



Reporter motivates agency to finally listen

One phone call on April 17 from a reporter to the Federal Aviation Administration motivated the agency to finally listen to the song controllers have been singing since last summer. The threat of exposing the FAA's unwillingness to resolve 19 deficiencies in the Display System Replacement equipment forced it to delay the system's installation until it reaches an agreement with the union. Previously, the agency would not react to complaints and stated problems might be fixed later, after controllers started using the equipment.

NATCA Executive Vice President Randy Schwitz and FAA Administrator Jane Garvey compromised on several issues, ultimately agreeing limited use of the equipment will begin on May 29 in Seattle, Wash. Operation may not go beyond limited implementation if individuals do not reach a resolution strategy.

A small group, composed of controllers from the DSR team and Lockheed Martin and agency engineers, are devising solutions for the 19 issues. DSR

Lead Mitch Coleman commented, "We will have an operationally suitable system if the FAA installs all of our recommendations."

NATCA's battle began last year when controllers identified numerous problems during formal testing with the equipment. The union's national office and DSR team initiated a grass roots effort with the facility representatives and executive board to pressure the agency to make changes. "The FAA began to make improvements but they were insignificant because they were first screened by cost and schedule," stated Coleman.

"We identified the problems, but we received nickel and dime fixes. The agency was not willing to let us sit

down with the engineers to develop solutions," he added. "It was apparent the FAA was more concerned about proving it can field new equipment on schedule and within costs than it was about whether the system was operationally acceptable," said NATCA President Mike McNally. Once the controllers evaluated DSR in aggregate this past March, it concluded it was unacceptable because several things still needed modification.

The new equipment is less capable in some areas than the 30-year system it is supposed to replace. Numerous aspects are problematic. For instance, on the

old system buttons and knobs are located on the radar screen. On the new system, they have been moved to the DSR keyboard, which inhibits the radar teams' access to the necessary tools. Recent pressure from the union to alter this feature will result in positive changes implemented by September.

Another problem involves the keyboards. Keys are all the same color, do not have different texture and are located further from screens. Both of these factors will inevitably

cause the worker to take his or her eyes off of the radar scope to look at keys.

Until the union and the agency resolve equipment issues, DSR will not be used at centers other than Seattle. Controllers have been trained and systems have been installed in Denver, Colo.; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Atlanta, Ga. "NATCA is optimistic the identified problems will be corrected prior to full operational use," concluded Schwitz.

NATCA recognizes the following members of the DSR evaluation team for their continued hard work and dedication over the last two years. These people work 12 to 16-hour days and give up a lot of personal

continued on page 6

Site	Initial Operating Capability	Operational Readiness Demonstration
Seattle	6/98	10/98
Salt Lake City	8/98	12/98
Denver	10/98	2/99
Atlanta	10/98	1/99
Chicago	11/98	2/99

* The first five facilities scheduled to receive DSR.

June Inside	Highlights	
	Open Season Analysis	6
	Asbestos	7
	Airport Simulator	8
	Website Information	9

Direct affiliation holds promising future for union

Dear friends and members:

For many years, the profession of an air traffic controller was only indirectly recognized by the AFL-CIO as an affiliated union. Recently, our professional status – both on the Hill and within the labor community – dramatically improved.

On March 20, NATCA, a relatively small federal union, was granted a direct charter by the AFL-CIO Executive Council. At no time in the history of air traffic control has this been achieved.

Genuine clout comes through effective alliances. Now as a direct affiliate of the AFL-CIO, we stand out and carry the House of Labor's strength when we work with members of Congress, White House advisors, agency officials and other trade unions.

Because of our direct affiliation, we can work even more effectively on many issues critical to our occupation, you and your family, as well as the public's safety.

Many Washington fights that have potential impact on our livelihoods generally go unnoticed, due in large part to the work of labor coalitions in fending off attacks on worker rights and benefits.

However inconspicuous they may be, make no mistake, without labor, there would be no other advocate to protect us from big business or big government interests.

Now, our direct labor relationship will give us access vital to our future success. A case in point is securing a retirement scenario that more fairly and accurately reflects the realities of our high stress occupation.

Aside from this union recognition of our occupation for the first time, other direct affiliation benefits will extend far beyond political clout. The AFL-CIO can provide cost effective services, assisting in ways an organization of our size could otherwise never hope to achieve. A direct charter positions us at the core of labor issues.

With the potential strengths and increasing influence in Washington as a result of NATCA's direct AFL-CIO affiliation comes a flip side: Responsibility. Now,

more than ever, we join all labor organizations in protecting employee rights, improving benefits; and, specifically, in our realm, ensuring a dependable, safe air traffic control system.

"Direct" AFL-CIO charters are rarely given. Indeed, the impetus of the labor movement is to affiliate (through a partner union), not be individually recognized. Believe me when I say this is an esteemed event, memorializing and acknowledging the unique status and economic impact of our occupation!

Understanding this distinction, we are proud and intend to be a full participant in the federation.

In solidarity,



Mike McNally
President



Want to be more informed
about NATCA...

then
check
out



NATCA's
Fac Rep
Mailing!

