



# The Air Traffic Controller

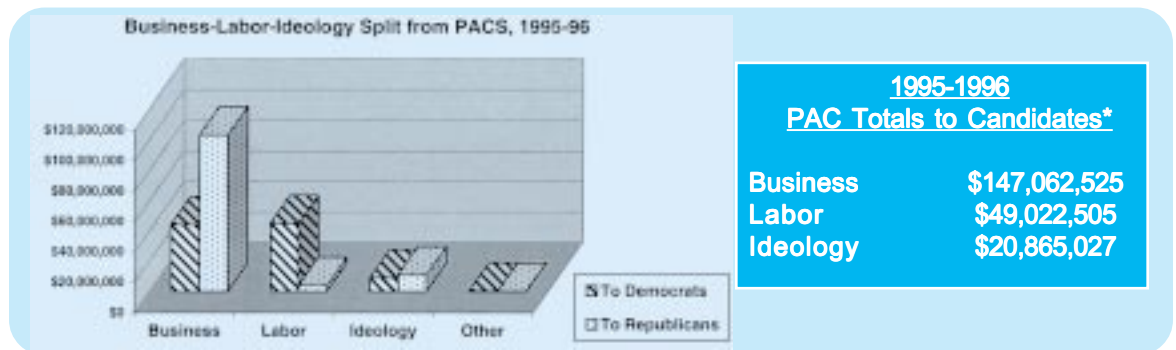
July 1998, Volume 12, Issue 6

## Contributions needed to maximize union's voice

**W**hat does it cost to run for political office? A House of Representative seat averages \$600,000 and a Senate one runs around \$4 million. This equates to individuals raising around \$5,800 a week for a House seat, and \$12,800 per week for a Senate seat.

In the 1996 election, business, labor and ideology groups gave political action contributions close to \$217 million to candidates. From labor's \$49 million donation, NATCA provided \$362,000—merely a drop in the bucket, at less than one percent of the labor community's total contributions. Yet, this amount still provided the union a voice on Capitol Hill.

A comparison between labor organizations' 1995-1996 PACs reveals NATCA, with 10,500 members, gave an



astounding average of \$31.48 per member during each election cycle. In contrast, the Teamsters' average is only \$1.86, United Transportation Union's is \$9.60, Air Line Pilots' is \$17.96 and the average flight attendant gives \$4.76 each cycle. By this measure, NATCA must forge ahead.

The dollar is the bottom line. Members of Congress don't look at the percentage of PAC dollars they receive—they only see the dollar amount. From this analysis, NATCA has a long way to reach the Teamsters' \$2.6 million, United Transportation's \$1.2 million and ALPA's \$880,000.

On Capitol Hill, there are 50 lobbyists for every member of Congress. This unbalanced ratio makes it difficult for members and staff to deal with every group's particular issue. By contributing to political campaigns and helping candidates get elected, it gives the union a foot in the door. NATCA is working on a better retirement system and preserving the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan. It must maintain strong relationships with both Republicans and Democrats who support its point of view.

Today 2,800 NATCA members contribute. Until membership grows through recruiting and representing new bargaining units, the livelihood of the PAC depends on its current members' willingness to give. A few dollars out of individuals' checks may not have much influence on their lifestyles, but this amount invested in the PAC may have a substantial impact on their careers as air traffic controllers. For more information, ask the local's facility representative for a form to start deductions today.

The top PAC contributors to federal candidates, not including donations to political parties, includes the following:\*

Rank	Contributor	PAC Total	Rank	Contributor	PAC Total
1	Teamsters	\$2,647,165	6	National Auto Dealers Assn.	\$2,346,925
2	Am. Fed. St./Cty/Mun. Employ.	\$2,512,821	29	United Transportation Union	\$1,266,500
3	United Auto Workers	\$2,475,819	39	Operating Engineers Union	\$908,290
4	American Medical Assn.	\$2,442,576	43	Air Line Pilots Association	\$880,000
5	National Education Assn.	\$2,356,006	**	Nat'l Air Traffic Control. Assn.	\$361,990

\* Source: Center for Responsive Politics

\*\* Not ranked in the top 50 PAC contributors

Highlights	
Volunteers	6
DSR Update	7
Facility Representatives	8
Female Controllers	9

# Volunteers give time, energy and money

Dear NATCA members and friends:

In a fast paced environment such as ours, it's often easy to overlook the obvious. You've probably noticed how we are recognizing some of our many, many volunteers who give so much time, energy and money for aviation and NATCA causes.

A monumental example is the reclass initiative which took six years and \$1.5 million, not counting the many, many 16 to 18 hour days and out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the men and women who worked tirelessly to make it happen.

Yes, we're exceptionally proud of our members who go beyond the call of duty. Here, I'm referring to people you know by name but who remain nameless to outsiders: Unsung heroes who often risk their lives in the course of day-to-day air traffic control. Recent examples come to mind.

Days ago, four controllers, a supervisor and 12 technicians remained in the Chicago O'Hare TRACON during an accidental carbon dioxide release. Why would they stay inside a closed area when a potentially lethal gas filled the air?

To safely guide pilots, their aircraft and passengers out of the airspace. The entire facility – with the exception of these people – was evacuated. They suffered the consequences: Nausea, light-headedness, pains in their joints. It could have been much worse!

Recently, controllers at Kansas City Center were caught in the midst of a bomb scare, when the FBI and local emergency personnel dealt with a suspicious device.

Again, the facility was evacuated. Yet, as many as 70 controllers continued at their positions, safely guiding aircraft through the skies. Of course, the place was buzzing with the news of a bomb, but controllers were not given any details. The explosive turned out to be a harmless contraption. Of course, these men and women are accustomed to crises.

Remember, the major December 1997 radio and radar outage that placed them in a precarious and dangerous situation. Still, their performance was exemplary. This is why we count Kansas City controllers among the best.



Finally, how many employees work in facilities contaminated by cancer-causing and harmful microbiological organisms, asbestos, radon and other gases?

Off the top of my head, I'm thinking of the 20 centers nationwide, the workplace for several thousand controllers – Boston, Miami, Washington, Indianapolis are notorious. From Anchorage to San Juan to Hawaii to New York environmental hazards abound. Day after day, controllers, technicians and other staff keep their eyes on radar scopes and aircraft. All in the name of our first priority: Safety.

Congratulations to all of you. My message is, yes, you know who you are but we who have the honor and pleasure of serving you know, too!

