



The Air Traffic Controller™

May 1998, Volume 12, Issue 4



NATCA's former President Barry Krasner, Executive Vice President Randy Schwitz and President Mike McNally accept the union's AFL-CIO affiliation on behalf of the members.

NATCA's quest for direct affiliation fulfilled

Members turned to a new chapter in NATCA's history on March 20. This day marks when the AFL-CIO Executive Council unanimously voted the union as a direct affiliate.

"This the first time the air traffic controllers' profession has been recognized by direct affiliation to the federation. More importantly, over the past 43 years, since the AFL and CIO's merger, only 20-something unions have been chartered as new affiliates," re-

"This the first time the air traffic controllers' profession has been recognized by direct affiliation to the federation."

marked NATCA President Mike McNally.

NATCA, formerly affiliated with the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, gave an oral and written presentation in support of its request. The House of Labor's Special Committee on National Charters, composed of former Executive Counsel members, evaluated the union's application.

It examined several aspects including geographic scope, size, occupational jurisdiction, financial stability, adherence to democratic principles, intent to actively participate and the reason for desiring affiliation. In addition, the federation's affiliates submitted their views.

Another factor motivating the committee to reach

its determination was "the extraordinary symbolism" attached to NATCA as presented by McNally. Additionally, as Barry Krasner, former NATCA president, wrote in a letter to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney last year:

"The membership of NATCA feels a deep obligation to labor. It is undisputed that the PATCO strike of 1981 and the subsequent firing of 11,000 air traffic controllers started a snowball effect on employee-employer relations from which the labor movement is just now beginning to recover. We at NATCA feel a responsibility to help reverse that declining trend in the most

"It also provides us with a direct voice, not only on our behalf, but for the destiny of organized labor as a whole."

participative manner possible," commented McNally.

As the committee concluded, "The air traffic controllers' legacy has not quietly been forgotten, that it remains a symbol warning the labor movement against complacency and against forgetting that an attack on one union is an attack on all."

As the history of unions evolves, and the AFL-CIO continues to educate politicians, community leaders and the public, a chapter on PATCO must be included. "The federation simply cannot do justice to that chapter if its very symbol, PATCO's successor union, remains outside the AFL-CIO," concluded the commit-

continued on page 6

May Inside

Highlights

- Open Season Results 6
- Flight 2000 7
- Guam Crash 8
- Volunteer Spotlight 9

Union welcomes and salutes new members

Dear Friends and NATCA members:

NATCA's Field Services Team is, as I write, processing color coded membership applications received from FAA air traffic controllers during our March of Freedom campaign. When all is said and done, we'll hit 700 and, if not, we'll get very close to it. Open season – the first in years – was a tremendous success.

Starting now, we will have access to fresh talent and ideas that will flow from this influx of people. And, just as when we bring another person into biological families, the addition of these men and women mean our NATCA family will never be the same. Their expectations, participation and feedback make consistency impossible.

March was exciting for controllers and another membership division. Not to be forgotten are our nearly 300 engineers out of an 1,100 potential member pool. Their high months were November and December, 1997, when 78 and 90 people joined NATCA, respectively.

During the first three months of 1998, another 99 people came on board – 33 during March. Regardless of whether controllers or engineers, I look forward to meeting and working with many of the newcomers. I hope you'll seek them out, and welcome them, too.

Perhaps now is a good time to remind everyone that signing someone up is not the end of the story. Remember when you first joined? Probably, it was a big step for you or your family, because it meant asserting the union is important and reprioritizing resources.

It was more than a gesture. It was a statement about your profession – where you want it to go, how you want it to succeed. It confirmed a belief NATCA is on the right track, validated its successes and implied you'd struggle with your brothers and sisters through any difficult times.

Today, hundreds of people are in your shoes. Don't forget to follow up with each person, ask her or him to attend meetings, pitch in, help on projects. Over and over we hear many NATCA members don't get involved

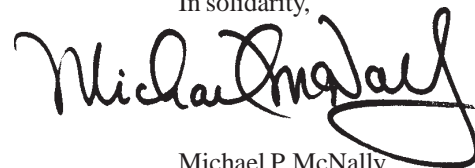
because they are never asked! Imagine the wasted talent. The unmined creativity that could go toward solving facility problems. If you, "just a member," recognize capable members not serving on committees, planning local events, or participating in regional or national forums, take it upon yourself to encourage them. Bring them into the NATCA family. For example, they may be our best recruiters of other controllers, engineers and even Department of Defense civilian controllers – a major target for membership once we resolve underlying issues with their current union.