President
Michael McNally

**Executive Vice
President**
Randy Schwitz

**The Air Traffic
Controller**™

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Banner promotes union

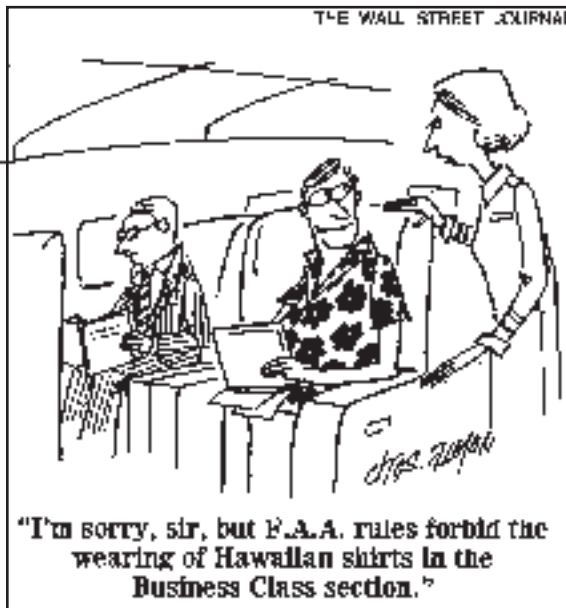
I would like to thank you for sending me NATCA's trade show material for our facility to use at Centennial Airport's Fly-In, *Just Plane Fun*, in Denver, Colo.

We hung NATCA's banner from a large tent cover our group recently purchased, and gave away union trinkets and sold hamburger, hot dogs, etc.

This was a great opportunity to raise money for the local chapter and visit with the people who support us. I highly recommend other facilities take advantage of the opportunity to use this banner because it is very versatile and easily transportable.

Above all, it helps promote NATCA's livelihood.

*Tony Nunez
Denver, Colo.*



From the *Wall Street Journal*. Permission Cartoon Features Syndicate.

Member speaks out on Thrift Savings Plans' policy

I had the opportunity to read the January/February edition of *The Air Traffic Controller*. Myself and others are extremely interested in the Member Viewpoint section discussing the Federal Aviation Administration's discriminatory policy of capping employees' contributions to their Thrift Savings Plans.

The Internal Revenue Code currently has provisions for retirement planning at the individual level through several methods of salary deferment. I can't comprehend why the agency has not extended the full limits of the regulatory provisions to all employees.

First, why are all FAA employees as a whole discriminated against as to the limitation at either five or 10 percent of base pay? Second, why does capping the contributions at five percent further discriminate against Civil Service Retirement System employees?

Unfortunately, this is another example of the government attempting to balance the budget on the backs of federal employees. All we are requesting is to be

treated in the same manner as other tax paying citizens of this country. Why are we not allowed the same rights and privileges as our neighbors?

Please extend our voice of support to Rep. Connie Morella, R-Md. Let her know she has a strong coalition of voting power behind her.

Thanks for listening. Your thoughts and comments are appreciated.

*Craig Lewis
Chicago, Ill.*

Successful tour given

I can't tell you how impressed I am with NATCA and Jim Schultz, who took the time to show me around the center on Long Island. He gave a really excellent tour and I am so impressed with the work NATCA does. It was truly a neat experience.

Instead of walking away scared to fly, I left with a real feeling of competence and professionalism on the part of controllers.

Again, many thanks.

*Carol Ann Kell
Washington, D.C.*

Member

viewpoint



We want to hear from YOU!

How do controllers deal with pilots who speak English as their second language?

Mail

Courtney Barron
at the national office

Email

cbarron@natcacdc.org

Fax

202/659-3991

June 25

Respond Today!

Selected answers will appear in future issues.

Deadline

Campaign Volunteer Seminar

focusing on legislative activism and motivating people to work on Congressional campaigns

June 17
(arrive June 16)
St. Louis
Call Dustin Miller
888/915-8194

July 22
(arrive July 21)
San Diego
Call David Caldwell
888/915-8188

Agency must receive sufficient funds to do full job

Sen. Wendell Ford, D-Ky., the ranking Democrat on the Commerce, Science and Transportation aviation subcommittee, will retire in 1998 after serving 24 years. Ford recently spoke with *The Air Traffic Controller* to elaborate on several issues surrounding the Federal Aviation Administration.



Sen. Wendell Ford, D-Ky.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* How do you view the culture of the agency in working with its unions?**

Ford: I am impressed with FAA Administrator Jane Garvey and the way she handles things. She is talking to a lot of people in the process of making decisions, so a lot of folks have input, including the unions. My observation is she works well with people. In some respects, individuals might think she is moving a little bit slower than they would like, but she is being very careful to not make mistakes of the past. Garvey is listening and not jumping to conclusions.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* Do you have a person in mind for the agency's deputy administrator's position that has been vacant for over a year?**

Ford: No, I don't. It is a very important position and, of course, we would all like to hire someone. There have been several very good candidates, but it is a difficult position to fill because the individual would have to take a significant cut in salary, considering what they would have to handle as the deputy. It is a long process, but I am hopeful they will find somebody soon.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* What is your opinion of the FAA's performance based organization bill?**

Ford: It is something Congress won't be able to put into place immediately. I believe a lot of thought has been invested in the bill, and we have an opportunity to take that piece of legislation and turn it into something good.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* Do you believe Congress will be able to pass a user fee system this year?**

Ford: Under the circumstances, it is doubtful. We would like to come to an agreement, but it is difficult right now to get a consensus between low fare and major airlines along with general aviation. If you could get all of them together, you could win a war.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* Do you think the FAA**

can deliver on large equipment acquisitions with its past history of cost over runs and years of delay on systems such as STARS and DSR?