In solidarity,

Mike McNally  
President

## Going to a trade show?



## Want to promote NATCA?



Use NATCA's  
trade booth



Contact Katie Wittig  
202/223-2900  
kwittig@natcacdc.org

### Correction

Rob Misick is Tamiami's Fac Rep.

**President**  
Michael McNally

**Executive Vice President**  
Randy Schwitz

**The Air Traffic Controller**

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**Publisher:** Michael McNally, President  
**Executive Editor:** Sherrod Shim, Communications Director

Vol. 12, Issue 6, July 1998

## Campaign activism important for union's livelihood

In this edition of *The Air Traffic Controller* you can read about the NATCA PAC and its importance to our legislative strategy. It financially assists members of Congress and candidates that fight for our issues. This is just one method we use to support our friends and defeat our enemies. Another key element in our overall strategy is the involvement by NATCA members on political campaigns. As part of an ongoing series between now and the November elections, I would like to highlight several of our campaign activists working throughout the nation.

Cleveland Center's Howard Hall is one such member. Howard has worked on several congressional campaigns and is working on his third election cycle with Rep. Sherrod Brown's, D-Ohio, campaign, and he is beginning to reap the rewards. Aside from getting invited to the World Series, he has used his influence with the congressman to help his facility resolve a Display System Replacement software issue. After countless hours of working phone banks, hanging yard signs and stuffing envelopes, he claims, "There is no better way to make a friend on Capitol Hill." I asked Howard how he became so involved working on campaigns and he said, "You do it once and you're hooked!"

Brad Burtner, a controller at Cincinnati, is another important NATCA activist who is working hard on Scotty Baesler's, D-Ky., Senate campaign. He got involved after experiencing problems at his facility and meeting with Sen. Wendell Ford, D-Ky., about those issues. He has since attended the Kentucky Magistrates meeting as a representative of Baesler, been invited to campaign events and the primary election victory party, as well as volunteered many hours to help elect a candidate sympathetic to air traffic controllers. He believes the best way to influence Congress is, "to get involved at the grassroots level and contribute to the NATCA PAC."

Individual relationships are a critical piece to completing the puzzle. I can't stress enough the importance of volunteering on campaigns. It helps not only the candidate, but also helps NATCA have a stronger voice in Congress.

*Alan Clendenin*

*National Legislative Committee Chairman*

## Benefits must improve

I feel one of the biggest ways NATCA can improve my benefits would be to give health care benefits along the same line as those of the United States Postal Service workers. We have to pay anywhere from about \$50 to well over \$100 per pay period for self and family health care and postal employees contribute about 10 to 20 percent of that. We deserve to receive the same!

*Michael Hintz*


*Atlanta, Ga.*

## Members reflect vast rainbow of hobbies

NATCA's membership consists of a diverse collection of individuals representing a collage of skills, tastes, ideas, customs and backgrounds. While there may truly be a unique sameness when it comes to their commitment to the profession and the enhancement of the work environment, the union's members reflect a vast rainbow of hobbies and interests.

After all is said and done, everyone knows life is not all work and no play. With this in mind, NATCA would very much be interested in finding out what occupies people during their leisure hours? What are their avocations? What are their unique interests? What do they enjoy doing? What are their hobbies?

This is a great way to share with fellow coworkers the various ways members occupy their leisure hours. Please mail your answers to Courtney Barron at the national office or email to [cbarron@natcadc.org](mailto:cbarron@natcadc.org) as soon as possible.

Member	viewpoint		We want to hear from YOU!
	<b>What types of stories would you like to see in <i>The Air Traffic Controller</i>?</b>		<b>July 25</b> Respond Today! Selected answers will appear in future issues.
<b>Mail</b> Courtney Barron at the national office <b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:cbarron@natcadc.org">cbarron@natcadc.org</a> <b>Fax</b> 202/659-3991		Deadline	

Q & A	<b>Q.</b> What should members do if their address, telephone number or facility changes?
	<b>A.</b> Email or call Candi Derr in Field Services at <a href="mailto:cderr@natcadc.org">cderr@natcadc.org</a> or 202/223-2900.

# Agency's huge bureaucracy generates concerns

**G**erard Lear, managing partner of the law firm Speiser Krause, has extensive experience in airline crash and general aviation litigation. His firm has been involved in well known cases. For instance, they are representing 60 families in the 1996 TWA 800-Boeing 747 explosion off the coast of Long Island, N.Y. Recently, he spoke with *The Air Traffic Controller* regarding his views on the industry.

*Gerard Lear, Esq.  
Managing Partner  
Speiser Krause  
2300 Clarendon Blvd.  
Suite 306  
Arlington, Va. 22201*



**The Air Traffic Controller:** Does Speiser Krause deal primarily with aviation law?

**Lear:** Yes, our group is one of three major firms with a specific background in aviation. We are familiar with numerous aspects of flying because 13 out of our 19 lawyers are pilots. Speiser Krause handles the filing of wrongful death and personal injury lawsuits against the airlines, manufacturers, government in connection with major air carrier disasters and general aviation. The cases are usually referred by the deceased's or survivor's family lawyer.

**The Air Traffic Controller:** What aspects of your field have changed over the years?

**Lear:** A large number of things have evolved in the last 30 years. Now families and survivors of airplane crashes are more sophisticated about both the law and government. They are much more interested about what is happening on a daily basis. Litigation is strenuous because the communication requirements are greater, resulting in a lot of time spent on communicating, rather than actually litigating, adding to the expense.

The accidents are also more technical, making things harder and the uncertainty greater. It used to be you could go out in the field, look at the wreckage and find a mechanical trail. Today, often the electronics go wrong without leaving a footprint, so it is more difficult to replicate.

**The Air Traffic Controller:** Do you interact with the agency or controllers when preparing for a case?

**Lear:** Speiser Krause takes a lot of cases against the agency, inevitably involving controllers. When controllers are negligent, we sue the United States government. The Department of Justice provides counsel in conjunction with the FAA for its employees. When our firm wants documents, communication tapes and other helpful information, we send a request to the DOJ, which it passes on to the agency and ultimately to the appropriate agency representative, who in turn

sends the data back through the food chain. Likewise, if we want to take the deposition of a controller or others in the air traffic control facility, we must initially ask the DOJ. Private attorneys cannot go directly to the FAA during litigation.