Before closing, I want to thank many people who made this all possible. Some I know about, most of you in the field I learn about second or third hand. Most of you go unnamed, but – take it from me you are – neither forgotten nor unappreciated.

Throughout the year, NATCA members work long hours, usually on their own time and at their own expense, to ensure the organization's influence remains strong: Trish Gilbert, fac rep at Houston Center, Kevin Christy, Great Lake's alternate regional vice president, fac reps around the country, such as John Tune of Kansas City Center who led the pack with 39 new members. They, with countless others behind the scenes, implement the details of recruiting. These others include national office staff, particularly Organizing, Field Services, Communications and Labor Relations Teams.

On behalf of NATCA, I welcome all new members and I salute the many people around the nation who pitched in to make March of Freedom a success.

In solidarity,



Michael P. McNally
President

[Correction](#)
The facility representative for the Guam CERAP is Mike Morley. We apologize for the misprint.



President
Michael McNally

Executive Vice President
Randy Schwitz

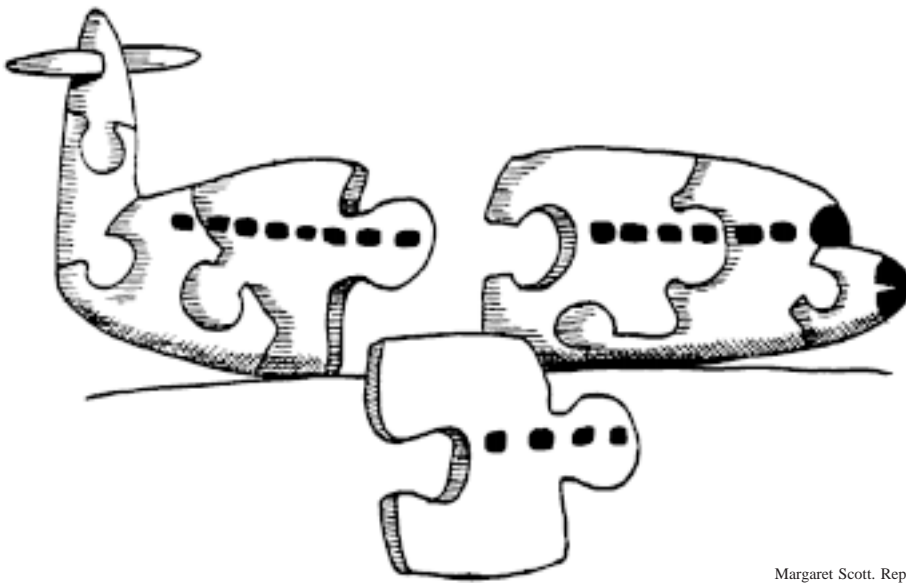
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Margaret Scott. Reprinted with permission.

Elements contributing to crash puzzle many

While it is unclear exactly what factors caused Korean Flight 801 to the crash into Guam's hillside, as a lawyer representing pilots and as a pilot, I am disturbed by some of the statements surrounding the National Transportation and Safety Board's recent hearing.

Some individuals contend during an in-flight emergency, the cockpit crew somehow should reach a consensus as to what to do. Others argue pilots should not be reluctant to override the flight management computer.

What people fail to mention is the most fundamental

cockpit acronym of all, PIC or Pilot in Command. From the first hour as a student, every pilot has it drummed into his or her heart, mind and soul the PIC always decides how to fly the airplane. It is determined long before the takeoff of each flight who will be the PIC.

Even if he or she is a freshly minted first officer sitting next to a grizzled, 20,000-hour captain, he or she makes all flight decisions. It would not work any other way. You cannot fly an airplane by committee.

*Donald Hardison
Reston, Va.*

New affiliation stimulates gratitude among members

We're often told how thankless a job it is being a representative of NATCA. The hard work that many people put in to represent the best interests of our union and its members often goes unnoticed.

On the contrary, it seems that only when we fail do people stand up and take notice. Despite all the negative criticism, we continue to get stonger, more respected (outside the Federal Aviation Administration), and more resilient.

Many controllers, in and out of the union, are not going to understand the ramifications of our new affiliation with the AFL-CIO.


Honestly, other than sheer force of numbers, political power beyond anything this "tiny" union could ever dream of, and perhaps the clout to have the FAA finally deal with us with integrity, neither do we.

We're sure there is much more and, in time, we'll understand how much. We owe a debt of gratitude to NATCA President Mike McNally and the people behind this grand achievement.