Ford: I think there is a possibility. Ms. Garvey has looked at the past General Accounting Office's criticism about being late and over budget. She is trying to be very careful. Once she gets the consensus, she has to look at what commission has recommended.

You have to build a bridge between the present equipment and the needs of the future. I am not sure you can put it in all at once and make a decision.


One of the major problems the agency struggles with is its constant expansion, which makes it more difficult to get people together to reach a consensus. If you don't have this agreement and you move forward, you are lacking the necessary support.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* Knowing the challenges of host replacement, STARS and DSR, do you foresee the agency being able to afford free flight?**

Ford: This is a mammoth job and putting safety first is the underlying criteria. Considering all of the problems and challenges with these issues, I think we will eventually get there. Right now the projected time to have all of the equipment in is around 2003. It is part of Ms. Garvey's decision making process as to whether or not the FAA accelerates this date.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* Do you feel the aviation trust fund should go directly to the FAA?**

Ford: Yes, all of the funds raised by aviation should go to the FAA. What is needed in between, we can support through the general fund. If it can fund the FAA sufficiently, it will accomplish its purpose. We can't give the agency less than it needs and expect it to do a full job.



A Closer Look

Role Model
Henry Clay
Motto
Compromise is negotiated hurt.
Hobby
Fishing
Greatest Strength
Patience

Engineers serve as useful resource for controllers

Mark McLaurin, PE

New England Region engineer local president

A majority of the engineers voted to affiliate with NATCA in November 1997. We chose this union because we like to do things right the first time.

Unfortunately, it is apparent a small minority of controllers do not want us included. I say this because of the reception engineers received during Lobby Week in Washington, D.C.

NATCA President Mike McNally introduced us in a general meeting and the controllers welcomed us with a standing ovation that went on for some time. I thank each of you for giving us such a warm greeting.

I did notice one man in the front of the hall sitting and scowling. I perceive he may have been unhappy

about our membership, but he may have just been in terrible pain. Thinking about the look on his face, it could have been either.

As I walked away from the reception, a controller left his seat. He came straight to me and asked for assistance in an equipment problem. This is the beginning of a partnership between the two groups that can make our working conditions and the Federal Aviation Administration better than we have ever known them.

I wanted to meet the disgruntled individual and suggest using the engineers as a resource, but events overcame the situation and I lost track of him. While I did not make the offer in person, it still stands.

Legitimate questions about membership answered

Every question about membership is legitimate. NATCA welcomes people who check out rumors and innuendo because they will become a well informed member with a likelihood of making solid decisions about NATCA's direction. Commonly asked questions and responses follow.

Why should I become involved in NATCA when I receive the same benefits without joining?

“Without a high membership, the Federal Aviation Administration assumes the workforce agrees with it and there's little motivation to negotiate on key employee issues. Effectiveness is tied to membership with the agency, on Capitol Hill, in the White House and your regions. Non-members have no voice on issues affecting them.”

Haven't you heard I have no use for unions?

“NATCA is the only group looking out for all interests of engineers and controllers. Think “association with teeth” if “union” bothers you. These organizations are evolving into more sophisticated entities than the old placard-carrying, strike-threatening groups. We must be professional in our watchdog role, as well as in policy-making circles around the country, with a provocative media and activist membership.”

Aren't you listening? I'm not interested. I don't care.

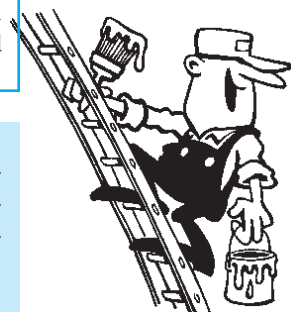
“What happens between NATCA and the FAA affects you. Interest in unions is on the increase, even in Congress, precisely because workers are re-learning why they are needed: protection of employee rights, compensation and benefits. You work for the better portion of the day, most of your life. Take an interest in what happens because, take it from us, others have - and they are not on your side, NATCA is.”

How can I join with a family to support and other financial priorities?

“Your dues are an investment in your future in the form of job security, better wages and improved benefits. They are the foundation of support for NATCA's strong, professional presence in contemporary arenas. You are not alone in grappling with a decision to support NATCA but we hope you, as others, will conclude greater monetary rewards and benefits are exactly why we need a stronger union.”

If I join NATCA won't it “mark” me or damage my career?

“No. Becoming active in NATCA gives you an opportunity to display leadership, communication and political skills. It helps you understand a person's motivation and as a result, helps you be a more effective employee.”