**The Air Traffic Controller:** Has your firm represented air traffic controllers?


**Lear:** Some of the partners have provided legal counsel to controllers in actions against the FAA. Usually, this involves administrative complaints. Speiser Krause does not represent controllers if a crash occurs because the DOJ and FAA always provide counsel.

**The Air Traffic Controller:** What is your impression of the FAA? How do you think it is doing?

**Lear:** I am concerned because I think being part of the Department of Transportation handicaps the agency. I remember when it was an independent entity, and I think it worked better. Today, everything coming out of the FAA has to go

through a more bureaucratic process than ever before. Someone from the DOT, who has little clue, must oversee what goes on in the agency. It has professionals being micro-managed by those that I consider political appointees, who are now selected at much lower levels and want to be hands on. Rather than having just the cabinet secretary and deputies appointed by the administration, now the political process chooses people who are actually overseeing the cases. This negates the success of the agency because too many people, with little experience, are second guessing the professionals. Our firm is dealing with a lot of good people whose hands are tied because they in turn have to answer to huge bureaucracies.

The FAA has fooled around with air traffic control equipment for who knows how long, and screwed it up to the point where now it is time to pay the piper. The system is deteriorating and we now have a genuine fear that it is going to break down.



## A Closer Look

Favorite Type of Book
Historical Novels
Hobbies
Snow Skiing and Fishing
Favorite Vacation Spot
Anywhere his boat is located.
Favorite Food
Italian

# Engineers' role and responsibilities in agency explained

Michael Martin

Western Pacific Region engineer local president

"Engineers in the Federal Aviation Administration, what do they do?"

This is a question I have been asked many times. Most air traffic controllers know engineers are responsible for the construction and major maintenance of facilities. But many aren't aware of what we actually

***"Engineers in the Federal Aviation Administration, what do they do?" This is a question I have been asked many times."***

do in order to ensure facilities are constructed or maintained. In describing the project I am currently working on, I hope to shed light on what we do, and what value we bring to the agency, as well as to the flying public.

Four existing Terminal Radar Approach Controls will consolidate into one, the Northern California TRACON (NCT), and will be located near Sacramento, Calif.

In late 1993, engineers performed a benefit/cost analysis demonstrating consolidation would result in cost savings to the agency over maintaining and replacing existing facilities.

Staff engineers and consultants gathered information about the current airspace. They discussed quality of life issues for employees, many of which date back to the '60s and '70s, and reviewed recent technology and infrastructure advances available to make this project possible. Based on this information the FAA determined to proceed and a preliminary design was completed by mid 1994.

Architects and engineers of various disciplines started the final design process, began coordination with other organizations both inside and outside the agency with an interest in the project, and gathered additional requirements.

Plans were adapted to meet those stipulations, working out issues such as workspace, equipment, site selection, human engineering, budget and constructability.

Electrical and mechanical engineers designed power and environmental systems with the goal of having zero unscheduled outages throughout the life of the facility; ensuring the controller will maintain a safe air traffic control system at all times. All of this equipment is coordinated so the service will not be compromised by the failure of any single piece of equipment within the system.

After the design was completed, engineers and the contracting officer selected a contractor through a com-

petitive bid process. Construction commenced in January. A team formed, including a contractor, contracting officer and resident engineers. While the contractor builds NCT, the onsite engineers coordinate other activities that must be done concurrent with construction, monitor progress and quality of work performed and make requested changes.

Project conditions often require changes to the design, which are implemented during construction for reasons, such as requests to modify the design from the NCT staff and management team, and contractor requests because of issues with buildability versus the design or if cost savings can be realized through utilization of alternate methods or means of construction.

The onsite engineers work to bring balance to the competing interests so the facility is completed within budget, a schedule is met and the facility functions properly and provides a comfortable and efficient place to work.

The secret to achieving this harmony is a project management tool known as "partnering." Through its use, all parties communicate openly and honestly to achieve the common goal of "customer satisfaction while being on-time, within budget and with no

claims."

Electronic engineers design, purchase, and integrate the consoles, computers and voice and data telecommunications equipment throughout the entire process. This machinery will be configured and installed for voice transmissions from aircraft and other controllers throughout NCT's area of flight operation. Other sys-



***"Over 100 engineers will have worked on the Northern California TRACON from the time the project was conceptualized until completion."***

tems will transmit data from radar, weather and other facilities to the appropriate controller in NCT.

Installation begins during the final stages of building construction and continues for about a year. During this period, engineers assist the TRACON staff with bringing the equipment online for testing, integration and tuning.

Over 100 engineers will have worked on the Northern California TRACON from the time the project was conceptualized until completion. Through everyone's efforts, I believe it will be one of the best facilities when it opens in November 2000.

# Individuals tackle safety problems, develop solutions

What are the inherent system, procedure and communication problems confronting aviation safety? Around 70 individuals attempted to tackle this question and develop new innovative solutions during *Communicating for Safety*, a conference held May 19-21 in Orlando, Fla.

This annual event, sponsored by numerous aviation organizations, provided an open forum for discussion and free interchange of ideas between air traffic controllers, Federal Aviation management, members of the National Transportation Safety Board, pilots, product design engineers, manufacturers and experts. Industry leaders and NATCA members presented, moderated and facilitated the presentations and discussions on each topic.

"I was very impressed with the diverse group of speakers we had this year. We invited individuals from different aspects of aviation, including helicopter operations, parachuting and avionics research. We were also able to address topics new to many of the attendees as well as some of the other speakers. Everyone gained something from this conference," remarked Western Pacific Region Safety Representative Rod Hieronymus.

FAA guest speakers, Eastern Region Administrator Arlene Feldman and National Headquarters Assistant Administrator for the Office of System Safety Chris Hart shared their views with participants. Hart discussed information sharing programs. Feldman elaborated on the need to develop two way communication

between the union and agency.

"If FAA Administrator Jane Garvey's statements are true, the agency must accept and act on the input from the two most forgotten users of the national airspace system; the air traffic controllers and pilots," stated Eastern Region Safety Representative Mark Dillon.



Scott Marlin, Miami Center, speaks at *Communicating for Safety*.

Some of the other issues addressed during seminars included the future of oceanic and domestic navigation, the human element of aviation and problems and solutions of airport capacity. Panels and groups interacted and worked on presenting ideas for solving some of the issues faced by pilots and air traffic controllers. An open forum also provided attendees with the opportunity to freely state their experiences and opinions on subjects.