On behalf of the members of the Albany local, I would like to thank Mike for making this possible.

And because only he knows who else to thank, please thank them for us.

*Joy Aldrich
Albany, N.Y.*

Member	viewpoint	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">We want to hear from YOU!</p>
	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.1em;">How can NATCA improve your benefits?</p>	
<p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Mail Courtney Barron at the national office Email cbarron@natcadc.org Fax 202/659-3991</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">May 25</p> <p style="font-weight: bold;">Respond Today!</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Selected answers will appear in future issues.</p>	Deadline

Controllers' opinions heard before programs initiated

The National Aviation Research Institute ensures the voice of controllers is heard before new programs and technologies are implemented -- not after. NARI's Executive Director Mike Connor helped pave the organization's path. Connor recently spoke with *The Air Traffic Controller* to elaborate on NARI's objectives and impact on NATCA members.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* What motivated you to charter NARI?**

Connor: Previously, I was NATCA's director of external operations. Every time we encountered a problem, it centered around the fact controllers were not involved in the process. All too often, they are left out and their issues aren't discussed or resolved. We couldn't afford it anymore.

I went to NATCA's Barry Krasner, former president, and Mike McNally, past executive vice president, and suggested creating an organization that would examine human factors issues. The union's board of directors approved the idea, provided seed money and have been very supportive. We chartered NARI in the District of Columbia as a private, not-for-profit organization. Our main focus is to provide necessary leadership for the air traffic control industry.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* How do companies find out about NARI?**

Connor: Companies usually hear about NARI by word of mouth. I have spent the last year and half getting the organization's message out to presidents of companies and universities, and making presentations to board of directors. Once corporations find out about us, they are very receptive. They are trying hard to understand controllers and the research of human factors in air traffic control. I believe we are beginning to have an impact.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* What are NARI's objectives?**

Connor: We currently have contracts with NASA, Lockheed Martin, Catholic University and Embry-Riddle University to examine what free flight means to controllers and study the feasibility of more advanced concepts. NARI has an agreement pending with MITER Corp. involving research about free flight phase

one including data link, new air traffic control procedures and global positioning systems. We have a bid on NASA Langely regarding the role of air traffic control in delivering weather products to the aviation community. NARI also has a bid on the Volpe Center in the future of air traffic systems area.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* Why are these projects relevant to controllers?**

Connor: Our system has been in place for 30 years. Now traffic has increased to a point now where controllers require technology to act in a supporting role. How the industry develops and deploys it is a critical issue. Controllers must have a strong voice in the design of these systems. NARI's role is to look at what they mean and what the implications are from a human point of view, procedurally and technologically.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* How will NARI impact NATCA?**

Connor: NARI hopes to avoid situations where you have to use the political and legal devices available to the organization, for instance what took place with STARS. We want to educate the industry and government by including NARI and the controllers, so the human factors and procedural questions are taken care of before the contract has jurisdiction.


***The Air Traffic Controller:* Why is it important for air traffic controllers to actively participate in NARI?**

Connor: Controllers are the experts. We are trying to build a history for research so when we tell the industry what is and is not workable and how the controllers feel about it, it comes with a single voice, that of NARI.

***The Air Traffic Controller:* How can NATCA members become involved with your organization?**

Connor: NARI works through the regional vice presidents and the facility representatives. We give the facilities the requested criteria from the client and I. My involvement entails looking at the simulation, examining the questions and what the research will ultimately do. We don't do anything that might compromise the controller. I sit down with the researchers when they draft reports to make sure the focus of the controller viewpoint stays at it should.

continued on page 9

	A Closer Look
Favorite Book	
<i>Catch 22</i>	
Motto	
be fair and considerate	
Hobbies	
cooking, soccer and reading	
Greatest Strength	
treat everyone as individuals	

Predicted forecast looks bright due to new partnership

*Jim D'Agati
Great Lakes Region engineer local president*

I can still remember when I was promoted into the Great Lakes regional office as an electronic engineer. I received one of my first assignments to establish Minneapolis Airport Traffic Control Tower back in the fall of 1994.

My first task was to design the cab layout which seemed so easy. I thought I had the best one in the Federal Aviation Administration, but I soon realized the Minnesota-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) controllers had a different opinion when we went to Atlantic City, N.J., to create a mock-up. I never thought the equipment location was so critical for controllers.

After listening to them and learning how they use each piece of equipment, I was able to devise something even more functional. From then on, I was a firm believer in getting input early in a project and trying to understand the reason for needing things a certain way.