March of Freedom membership numbers tallied

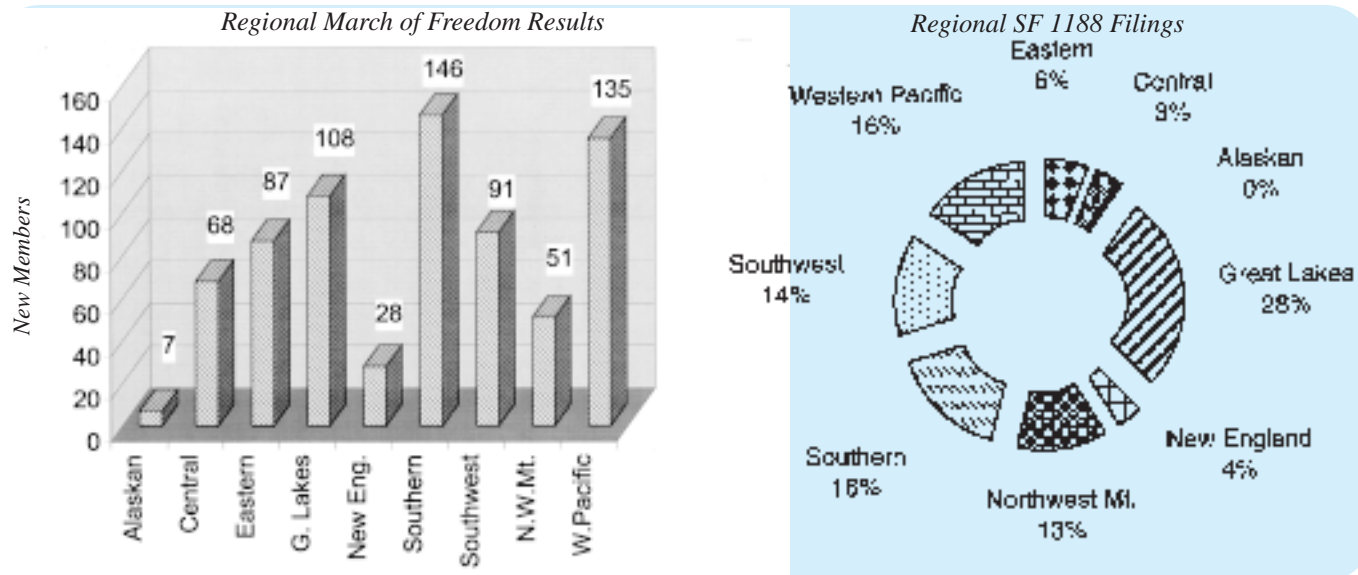
The sound of feet pitter-pattering subsided as NATCA's open season, March of Freedom, recently drew to a close. A total of 721 members walked into the union's family during this offer. "We are extremely pleased with the high turnout," remarked Organizing Team Lead Lewis Zietz.

The Southern Region attracted the most new members by gaining 146 controllers. Following close behind was the Western Pacific Region with 135 and the Great Lakes Region garnered 108 individuals.

More specifically, the Kansas City Center led the pack with 39 new members, closely followed by Indianapolis Center, 28; New York TRACON, 25; Washington Center, 20; and Fort Worth Texas Center, 17.

Along with absorbing new members 290 individuals submitted Standard Form 1188. This number does not reflect the final total of lapse controllers. Just because someone files this form does not confirm he or she is leaving the union. Rather, it merely stops the dues deductions.

NATCA's Field Services Team will send letters and invoices at the end of the month stating these accounts are 45 days in arrears. People must pay the dues within 30 days after receipt of written notification to be reinstated.



Agency announces plan to remap air routes

The bottom line of the Federal Aviation Administration's plan to remap air routes: Reduce delays for passengers and ease congestion in the skies. The solution: Redesign airspace around the country beginning this summer.

The agency's effort, which is expected to take several years and cost tens of millions of dollars, will focus first on the Eastern, New England, Great Lakes and Southern Regions because its air traffic is the heaviest and plagued by the most delays.

For instance, in nine of the last 14 years, Newark

has ranked as having the highest lag times. Last year, La Guardia Airport was the second worst and Kennedy International Airport previously the sixth poorest, improved to eighth.

Traffic continues to increase. For instance, three of these airports' combined effort already handles around 5,000 flights daily, nearly one-tenth the national total. "Something needs to be done to address our area, the most complex airspace in the world," stated NATCA Eastern Region Vice President Joe Fruscella.

"We have a portion of air space that is just over-saturated," remarked Fruscella. "This plan is long overdue. It is time to get things back under control because now there is no rhyme or reason to our region," commented New York TRACON Facility Representative Phil Barbarello.

"You could have a new tower, lengthen the runway, have the sufficient number of air traffic controllers, bring in new equipment, but if you don't redesign the system, it doesn't amount to a hill of beans," stated Rep. William Pascrell, D-N.J., in *The New York Times*.

Controllers on the National Airspace Redesign Focus Team will meet this summer to discuss issues relating to the change.

DSR

continued from page 1

time on the union's behalf. Along with the evaluation, they are responsible for supplying information to and keeping the communication lines open with the regional representatives and facilities. They are DSR Team Lead Mitch Coleman, Training Lead Keven DeBoard, Jim Ashe, Jeff Billings, Bill Blackmer, Glenn Cummings, Mike Dunhom, Scott Hanley, Jim Karlovich, Tom Lane, Mike Naiman, Jeff Phillips and Sterling Swan.

Similar asbestos situations draw different outcomes

Michael A. Pinto, Ph.D., Wonder Makers, Inc.