"This event caused people to start talking and thinking," added Chairperson and Southern Region Safety Representative Wade Stanfield. "It was a good forum to get the true users of the system together to determine problems and solutions," stated Southwest Region Safety Representative Scott Voigt.

"I think the conference went well and people enjoyed themselves. We are going to try something different next year. Rather than sponsoring this event, NATCA plans on hosting its own safety and technology conference, which will be somewhat similar to *Communicating for Safety*," concluded Stanfield.

## Volunteers keep union moving forward

Many members may feel the time they voluntarily devote goes unnoticed or unrecognized. But in reality, their actions actually catch at least one person's eyes. This month NATCA thanks Dave Levesque and Joe Parnacott for their contributions to the union.

Levesque, a controller at Anchorage TRACON, is directly responsible for increasing activism at the grass roots level with subsequent impact to regional goals. During the union's last Political Action Contribution drive, he personally advertised, solicited and prepared forms to increase or start PAC contributions for his facility, resulting in a higher percentage of participation. Levesque has been a part of the Critical Incident Stress Program Dispense group for three years. He also has served as vice president and executive board member for his local the past four years. At the 1996 NATCA Convention he served as Anchorage TRACON's representative. Levesque has given countless hours to prepare meeting agendas, activities and attend discussions with the Federal Aviation Administration. "I look for areas that need attention and help out when I can," he commented.

At Kansas City Center Joe Parnacott has garnered the part of safety chairman for the last year. In this role he tries to raise awareness of safety procedures and equipment. Previously, Parnacott served on his local executive board for one year and acted as an area representative in his specialty, trail, for three years. He also negotiated numerous issues for the Alternate Work Schedule defense. Parnacott completed several statistical analyses of the data including a comparison of cost and staffing between AWS and non-AWS situations. "I like becoming involved and I derive joy from being a part of the decision making. I also enjoy the challenges my various positions have presented me," he remarked.

This is a new feature of *The Air Traffic Controller*. Please submit volunteers' names to Courtney Barron at [cbarron@natcad.org](mailto:cbarron@natcad.org) or call the national office at 202/223-2900.



# ATC SafetyNet

TECHNICAL AND SAFETY ISSUES FACING U.S. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

July 1998, Issue 1

## Union's presence radiates at conference

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations recently held its 37<sup>th</sup> consecutive annual conference in Toulouse, France. Since 1995, NATCA has sent delegations to attend this meeting. This year the union's President Mike McNally, Eastern Region Vice President Joe Fruscella and Alaskan Region Vice President Ricky Thompson provided representation.

The conference is traditionally structured into three committees, which meet separately, except for opening and closing plenary sessions. Committee A handles the administrative business of running the federation. Committee B deals with the technical issues, reviewing and updating federation policy regarding new technologies. Committee C deals with legal and professional issues of the federation, and also reviews and updates policies in these areas.

NATCA's presence was further enhanced because this year a fellow member served on IFATCA's executive board. Its Executive Vice President Technical Martin Cole, controller from Washington Center, provided input into the discussions in Committee B. Thompson also provided a U.S. viewpoint and voted on all policy issues.

Representatives of International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations, International Civil Aviation Organization and International Air Transport Association also attended these meetings. They contributed significantly to the discussions highlighting the importance the international aviation community places on the views and policies of IFATCA.

Several of the gatherings in Committee B, as well as new official policy positions, are of direct interest to American controllers. Among these debates were the issues of the introduction of Reduced Vertical Separation Minima, Cockpit Display of Traffic Information and Airborne Separation Assurance System.

There are discussions and policies within IFATCA with immediate relevance to air traffic controllers in the U.S. NATCA's participation is vital, and not only must continue but should be expanded to include even more representation of North America's perspective in the global aviation community.

Sections of new federation policy adopted include:

Sections of new federation policy adopted include:

Short Term Conflict Alert	Policy was adopted regarding reduction of nuisance alerts and possible conflicts between STCA and Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System.
RVS	Policy was adopted aimed at keeping to an absolute minimum the number of non-compliant aircraft allowed into this airspace based on state (government) exemption from the regulations. IFATCA also endorsed the "single alternate" plan for assignment of the new available altitudes above FL290.
Future Air Navigation System - 1/A Data Link	After long and heated debate, IFATCA adopted policy aimed at highlighting the deficiencies of the FANS-1/A datalink technology and opposing any proliferation of this technology beyond the Asia-Pacific region where it is currently in use. The IFATCA technical standing committee also will undertake the task to bring to next year's annual conference proposed policy that would limit the use of FANS-1/A even in the region where it is currently implemented. Both of these policies, the one adopted this year on proliferation and the one that will be proposed next year, are extremely significant for NATCA controllers. FANS-1/A datalink is the technology that is currently in use in conjunction with Oceanic Data Link in the Oakland Center Oceanic area.
South Pacific Weather Deviation Procedure	This policy adopted at the conference is important for NATCA's Oakland Center Oceanic controllers. This new ICAO regional procedure, which asks workers to provide to aircrews a suggested course of action resulting in a loss of standard separation, is being implemented in the South Pacific region served by Oakland Center. The adopted IFATCA policy states controllers should not provide these suggestions unless employing aviation authority provides a clear policy that workers will not be held responsible for incidents/accidents resulting from the implementation of this procedure.

July Inside		Highlights
July Inside	Air Traffic Procedures Advisory Council	2
	Safety Committee	3
	Technology Projects	4

# Controllers have power to catalyze national change

As a NATCA member, do you think you have the power to set in motion a national change in how we do our jobs? Well, if you think you don't, think again. Air Traffic Procedures Advisory Council formed years ago to examine users of the air traffic control system's concerns, and take input from the members of their groups to look at safety concerns throughout the system. NATCA is a part of this team and helps to voice people's views.

As an individual, you can give issues to the union's ATPAC representative to be brought up in the upcoming council meetings. A copy of its issues form is located in the union's safety manual. If you don't have one, ask your local safety or facility representative. Submit the information with your opinions and requested resolution to your regional safety representative or the National Safety Committee Chairman Wade Stanfield. The addresses for these individuals are also found in the book.