This new understanding lead to the development of a MSP working group composed of management from both airways facilities and air traffic, project engineers from every discipline, local MSP personnel and the NATCA representative. These individuals kept matters on schedule and locally solved many of the problems facing this multi-million dollar project. It also gave controllers first hand information and the ability

to participate in the decision making process.

By the end, I established a strong relationship with them. I learned the function of each position in the cab and how they related to one another. This kind of knowledge is priceless because it will help me communicate better on future tower projects. I envision work groups being the way of the future to involve all stakeholders early and active in the decision making process.

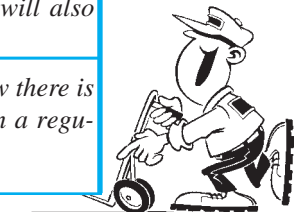
I'm now beginning phase two of this project, TRACON expansion. Before I designed the layout, I met with the controllers and listened to how they operate and vision their future operations. Once I obtained this information, I sketched a layout and developed a transition plan. So far, they are pleased with my results, and if they do have a problem they can always call me direct and I will research and develop solutions for them.

Since the successful vote for NATCA engineers, I foresee working even closer with controllers, because they now have a vast resource of engineering disciplines to utilize. This partnership is crucial in this time of budget cutting and insufficient project funding. We must work together to meet the true needs of the future and to prove we can produce a better product then any contractor.

Reasons engineers seize opportunity to join NATCA

*Jim D'Agati
Great Lakes Region engineer local president*

✓ <i>Change Federal Aviation Administration policy</i>	<i>Having the opportunity to influence Congress is NATCA's strongest selling point.</i>
✓ <i>Ensure job security</i>	<i>This is the number one reason why engineers are joining NATCA. Many believe that, if the ANI Engineering Center fails, then we will be out of a job and management will just be relocated to other positions. In addition, there has been a push to convert engineers in the field into technicians.</i>
✓ <i>Want fair treatment locally and nationally</i>	<i>Fairness and respect, need I say more. This is probably the second most popular reason for becoming a part of the union.</i>
✓ <i>Desire an active voice in job and career matters</i>	<i>Only by joining NATCA will one have an active voice in representing engineers in committees. Members will experience first hand labor management relationships, leadership and teamwork skills. Joining will also help in engineers' career progression.</i>
✓ <i>Establish solidarity by sharing technology with other regions</i>	<i>Everyone knows each region does business differently, but now there is a belief national communication between engineers will occur on a regular basis and it will make us stronger.</i>



Open season stimulates unbelievable response

“When you reach for the stars, you might not quite get one, but you won’t come up with a handful of mud either,” Businessman Leo Burnett once stated.

NATCA inched closer to reaching its goal of garnering 998 recruits in 1998 during its “March of Freedom,” by attracting approximately 700 new members. During March, the union waived the usual initiation fee, saving individuals up to \$1,000. “Our solidarity will increase as more people join, allowing NATCA to

“Our solidarity will increase as more people join, allowing NATCA to accomplish more.”

accomplish more,” remarked Ron Oberg, Green Bay.

Facility representatives reported many people joined because they believe strength is in numbers. Others desired to voice their concerns and address neglected issues. Some noticed recent visionary changes and wanted to ensure matters continued on the path already carved.

“People see the local going in the right direction, in particular looking out for the individual controller,” commented Mike Wehrman, Indianapolis Center.

Richard Accorto, Miami Center, agreed, “Nonmem-

“The things people have seen lately have been positive; this motivates others to join.”

bers started to realize NATCA is working on controllers and engineers’ behalf.” “The union has a better outlook, and people want to be a part of a thriving organization,” added Richard Carroll, Fort Smith Tower.

John Tune, Kansas City Center, added, “The things people have seen lately have been positive; this motivates others to join.” His facility encountered the most numerical success by recruiting 39 individuals. Tune

attributes their high recruitment to the effort exerted by current members. “They went out and actively sought potential members and convinced them to join

“The high number of recruits reflects a renewed enthusiasm for the steps NATCA is taking to benefit the work force.”

by telling them about all of the benefits.”