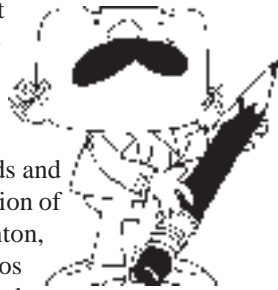
It's a crazy world. Sometimes I'm amazed when two similar events can have such different outcomes. It all started a few days ago when I read an article in the *Kalamazoo Gazette* about a recall of Hostess products from a factory in the Chicago suburbs. You know, Twinkies, ding-dongs, cupcakes and ho-hos; all the stuff we beg for as kids and gravitate toward in the gas station mini-mart when we're hungry. The reason for the recall of over 1.5 million packages of these confectionery products in 21 states was potential asbestos contamination.

As an environmental engineer who has worked with NATCA for six years responding to various environmental and safety problems, the news article about the

“The reason for the recall of over 1.5 million packages of these confectionery products in 21 states was potential asbestos contamination.”

asbestos exposure at the Hostess plant was eerily similar. Improper asbestos removal had taken place in the boiler room and the fibrous debris was carried through the plant in an open top cart potentially sending millions of the invisible odorless and cancer causing fibers into the air.

Change just a few words and it could've been a description of the incident in Binghamton, N.Y., a tower where asbestos duct installation floated through the entire facility in an open top garbage can. Maybe it was more reminiscent of the situation at the Boston Center, where asbestos debris moved through parts of the facility in open pushcarts. Several control-



“As I learned more about the contamination at the Hostess plant, even more similarities appeared.”

lers complained about dust billowing from the carts. How about the tower in California where workers filled garbage bags with pipe insulation and dragged them down the hallways.

As I learned more about the contamination at the Hostess plant, even more similarities appeared. Individuals immediately complained on Jan. 11 or 12, the date of the original incident. Action was deferred for many days making the ultimate clean up and response much more involved than if corrective action had been taken quickly. Unfortunately, it seems to be the standard response at many Federal Aviation Administration facilities.

Instead of acknowledging there is problem and moving quickly to correct it, denial and defensiveness rule the day after asbestos related incidents. In one

case, the agency went so far as to accuse the controller who reported the problem of actually causing it. Ultimately, the result of delays and defensiveness is a more complex and expensive clean up. In case of the Hostess plant over, 1.5 million packages were recalled, which represents multiple days of production. In a similar fashion, the clean up at a number of facilities has been complicated because of several days or weeks setbacks in addressing the problem. Even more important than financial cost, such delays increase the risk of exposure for individuals in the facilities or those who come in contact with products from the facility.

While there are many similarities between the asbestos problem at the Hostess plant and situations at the FAA facilities, there are some stark differences as well. The biggest one appears the Hostess Co. eventually took strong corrective action to regain worker and customer confidence, while the agency prefers to drag out the resolution to such problems. Federal or state asbestos officials did not mandate the recall of over a week's worth of product from Hostess, although they were supportive of it. After receiving all of the information, it was the Hostess management that de-

“Who knows, in the big scheme of things maybe Twinkies are more important than controllers.”

ecided to recall the product even though there was a very small risk of exposure from the product.

The agency on the other hand tends to minimize concerns of worker or public risk after asbestos exposure incidents. In one particularly galling case, the FAA sent the controllers a letter explaining they had not been exposed to asbestos because they didn't have personal sample results which indicated such. Even though the agency's own industrial hygienist provided documentation indicating exposure of the workers in the control room above the Occupational Safety and Health Administration permissible exposure limit.

So the sad fact remains in private industry they'll recall millions of packages of Twinkies to keep consumers from even having a minuscule risk of asbestos exposure from their mistakes. But the agency will not even officially acknowledge extensive exposure of their work force which would trigger medical exams and detect potential health problems. Who knows, in the big scheme of things maybe Twinkies are more important than controllers.

Michael A. Pinto has a doctorate in environmental engineering as well as being a Certified Safety Professional. Through his organization, Wonder Makers, Inc., he has provided assistance to NATCA with regard to environmental and safety and health issues. He holds certification in four asbestos control disciplines and is a certified instructor for asbestos remediation classes.

Union hopes to utilize airport operations simulator to educate facilities with radar capabilities

Do you want fog, rain, dusk, snow or wind? You've got it with a few strokes of an airport operations simulator's keyboard, the Surface Development and Test Facility, which will offer a realistic view of airport conditions.

Next year, using Silicon Valley-based technology, individuals will run virtual-reality tests at the world's first airport operations simulator, located at National Aeronautics and Space Administration/Ames Research Center in Mountain View. The system will reduce risks by allowing the aviation industry to test equipment without creating possible chaos in complex facilities.

Rather than using real planes, researchers will test technologies and procedures to move traffic more efficiently in the air and on the ground, by simulating any airport in their database.

The system will depict realistic three-dimensional images of the seasons, weather conditions and aircraft moving on the runway or through the skies on 12 large rear-projection screens just outside the windows.

"This will be the only one of its kind in the world. It will be as real as it gets," NASA Simulator Project Manager Stan Harke told the *San Jose Mercury News*. Specific airport patterns and operating procedure may also be utilized. "I can make you whatever you want including not only the view out the window but also the control functions inside the cab. Los Angeles is on the screen; just push a button, boom, there's Chicago or Atlanta."