If you want to see something near and dear to your heart brought up, obtain the form, fill it out and send it in. We will ensure your voice is heard. If you have any other questions about ATPAC, contact your regional safety representative who would be more than happy to explain the process to you. Some of the subjects being worked on right now pertain to matters brought up by different pilot groups because controllers haven't sent in agenda items in a very long time. A sample includes:

<b>250-Knot Rule in Class B</b>	<b>Runway Incursions</b>	<b>Runway Exiting</b>
Currently, it is being evaluated in Houston, Tex. The test has numerous points to be resolved to satisfy both NATCA and the pilots. The Federal Aviation Administration wants to press ahead and expand it to other cities.	The agency already has convened a group to work on this, but there hasn't been a national agreement between the agency and union on how to work together to fix this problem. Hopefully, we will hear more about this soon.	Again, explanation as to where one can and can't leave a runway, and what to do after departing.
<b>Speed Control Below Class B</b>	<b>Wake Turbulence Advisories</b>	<b>Next Generation Radar</b>
Pilots contend they do not carry Class B charts, and do not know when they are going out of the Class B on the underside, making it difficult to know if they need to slow down.	Pilots request controllers issue more wake turbulence advisories because there have been numerous close encounters.	The agency briefed on their plan to do away with all enroute primary radars after NEXRAD weather radar is overlaid on the display. All ATPAC members were against this move.
<b>Taxiing in Low Visibility</b>	<b>The Term, "Expedite"</b>	<b>Parachute Jumping Operations</b>
The different pilot organizations desire more procedures in place to help ensure aircraft may be monitored and don't blunder into runway areas.	Controllers are using this term more often and need to distinguish where pilots need to expedite.	The committee has deliberated over this subject for some time. The agency is working on a revision to the Federal Air Regulation 105 for parachute jumping. The group agreed there is a need for uniform regulation of all classes of airspace.
<b>Visual Separation</b>	<b>No Turns Below 400 Feet AGL</b>	<b>Precision Runway Monitor Issues</b>
A definition is necessary on how to use visual separation because pilots using the system can no longer see the other aircraft when passing.	The pilot groups have found some controllers try to require aircraft to start turns prior to reaching 400 feet above ground level. They would like to see more education for these individuals to prevent this from occurring.	The matters are cropping up at the Minneapolis Airport, where it has the first production model. It doesn't have a nationwide effect yet, but might if the system is deployed to more facilities.

**Chairperson**  
Wade Stanfield

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# “What’s going on in the world of safety & technology?”

Wade Stanfield, National Safety Committee chairman

Unfortunately, people ask me this question daily. Why do I say unfortunately? Because, even though I understand individuals are inquiring because they are genuinely interested, every time I hear this phrase, it still reminds me of the underlying problem of communicating safety and technology news to the membership. I believe I can safely speak for everyone involved in this field by stating we all realize, in general, we do not effectively disseminate information. Admittedly, some of us are better than others, but I still think we could do a better job.

So, that having been said, what do we need to do to remedy this situation? You are reading our largest attempt at conveying news, *ATC Safety Net*. Hopefully this will provide an avenue for distributing current

sound bytes on pertinent issues to the membership and the public sector. This publication will begin as a biannual insert. The long-range goal will be to progress into a monthly insert and eventually to a stand-alone newsletter dedicated solely to safety and technology.

Obviously, there are dozens of other things we could work on. Effective use of the Internet probably holds the most promise, although even it is not the cure all. We will also gladly accept any suggestions/ideas anyone wishes to pass along to us. These changes will take time, but they will make our union better and stronger in the long run.

In the meantime, please feel free to ask anyone involved in our area with NATCA - “So, what’s going on in the world of safety and technology?”

## Safety committee exposes important issues

Scott Voigt, Southwest Region safety and technology chairman

I would like to welcome you to the first edition of *ATC Safety Net*. This is our initial attempt to expose safety and technology issues, news and views facing the membership today and in the future. We want to hear from you in the next few months to determine if we are fulfilling your need for information regarding what NATCA is doing. Tell us if we are doing this right. We, unlike the Federal Aviation Administration, haven’t forgotten you, the working controllers, are OUR customers.

I hope to include articles in coming editions on all of the different technologies we are either involved or trying to become immersed in. What is on the horizon and what to be vigilant for. We also want to delve into the rules and policies composing the business of air traffic control, how we are able to carry out our job and maybe explore ways to perform better.

If there are topics we have left out you are interested in, please let us know. We will endeavor to keep you up to date on your profession and give you the tools to make informed decisions on what is going to affect all of us. Please feel free to contact either Courtney Barron at the national office or myself at: 540 Timber Ridge Dr., Trophy Club, Texas 76262, 817-491-2699, [svoigt@flash.net](mailto:svoigt@flash.net).

## Forms serve as invaluable resource and record

Ben Phelps, national safety coordinator

If something goes wrong with a controller’s equipment or a procedure isn’t working properly, what should one do?

Fill out a National Aeronautics Space Administration form, located in every facility, which will be entered into the Aviation Safety Reports System database.

Whenever something compromises safety, controllers need to complete and submit this information. It is an invaluable resource for resolving problems at the national level.

Unfortunately, pilots submit 90 percent of the forms, slanting the database to their point of view. We need to garner more input from controllers before a major problem evolves.

There is also a greater chance the matter will be

fixed if it is recorded in the database because it is hard for the Federal Aviation Administration to ignore.

This knowledge is useful for fighting issues in Congress, and may also explain why similar problems are occurring in other facilities.

People who report issues are guaranteed anonymity. They only have to include their name so they can receive a receipt for sending the tip.

In the last 25 years, no one’s identity has ever been compromised.

Although many individuals don’t like to write or have a lot of free time to bother with these issues, the benefits rendered from submitting the news clearly indicate it is a worthwhile task.

# Safety and Tech team members garner specific duties

Dick Swauger, national technology coordinator

**T**he name of our team here at the “nerve center” is Safety and Technology, and we each garner specific duties.

Safety Coordinator Ben Phelps handles anything regarding safety and works very closely with the National Safety Committee. As technology coordinator, I deal with technology issues. I coordinate activities of about 40 NATCA project representatives, and try to maintain at least a working knowledge about their undertakings. Administrative Assistant Donna Gunter makes sure neither Ben nor I are around any sharp objects, and takes our shoestrings from us each morning when we come to work. Seriously, she is the glue holding the crew together. And Executive Director Jack Cole – yes, I know, he is not officially assigned to our group, but he doesn’t know that, and we aren’t going to tell him. “General Jack” is the person who ensures the rubber band in each of us doesn’t get stretched too thin. He feels (as the rest of us do) there is no job too big or too small if its union works.

