a couple of meetings with Meade to see if I can come up with some sort of compromise he and I can both live with."



Pres. McNally gathers his thoughts in CNN's studio.

NATCA President Mike McNally appeared on CNN on Oct. 15 to discuss NATCA's interaction with the agency on developing a year 2000 contingency plan. McNally recently met with senior FAA officials who voiced they are willing to do anything he wants. The union is beginning to develop the initial steps of a strategy in the event of equipment outages.



NATCA's LR staff and liaisons strike a pose.

NATCA's labor relations group and liaisons attended a briefing retreat in September to go over the contract's new provisions and changes in Warrenton, Va. LR Director Bob Taylor also highlighted some sections which may prove controversial.

Many have heard about NATCA's trade booth, but are unaware of who takes advantage of this communication tool. Hats off to the West Coast members! The Northwest Mountain and Western Pacific regions utilized it 40 percent of the time for gatherings such as fly-ins, career expositions and aviation trade shows. The remaining 60 percent may be equally divided among the Eastern, Central, Great Lakes, Southern and Southwest areas. Interested in reserving the booth for an event? Contact Communications/Legislative Assistant Katie Wittig at kwittig@natcadc.org or call 202/721-2412.

The Southwest Region will host its 12th annual skifest in Salt Lake City, Utah, Feb. 21-27, 1999. For more information contact Milton Scherotter at 281/590-6661.

“Past Practice” fire continues to burn

Over the past several weeks the issue of “past practice” has been a hot topic. On Oct. 23, FAA Director of Air Traffic Ron Morgan issued a letter stating as of Oct. 30, all past practices which conflict with the new agreement will no longer be followed, and no negotiations will be required when terminating such practices. NATCA President Mike McNally responded on Oct. 28 commenting Article 102 of the new collective bargaining agreement refers to “employer” rules and regulations, *not* to unwritten past *practices of the parties*. He made clear Article 7 requires full and proper negotiations on such issues and policies.

In response on Oct. 29, FAA Director of Labor and Employee Relations Ray Thoman offered “past practices” should be included in the interpretation of Article 102, as they have since the parties’ 1989 agreement. He also added Article 102 stands as the negotiations for such actions as terminating “past practices” along with the conflicting *written* MOUs, and the agency will delay its implementation of the Oct. 23 guidance until Nov. 15.

McNally reacted to Thoman’s letter standing firm on NATCA’s original position. He also gave notice the union will file a national grievance regarding this issue demanding expedited arbitration on Nov. 15 if the agency chooses not to change its position.

New York TRACON security cards MOU signed

On Oct. 22, NATCA and the FAA signed a memorandum of understanding regarding the use of an employee identification (security) card system at New York TRACON. In the MOU, the agency states its primary purpose is to gain access to the facility and other security sensitive areas. It will not be used to track time and attendance, and will not be utilized as the sole source of evidence for invoking a disciplinary action. Should it be required, the employee retains the right to a copy of any information which may be used against him or her.

Government leaves American Express for Citibank

Recently, the government cancelled its contract with American Express, and entered into contract with Citibank for government issued credit cards. The union did not negotiate this change, and has requested a briefing with the FAA to discuss this matter.

Guidance regarding Article 18

Air Traffic Labor Management Relations Manager Bill Buck put out guidance which contradicts Article 18, controller-in-charge. On Oct. 30, the union notified the agency a grievance would be filed if management does not comply with the provisions of this article. All facility representatives should ensure Article 18 is being complied with at their facility or a grievance should be submitted.

FAA Private Contract Tower News

Management recently informed some Robinson Van-Vuren controllers their hours would be reduced. When queried as to why these actions were taken at this time, a spokesman for RVA responded the company needed “to remain competitive.” Alterations in working conditions prompted the union to submit proposals to negotiate the changes according to NATCA Labor Relations Staff Susan Tsui Grundmann. The employer’s failure to comply may result in the filing of unfair labor practices and a national grievance.

All controllers should check to ensure they are paid according to the most recent Department of Labor wage determination applicable to their area.

Midwest Air Traffic Control Services, Inc., recently tried to implement phone logs for long distance calls at all of their facilities.

After a letter from the national office, it suspended implementation of this policy pending determination of whether it falls within contemplation of Article 7, and whether further negotiations at the national level are required.

Want to share comments, ideas or suggestions about this new section? Submit them to Organizing Team Lead Lew Zietz at lzietz@natcad.org at the national office.



One-on-One

continued from page 4

ment of procedures, controllers must be included at the earliest stages and their ideas must be part of the design process, creation of requirements, procedures and training plans.

The Air Traffic Controller: What specific effort is the agency making to involve controllers at the beginning of equipment technology advances?

Griffith: We could call this one of the lessons learned from dealing with Display System Replacement and Standard Terminal Automation Replacement Sys-

tem. In both cases, the agency worked with NATCA to address issues and concerns to make changes for the better. As a result of this process, DSR is an excellent system, and is currently being deployed. We have carried this a step further in other current projects including Airport Movement Area Safety System and Initial Conflict Probe. The FAA put together a charter group who looks at not only the computer human interface, but also the concept of how the system will be used operationally. This initial information garnered from the controllers will carry the groups as both move forward through the acquisition.