Along with assisting researchers, NATCA would also like to utilize this system as a model to teach air traffic controllers. "We would like to use the equipment to educate any facility with radar capabilities," explained San Jose Facility Representative Richard Burton. "It would be a considerable advantage to have formal tower radar training, with a specific syllabus," added Dallas/Fort Worth Facility Representative Dennis McGee.

The reality of whether or not the union will be allowed to use it is uncertain. "Although formal discussions have not taken place yet, NATCA is preparing the necessary groundwork," stated Burton. "We are taking the initiative to first actually see the system around June, to determine if it is an issue we should pursue," said McGee. "Controllers must have the proper training and sufficient knowledge to do their job. Anything else is just not safe," concluded San Francisco Facility Representative David Caldwell.

Researchers also plan to study human factors issues. Real controllers, "pseudo pilots," ramp controllers and airport operators will communicate by simulated radio transmission. Video cameras will record workers' reactions to different situations, allowing observers to view what is taking place without interrupting.

"This is a simulation with a human in the loop. It's more difficult than just a computer," Harke stated. "You can check it out on the computer before you spend money to find out it's not good. You could do the most outrageous procedure and see if it works."

Hotel shifts gears, becomes unionized

Six years, four months and 10 days later, the Frontier Hotel's employees in Las Vegas, Nev., completed their mission. The strike was over. Throughout the years, individuals picketed daily outside the hotel because the previous owners, the Elardis, would not negotiate with the culinary union. This type of organization would support not only kitchen workers, but also food servers, cocktail waitresses and housekeepers.

Today, close to 300 out of the original 600 employees who walked the lines returned to work. Now, the New Frontier Hotel's owners are trying to pick up the pieces and rebuild a strong business with other unions' help, including NATCA. "We appreciate labor organizations sticking by us and especially providing support during this transition time," commented the hotel's Director of Sales Pat Thomas.

NATCA is extending its arms by holding monthly facility representative training there. "We need to take a step back and look at the big picture. John Sweeney,

president of the AFL-CIO, put the issue into perspective for union members at its recent meeting. He commented it's not just about helping a hotel get back on its feet again, it concerns supporting the labor movement as a whole," remarked NATCA President Mike McNally.



Before the strike, the hotel was a premier property attracting an immense amount of union business. After the Elardis took over, more employees became disgruntled and began to protest. All sorts of labor-oriented individuals walked with them as well including NATCA's Executive Vice President Randy Schwitz, former President Barry Krasner, Bernie Reed and Bob Taylor.

As time progressed, the site lost business. Finally on Feb. 1, Ruffin Gaming bought the hotel. New space and convention areas are being built. As Thomas describes, "We have our hands full getting this property into shape." It became unionized and will become a Radisson Hotel.

Volunteers dedicate uncountable hours to union

Imagine volunteering an additional 5-10 hours a week on behalf of others. Whereas some can't conceive taking on more responsibility, many NATCA members dedicate an uncountable number of hours to improve the union. Controllers Mark Hood and Howard Blakenship are two such individuals.

Hood, from New York TRACON, has held a variety of positions in the Eastern and Southern Regions. He has acted as an arbitration advocate, facility representative, labor relations instructor, regional drug and alcohol representative and national contract team member. Since January 1997, Hood has worked alongside 12 other dedicated people doing contract negotiations, resulting in spending a lot of time away from his family. In fact, over the last year and a half, this group has been away from home for approximately 120 days. When asked why he devotes so much time he responded, "It is the right thing to do for the men and women out in the field. We all need to contribute so the union will be successful in its endeavors. If we had

more people involved, some of us would be able to take a break."

Kansas City Center controller Howard Blakenship is the vice president of his local chapter and served on the Alternative Work Schedule Team. As vice president, he tries to increase communication between the local chapter and agency, and motivates other members to become involved. As part of the AWS group, Blakenship helped secure controllers' ability to maintain a flexible and compressed schedules. He elaborated on why he volunteers by stating, "NATCA is the one organization solely interested in air traffic controllers' well being. Our welfare and safety come first. The union depends on our contributions. I have been around long enough to know, for NATCA to become stronger and more beneficial to us, we need to also give to it."

This is a new section of *The Air Traffic Controller*. Please submit volunteers' names to Courtney Barron at the national office or email cbarron@natcacdc.org.

Oh what a tangled web we weave

Some NATCA members have a legitimate concern at work and want to tell someone about it immediately. The only problem is, they do not have the email address of the appropriate contact person. Or, someone needs to find out about specific membership information for the upcoming convention, but does not know the right password. For many people, surfing the internet can be frustrating.

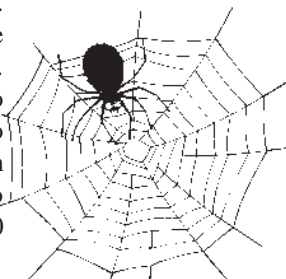
Now, NATCA can help by offering a listing of related web sites and links for special public and private information. Just click on to www.natcacdc.org and members are just seconds away from the latest news. To get connected to the members only site, please call Candi Derr or Wilma Gisala at NATCA's Field Services office at (202) 223-2900 for the correct user name and password.

To contact someone in the national office, members may do so by logging onto the person's email address. Just click on NATCA's web site under national con-

tacts. "Email is a quick way to inform the staff of your issues or ask questions," says Sherrod Shim, Communications team lead.