Since I am the technology guy, I would like to say a little something about my role. As far as experience for the job goes, yes, at one time I was a controller, but the operative word here is “was.” That is why I receive all

of my information about an activity from its representative. In fact, I am absolutely dependent on close contact with project and facility representatives (never met one I didn’t like) and the fine members of NATCA’s board, to keep me informed about what’s going on where it really counts – in the field. I’ve been asked more than once; do I like this job?

My answer is, next to working airplanes, it is the most enjoyable thing I have ever done. The closeness I feel with the brothers and sisters of this union is a very important part of my life, but it goes beyond that. The challenge to put decent equipment into your hands, in spite of the total disregard for controllers’ needs by Federal Aviation Administration, is one I accept with gusto. Display System Replacement and Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System are good examples of the struggles that must take place between the union and agency before equipment is deployed. With your solid backing, we will win those battles, and any others that arise in the future.

That’s it in a nutshell, and the next time you call you will know a little more about whom you are talking to, and don’t hesitate to pick up the phone. Remember, we work for you.

## NATCA’s Current Technology Projects

*Advanced Communications*

*DSR, Enhanced Terminal Voice Switch*

*Airport Movement Area Safety System*

*Free Flight*

*Airport Surveillance Radar 11*

*Rapid Deployment Voice System*

*Center TRACON Automation System*

*Surface Movement Advisor Prototype*

*Data Link*

*User Request Evaluation Tool*

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# National Safety Committee juggles multiple tasks

Scott Voigt, Southwest Region safety and technology chairman

NATCA's National Constitution instituted the National Safety Committee. Our charter is as follows: "That NATCA National Safety Committee shall be a national standing committee as mandated by NATCA's National Constitution. Its purpose is to be the focal point for NATCA on all air traffic control procedural and equipment related safety issues, which include:

Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Current and proposed air traffic control handbook proposals.</li><li>✓ Changes affecting existing equipment and technology.</li><li>✓ Recommendations on future equipment and technology requirements.</li><li>✓ The National Safety Committee shall, through the department of Safety and Technology:</li></ul>
Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Advise president on safety issues that may affect NATCA's bargaining unit members.</li><li>✓ Make recommendations to the president on safety issues.</li><li>✓ Coordinate and provide input to NATCA's safety work group members."</li></ul>

We are full time working controllers and engineers just like you, but we put our time in on the boards and deal with the issues on a daily basis. We are all volunteers and do the union's work for the membership mostly on our own time, days off, vacation, along with some official time. One person from each region represents the people in his or her area by serving on the committee. We also hope to add an engineer soon.

The committee is determined to provide the best possible leadership for the union in the field of safety and technology. We can only do so much. To have an effective safety arm, NATCA needs to involve everyone. We are only as good as the information we obtain from members. With-



out a determined force of controllers and engineers in the field helping, we are ineffective. Every facility needs to have a safety representative who can be an extension of both the Regional Safety and the National Safety Committees. You also need facility representatives who support the local safety representatives in doing their important jobs.

It is only through all of you the National Safety Committee can do the work that needs to be done. NATCA is the only voice for your profession. Together the thousands of controllers and engineers in this country, in a united voice can and will be heard, by both the users

of the airways and by leaders in the nation's capitol. Change is in the air, and only YOU can ignite the transition.

## Solution set finally developed for equipment issues

Mitch Coleman, Display System Replacement team lead

Recently, a joint effort of controllers and Federal Aviation Administration and Lockheed Martin engineers, successfully developed a solution set to the 19 Display System Replacement issues identified by NATCA in Seattle Center.

Union members Bill Blackmer, Sterling Swan, Mike Dunhom and Mike Naiman represented NATCA. Answers to every problem were first considered for operational acceptability and then went through the cost and schedule filters imposed by the contract.

Lockheed is writing the software to implement the resolutions that will be deployed by October. Now DSR equipment will include the use of color to improve the display attributes, better layout of the keyboard, adjusting the fonts of the flight strips and controller preference sets for display settings.

Other modifications involve highlighting Full Data

Block information by moving the slewball over the data to improve the overlapping information issue and the ability to get a flight plan read-out by a trackball action on the FDB. These alterations, along with an interactive keypad, allow members of the radar team to access

the facts in the views and to use the range controls and vector lines simultaneously and independent of the DSR keyboard and trackball, making the equipment a suitable platform for the future.

The union's effort isn't finished.

The equipment will be suitable for deployment, but there are many improvements to make, which will be better defined as the system is used.

One thing NATCA has learned is DSR does offer flexibility to make software enhancements quickly, which could never be done to the current radar display.

***"The equipment will be suitable for deployment, but there are many improvements to make, which will be better defined as the system is used."***

# Outstanding facility representatives recognized

Representing and serving fellow controllers is a role over 500 NATCA facility representatives undertake each year. These individuals ensure policies and procedures are followed correctly, attend numerous meetings and look out for the general well-being of their bargaining unit members. NATCA recognizes and appreciates the diligent work provided by these people, and would like to highlight one outstanding facility representative from each region, nominated by their regional vice president.



## Alaskan

Cathy Alcorn

Cathy Alcorn, Alaskan Region, became involved as a facility representative six years ago because she saw a need for improvement and wanted to actively make a difference. She has served her current tower, Merrill Field, for the past year. Alcorn has worked hard to motivate members to abandon the “I don’t know, I don’t care” mindset, and to start becoming concerned about issues other than those just affecting their paycheck. She has also successfully battled many points of contention with the agency. “I find this position extremely rewarding, especially when the members and I successfully resolve a grievance with management,” Alcorn remarked.



## Great Lakes

Steve Davis

Steve Davis, Great Lake Region, is going on seven years as Milwaukee Tower’s facility representative. He became involved because he was concerned about the relationship between controllers and the agency. Davis saw this position as the opportunity to become part of the change. “I enjoy helping people and I also have a vested interest in my career,” he commented. He tries to utilize as many resources as possible, creating a high level of local participation. Davis finds working with the FAA hard because “There is not a lot of rhyme or reason for why they do things. Also, it is difficult on all management levels due to the quick turnover because each manager has a different philosophy.”



## Central

John Tune

John Tune, Central Region, joined NATCA in 1987, and has served as Kansas City Center’s facility representative for eight years. “I never dreamed I would run for this position. I just stepped up to it, and have run ever since,” he commented. Tune feels the need to be active and enjoys working with air traffic controllers, but finds the Federal Aviation Administration more challenging. “The agency rarely tells you the same thing consistently, even on the same day. I like taking an issue to management, when it swears it is right. Then, I successfully show it is incorrect. The tougher the fight, the more I enjoy it,” he elaborated. This year will be Tune’s last term. “Even though it is good to have stability in this position because it generates experience, I think it is time for a change.”



## New England

Howie Barte

Howie Barte, New England Region, has been around since the union’s inception. He started as a Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization facility representative and later helped organize NATCA. He soon became New England regional vice president and currently serves as its alternate vice president, along with fac rep. “I became involved because it is the right thing to do. I am successful at representing and defending controllers because I have extensive experience. It takes a long time to get good at this because it is difficult to keep up with the changes in labor relations,” he offered. “NATCA members may not always be right, but they are never wrong.”



## Eastern

Joy Aldrich

Joy Aldrich, Eastern Region, held several roles at Albany Tower before becoming a facility representative in December 1997. She has garnered the position on her local executive board for five years, a crew representative for two years and both secretary treasurer and vice president for one year. Aldrich’s motivation lies with trying to help the local benefit. She attempts to aid her members in becoming more pro-active and involved with pertinent issues. Aldrich wants her tower to reap as many benefits as possible. “I hope to take our facility to the next level. More importantly, I want to be there for our individuals,” she stated.



## NW Mountain

Carol Branaman

Carol Branaman, Northwest Mountain Region, believes the union has come a long way since the days of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. She served as a PATCO facility representative for two years before attaining her current position five years ago. “Today, members receive more support from the regional vice president and the national office. Communication lines are developed and more effective in relaying information,” she stated. Branaman works hard to promote a harmonious relationship between the union and agency, but finds it challenging to balance the members’ needs with keeping the FAA reasonably satisfied.

# Female controllers share views on occupation

What does it feel like to walk into a facility, look around and ultimately realize you are a minority? Do you feel bewildered, strange or lonely?

To answer these questions, NATCA conducted nationwide phone interviews with numerous female controllers about why they joined a male-dominated occupation, the conditions of their working environment and how the agency treats them. The majority do not feel discriminated against and do not want to be singled out. Rather, they want to be treated equally in recruiting, testing and hiring procedures.

Women gave a variety of reasons for becoming a controller, ranging from having a fascination with aviation, to wanting a change in career paths. Boston Tower's Vivian Lumbar's interest sparked after taking flying lessons. Teresa Reber's, Long Beach Tower, father influenced her because he used to be a controller.

Michelle Wroblewski, Green Bay Tower, was a flight instructor before becoming a controller. She took the test on a whim with a friend as a bet to see who could score higher. A change in profession, from an engineer to a controller, was Margaret Murillo's, Fort Lauderdale Tower, rationale.

Everyone agreed they are not intimidated working primarily with men. "The women who become controllers are not your average female. Most of them can

*"Today men are more open-minded than when I joined 22 years ago. If you do your job well, your peers will respect you."*

hold their ground and are not bothered by being in the minority," commented one woman.

Although some encountered static from men back in the '80s, now the gender differences are not as much a point of contention. "Today, men are more open-minded than when I joined 22 years ago," offered another. "If you do your job well, your peers will respect you."

The number of female controllers is on the rise. Some facilities have close to 30 percent women employees. Most of those questioned did not want the agency to specifically target and recruit women. But it should provide the same consideration and opportunities, regardless of gender.

A few felt the FAA should focus more on its efforts to recruit females by providing incentives such as scholarships. Ruth Marlin, Miami Center, has initiated a women's scholarship fund beginning this fall.

"I enjoy what I do everyday when I am at work. I think other females should know and learn about this career opportunity because it has a lot to offer," one controller concluded.

*Editor's note: This article does not represent the views of all female controllers. NATCA selected women at random to offer their points of view.*



## Southern

John Gainey



John Gainey, Southern Region, thought he could make a difference six years ago when he became facility representative at Macon RAPCON. He finds his position fulfilling and worthwhile because he enjoys helping people at his facility and other local presidents. Working with the agency is more challenging because since its reform it has lacked direction provoking the FAA to often cancel or postpone meetings. With help from NATCA's national office, he has guided his group over numerous obstacles. "I enjoy my role because the pros definitely outweigh the cons," he explained.

## Southwest

K.C. Leonard



K.C. Leonard's, Southwest Region, interest in NATCA began in 1985 when he handed out literature to generate support for establishing a union. As a charter member, he became the vice president for New Orleans International Tower and later moved up to president 10 years ago. "I wear something with NATCA on it everyday to show my pride," he remarked. "Our facility also holds NATCA shirt or hat days periodically, which drives our managers wild." Leonard's philosophy is the union individuals are like family. "You shouldn't bad mouth either one. Don't become a member unless you want to participate and become involved. We need people who want to become active because we energize and motivate each other," he concluded.

## Western Pacific

Chuck Zapf



Chuck Zapf, Western Pacific Region, picked up his role as facility representative close to three years ago when he moved to Hawaii. When he started his position at Honolulu CERAP, 18 out of 40 controllers were NATCA members. Today, the numbers increased to 48 out of 53 individuals. "Our group works off the attitude everyone in the facility is extended family." The rise in employee involvement is Zapf's indication things are running smoothly, and plans on motivating more controllers to join. "I really enjoy what I am doing because I like helping others and there are so many rewards. I am thankful for the culture I work in," he concluded.

Organized labor asserted its political might on June 2 when the referendum called Proposition 226 was defeated 54 to 37 percent. This initiative posed one of the largest threats to labor in years. It would have required annual written authorization from union members for use of their dues in politics, inevitably choking off support for liberal causes and Democratic candidates. This outcome represents a stunning comeback for labor.

The General Accounting Office's report issued on June 2 indicated the Federal Aviation Administration does a poor job relaying crucial weather data to pilots, information that could avoid everything from bumpy flights to crashes. The agency contends it is making progress, installing 37 high tech Doppler radar units at major airports around the country to provide up-to-the-minute data.



NATCA's national office's (from left to right sitting) Laurie Bay, Shannon Grant (left to right standing) Katie Wittig, Lew Zietz, Mike Doherty and National Liaison Wes Stoops staffed the booth at Andrews Air Force Base's open house..

Members proudly displayed NATCA's banner at Centennial Tower's fly-in, attended by over 13,000 individuals on May 9. The local used the banner to attract more attention and publicity, as well as make the public aware of what controllers do.