To access NATCA's regional summaries or home pages, go to the region section on the web site. Click on any of the nine sites and it will pull up information on each of the offices. Fellow members can keep up with the other facilities or notice similar work related concerns. All of the regional vice presidents' email addresses are listed within the specific summary pages.

Mastering the different web sites is not difficult. Most people find they cannot stop once they have started. Do not forget about the new NATCANet page. A member created it to allow air traffic controllers to talk among themselves. To access NATCANet go to www.natca.net, fill out and submit the application form and access will be granted within 24 hours. To unsubscribe, do not log onto the site, and after 90 days individuals will be taken off.



National Office Staff's Email Addresses

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The National Legislative Committee will offer one-day campaign volunteer training sessions this summer. The focus will be on legislative activism and motivating members to work on congressional campaigns. The NLC will pay for hotel accommodations, but individuals are responsible for transportation and meals. The first seminar will be held June 17 at the Hyatt Regency Union Station in St. Louis, Mo. Participants need to arrive on June 16. Please contact Central Region Legislative Chair Dustin Miller at 888/915-8194 for additional information. The second seminar will take place on July 22 at Clarion Bayview in San Diego, Calif. Attendees need to arrive on July 21. For more details contact Western Pacific Region Legislative Chair David Caldwell at 888/915-8188.



Rep. Julia Carson, D-Ind., visited Indianapolis Center and Tower on April 7. John Jones, Indianapolis Tower, explains some of his facility's operations. Photo by Ed Locke, Indianapolis Center.

The government is not appealing Judge Aldrich's decision in the contracting-out case. It decided to remand the issue to the agency for compliance with the requirements of the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-76, which states terms and conditions which government functions may be contracted out.

According to the Justice Department, the government has no intention of dismantling the contracting out program during this period. It reads the judge's verdict to "remand and vacate" as meaning it should vacate the initial decision-making process, but not the ruling itself. It has begun the process of complying with the A-76 requirements, and can't currently estimate when this process will be completed.

Recently, NATCA hosted a table at the 1997 Robert J. Collier Trophy Presentation Banquet. President of the National Association of Air Traffic Specialists Wally Pike, President of Professional Airway Systems Specialists Mike Fanfalone and the Australian Air Wing Commander Paul McCann, Royal Australian Air Force, joined NATCA President Mike McNally at the table. The trophy was awarded to Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation and the Gulfstream V Industry Team, "For successful application of advanced design and efficient manufacturing techniques together with innovative international business partnerships, to place into customer service the Gulfstream V, the world's first ultra-long range business jet."

The national office welcomes Laurie Bay to its Labor Relations Team and Maureen McGaffin to the Communications Team.

In looking down the path ahead, the union's National Executive Board recently met to address several issues, including its Leave Without Pay policy and Skytel pagers. Uncertainty has lingered around what the organization's reimbursement policy is when NATCA asks a controller to work on a project on its behalf during periods of LWOP. The leaders clarified what the union will and will not pay. NATCA will compensate a straight hourly rate plus a five percent operational differential along with the government share/contribution to the Thrift Savings Plan, if the individual participates in the Federal Employee Retirement System.

The union will not pay Sunday and night differentials and holiday compensation because it does not request individuals to perform services during these periods of time. If members have additional questions they should contact Executive Vice President Randy Schwitz or Comptroller Frances Alsop in the national office.

The board also discussed Skytel, the union's pager system. Initially, NATCA wanted to test the program to determine if it would fill its needs. The union believed the cost encountered during the testing period, around \$180,000 a year, would continue if it decided to keep up the service. This figure soon escalated to \$400,000, making it fiscally not prudent or capable for NATCA to fund.

In upcoming months the union hopes to change providers and set up a pager system connected to individuals' voice mail based in the office. Members would receive a numeric pager alerting them to check their voice mail. The projected cost for this package is around \$50,000 a year.

This September, NATCA's national convention will reconvene in Seattle, Wash. According to the union constitution, each local is entitled to one delegate, and also receives an additional one for every 50 members in good standing over and above 100 members. Only individuals in good standing on or before Aug. 6 can be included. With this in mind, you have an opportunity to ensure the maximum number of delegates for your facility. Be sure to mail into the national office all new applications no later than June 20. Also review recent SF 1188 filings and re-recruit any lapsed members.

**Congratulations
100 percent
Facilities**

<u>Towers</u>	<u>Fac Reps</u>
Ann Arbor	Tim Mazurek
Pueblo	Larry Halpern
Tamiami	Rob Mizik
Twin Falls	Scott Carruthers

Several memoranda of understanding signed

NATCA signed several memoranda of understanding regarding the following subjects:

- X Deployment of Display System Replacement
- X Rehabilitation of the Administrative Wing at Air Route Traffic Centers
- X Voice Switching and Control Systems Training and Backup Systems
- X Addendum to testing of 3-D User Preferred Trajectory Flight Trials Project testing
- X North Pacific Required Navigational Performance-10 Routes

Memoranda may be found on the labor relations page of NATCA's members only website.

Union argues arbitrator did not understand facts

The union argued the agency failed to negotiate the deployment and implementation of the Sarasota Airport Surveillance Radar-9 and the integration of this radar system with relation to the Tampa ASR9 radar unit. The arbitrator found no violation of Article 7 and Article 48 of the NATCA/FAA Collective Bargaining Agreement. NATCA filed exceptions on the arbitrator's misunderstanding of facts and evidence — he determined union initiated negotiations were still available to NATCA. In fact, the documents indicate the local union did begin negotiations under Article 7.

Arbitrator ruled union did not act timely

NATCA will appeal a recent arbitration regarding whether the agency should have bargained on the Air Traffic Quality Assurance Order. The arbitrator denied the grievance because he concluded the union did not submit its proposals in a timely manner.

Air Traffic Operations Network delayed

The Federal Aviation Administration will delay the implementation of the Air Traffic Operations Network until Sept. 1. The system, designed to transmit facility data such as traffic count, delays and equipment status to a central collection location, is not in itself a problem. Implementation by the agency has caused difficulties.

Facility level supervisors and managers took it upon themselves to require bargaining unit members to collect data and prepare it for transmission. While the assignment of work is a management right, the manner in which the agency exercises that right is negotiable under the statute. NATCA will not stand idly by while supervisors attempt to pawn their work off on controllers.

As a result of the union's intervention, the agency has delayed implementation of OPSNET until issues concerning its effect upon the bargaining unit have been identified and resolved.

Agency proposes performance based organization bill

The air traffic control system is perched on the brink of a new legislative proposal allowing the Federal Aviation Administration to become a performance based organization by January 1999. NATCA has several concerns regarding this idea, but the agency contends the change, which would have to be approved by Congress, is necessary to keep pace with the thriving aviation industry.

"We have to be able to put in place a funding mechanism that is creative and flexible enough to allow us to meet the demand. This budgetary treatment will allow FAA air traffic infrastructure and staffing levels to grow as fast as traffic," remarked Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater in the *Federal Times*.

This concept materialized after the FAA's Reauthorization Act of 1996 commissioned the National Civil Aviation Review Commission to review, study and make recommendations about an alternative funding mechanism for the FAA, in particular air traffic services. In December 1997, NCARC called for the agency to institute its air traffic control services organization into a PBO and establish a user fee system to fund it. Slater moved forward on the recommendation and recently proposed the Air Traffic Services Improvement Act of 1998.

According to the proposal, daily operations of the FAA Air Traffic Services would be centralized in a PBO and supervised by a chief operating officer appointed by the secretary. A newly created subcommittee would provide comments and dissenting views to the admin-

istrator on ATS performance. Its employees would continue to be government employees with the same rights and benefits as other agency workers.

Under this plan, the FAA would attain the flexibility to hire controllers and aviation inspectors without waiting for budget authorization, freeing it from the congressional process. The ATS would also more rapidly propose, adopt and advance new technologies. Releasing the agency from Congress' control is one of the union's biggest concerns.

NATCA is generally supportive of an alternative funding mechanism but has several points of contention. How will this impact general aviation? What measures will ensure it is not overtaxed? The union argues some funding mechanism should remain under the general appropriations process, maintaining Congressional oversight of various aspects of the ATS. Specifically, supervision needs to continue on the modernization programs, so as not to repeat the advanced automation system debacle.

NATCA is also concerned about the governing aspects of the PBO because labor does not have a seat at the table regarding the management of the new organization. It is also unclear what the effects of additional layered approach to managing ATS will be.

"It appears at this time to be a non-starter on Capitol Hill. In the mean time we are working on clarifying language to address our concerns," concluded NATCA President Mike McNally.

Bulletin Board

June

- 8-10 Western Pacific Regional Meeting, Las Vegas, Nev
- 9 Arbitration, Operational Error
- 10 Arbitration, Three-Day Suspension
- 9-11 Northwest Mountain Region Facility Rep. Meeting, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 10 Northwest Mountain Region Parliamentary training and mock convention
- 10-11 Southern Region Arbitration, Asheville, N.C.
- 11 Arbitration, Washington Center Asbestos
- 11 Arbitration, Article 63
- 11 Arbitration, Article 63 Issues
- 12 Notre Dame Labor Relations Conference
- 15-19 NEB Meeting, St. Louis, Mo.

- 17 Arbitration, Removal
- 22-24 Great Lakes Region Town Hall/ Local Meeting, N.D./S.D.
- 22-26 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 23-24 Southern Region Third Level Review for Grievances
- 26 Arbitration, Overtime
- 27-29 Engineer National Executive Board Meeting, Atlanta, Ga.
- 29 Engineer Southern Region RO for FLRA training/reception for regional representatives
- 30 Arbitration, Removal
- 30-31 Central Region Facility Representative Meeting, Kansas City, Mo.

July

- 1-7 Alaskan Region Facility Representative Meeting, Anchorage, Ala.
- 13-17 Southern/New England Regions Preconvention Facility Representa-

July

- tive Meeting, Atlanta, Ga.
- 15-16 Great Lakes Region Facility Representative Meeting, Elmhurst, Ill.
- 20-24 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 22 Southern Region End of Year Bid Brokering, Atlanta, Ga.

August

- 10 Great Lakes Region Performance Arbitration
- 24-28 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.

September

- 4-9 NATCA Convention, Seattle, Wash.
- 28-31 Arbitration I Training, Las Vegas, Nev.

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