NATCA's convention is just around the corner. According to the union's constitution, a facility's delegate count is based upon the number of members within each facility. It is imperative each local receives the maximum number of representatives it is entitled to. This is an excellent time to take stock of your current delegate entitlements and take advantage of the opportunity to increase the number of individuals granted.

It is a simple proposition. Some facilities may be within a few members of reaching its next plateau. With just a little effort, it may be possible to increase this representation. This "window of opportunity" is quickly shrinking and is about to close. The convention will commence in Seattle on Sept. 5. New member applications must be received by NATCA's national office no later than July 20. Need additional assistance or information? Contact Organizing Team Director Lew Zietz at 202/721-2431.



NATCA's Executive Vice President Randy Schwitz met with several reporters on June 5, and defended air traffic controllers regarding refresher course training mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration. Pictured above, he addresses important issues on CNN.

Over 800,000 people flocked to Andrews Air Force Base's open house May 16-17 to view an assortment of airplanes and exhibits staffed by organizations in the aviation industry. The highlight of the event included an air show performance by the Navy's Blue Angels and Army's Golden Knights.

NATCA staffed a booth and fielded questions about how to become an air traffic controller and union member. "We were pleased with the support and inquiries of those who were interested in our field," remarked NATCA Communications Assistant Katie Wittig.

If you would like to utilize the union's booth please contact Wittig in NATCA's national office at 202/223-2900.



Although birds are beautiful to admire and listen to, sometimes they are a nuisance in aviation. An estimated 9,000 United States commercial and another 2,600 military flights collide with birds each year, causing the animals to get sucked into turbine engines or strike wings and fuselages as reported in *The Washingtonian*. In 1995 at Dulles Airport, a flock of about 10 geese hit and damaged the wing of a Boeing 757. Many civilian airports are equipped with noisemaking cannons to scare birds away.

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Facilities**



Towers  
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Orlando Executive

Fac Reps  
Jim Vitti  
Todd Parker

**Memoranda of understanding signed**

**N**ATCA signed a memoranda of understanding concerning Display System Replacement site survey issues at Seattle Center. Check out the labor relations page of NATCA's members only website for more information.

**Individual removed because did not seek assistance**

The Federal Aviation Administration's current policy regarding alcohol rehabilitation gives employees who self-refer a second opportunity for help if they relapse. The point of contention was whether the grievant referred himself before the agency discovered he had a problem. The arbitrator determined the individual didn't first request assistance and was provided all the support he was entitled to. He was removed to promote the efficiency of the agency.

**Grievant provided false information**

An arbitration took place regarding a three day suspension for unauthorized absence from the facility. Even though it may be a common practice to sign in and out at the beginning of a shift to leave early, prior permission from a supervisor still needs to be obtained and documented. The arbitrator concluded the grievant gave false information during the investigative interview, and concluded the agency had just cause to suspend the person.

**Asbestos contamination evaluated**

An arbitration took place regarding asbestos contamination at Boston Center. The agency violated certain provisions of the collective bargaining agreement, in particular Occupational Safety and Health Agreement regulations and the Boston Center Contingency Plan.

NATCA sought "medical surveillance," hazardous duty pay and restoration of leave for certain bargaining unit employees. The arbitrator issued a split decision finding:

✗ The risk of exposure to airborne asbestos fiber concentrations was directly connected with the performance of assigned duties and was not incidental. Hazardous duty pay was appropriate for a certain period.

✗ Although controllers were not entitled to medical surveillance, they were entitled to receive a medical.

✗ The restoration of leave was denied. NATCA will appeal the denial of the medical surveillance and is attempting to expand the scope of hazardous duty pay.

**Excess and obsolete equipment donated to Africa**

The theory: An individual can take a small idea and make something happen by talking to the right person

The individual: Great Lakes Regional Vice President Jim Poole.

The small idea: Donate obsolete or excess air traffic control equipment to governments of sub-Saharan African countries.

The right person: Chief of Staff for Rep. Danny Davis, D-Ill., Rich Boykin.

Recently while sitting on an airplane, Poole struck up a conversation with Boykin regarding aviation issues confronting various countries. They developed the idea of the United States giving obsolete or excess air traffic control equipment and reimbursable technical assistance to sub-Saharan African countries. Inevitably it passed in Congress, and became an

amendment to the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

For many years the United States has worked to bring Africa to the world table with trade and economic development, and this effort would further that pursuit. Also as the United States increases trade with this area, it would ensure the infrastructure for air traffic is sound and safe.

The amendment also reaffirms America's commitment as the leader in technology, to bridge the technological and communication gap residing between the two countries. It ensures planes and Americans travelling into African air space will be safer.

Today, the International Federation of Airline Pilots Association and others declare the majority of the area over Africa is critically deficient in air traffic control. Its poor safety record comes from lack of radar, VHF coverage and thorough meteorological information. In fact, in 1996, IFAPA reported 77 midair collisions in the African airspace.

**What's New on NATCA's Home Page**

www.natca.org

\* New Training Modules are now posted for NATCA members. Just simply click on the new training site on the members only home page to get connected. Inside you will find important information on labor relations, the Back Pay Act and filing grievances.

\* The advertising rates for this year's convention are listed on the web. NATCA wants you to make this convention the best ever. Show your local union spirit by displaying your ad in the program. Space is limited so sign up soon: members only news center update.

# Bulletin Board

## July

- 6 Package of amendments/resolutions mailed and received by members
- 7-8 Alaskan Region Facility Representative Meeting, Anchorage, Ala
- 8 Arbitration, Removal.
- 13-17 Southern/New England Regions Preconvention Facility Representative Meeting, Atlanta, Ga.
- 15 Arbitration, Change in Grade
- 15-16 Great Lakes Region Facility Representative Meeting, Elmhurst, Ill.
- 20-24 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 22 Campaign Volunteer Training, San Diego, Calif.
- 22 Southern Region End of Year Bid Brokering, Atlanta, Ga.

## August

- 10 Great Lakes Region Performance Arbitration
- 10 Arbitration, Quality Step Increase
- 12 Arbitration, Official Time
- 24-28 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.

## September

- 4-8 NATCA Convention, Seattle, Wash.
- 14 Fourth Annual Golf Tournament, Southern California TRACON
- 17 NATCA Golf Outing, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- 28- Oct. 2 Arbitration I Training, Las Vegas, Nev.

## October

- 19-23 Arbitration II Training, Las Vegas, Nev.

## November

- 16-20 NEB Meeting, Washington, D.C.

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