“Our members also encouraged potential ones to come on board. The union’s recent affiliation with the AFL-CIO and progress with the reclassification also played a role in our successful recruitment,” commented Denzil Britt, Nashville Tower. “I believe the high number of recruits reflects a renewed enthusiasm for the steps NATCA is taking to benefit the work

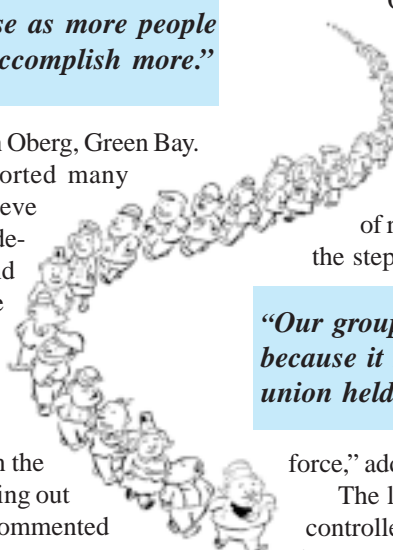
“Our group couldn’t pass up the opportunity because it had been so many years since the union held an open season.”

force,” added Mark Kessler, Daytona Beach Tower.

The lack of an initiation fee motivated many controllers to join. “Our group couldn’t pass up the opportunity because it had been so many years since the union held an open season,” said William Davenport, Huntington Tower. The additional individuals will increase revenues.

“It will allow NATCA to provide more services and meet today’s demands,” stated Kevin Christy, Great Lakes Region alternate vice president. “The additional funds will allow us to have a stronger impact and make a real difference,” added Jim Poole, Great Lakes Region vice president.

NATCA President Mike McNally concluded, “We set our organizational goals high and expect to reach them. We couldn’t lose anything by taking a chance and offering an open season. We reached for the stars, and actually caught around 700 new ones.”



Affiliation

continued from page 1

tee. Becoming affiliated to the federation is significant and beneficial for several reasons.

“By being a part of the AFL-CIO, it gives us more political clout and a stronger position of defense on any overt attacks on our bargaining unit,” NATCA’s Executive Vice President Randy Schwitz said.

“It also provides us with a direct voice, not only on our behalf, but for the destiny of organized labor as a

whole,” added Krasner.

“We are extremely proud to be a part of the AFL-CIO. We see it not as a one-way street, but one where we’re committed to being a part of the federation in every way possible for the strength of organized labor. We know the charter comes with responsibility, not only during good times, but also through the challenges ahead,” concluded McNally.

Union propels through Flight 2000 obstacle course



NATCA President Mike McNally testifies before the House Technology Subcommittee on Flight 2000.

NATCA forges ahead in its effort to motivate the Federal Aviation Administration to improve the National Air Space in incremental modifications, building in appropriate training, full debate of issues and objective cost-benefit analysis before requesting funding and beginning implementation of Flight 2000.

“We have adopted FAA Administrator Jane Garvey’s concept of build a little, test a little, field a little,” remarked NATCA President Mike McNally during the House Technology Subcommittee hearing on March 12. “Hardly anyone disagrees NAS modernization is a good idea. The how and who, on the other hand, is where the debate lies.”

Flight 2000 allows airlines to fly with instrument flight rules, but with the independence allotted when piloting under visual flight rules – better known as “see-and-be-seen” – generally utilized by smaller aircraft and typically without clearances from the control tower. This program attempts to test NAS modification technologies in a live air traffic control environment. While

the union applauds the FAA’s effort to improve the system, it is cautious.

“We must take very small steps in the development and testing of new equipment necessary for this project. It’s unclear how each piece would fit into the big picture but we need integration,” commented NATCA Executive Vice President Randy Schwitz. He is also concerned funding will be diverted from the replacement of the host computer or creation of systems such as the Display System Replacement, to support Flight 2000.

“We are hopeful the current request for \$75 million to replace the host will be granted to help advance a realistic NAS modernization concept. The key point on all these technologies is the human factors issues, not only in the cockpit, but on the ground at the hands of the air traffic controllers. We cannot afford to repeat previous FAA mistakes in keeping controllers, the users, out of the design, development and implementation states without increasing the likelihood of inefficiencies and sacrificing the safety of the entire air traffic control system,” added Schwitz.

The modern technology will also affect the staffing of controllers. As the new equipment integrates into the old, two systems will operate simultaneously, requiring additional controllers and increasing costs.

Controllers must have highly sophisticated automation to assist in the identification of aircraft conflicts before Flight 2000 can successfully operate, stressed McNally. “The controller must always be the final arbiter in separation of aircraft to maintain the integrity and safety of the NAS. It goes to the core of our occupation and aviation safety. Safety, as always, is the number one priority of the air traffic controllers,” he concluded.

New communication network provided for members

Individuals may log on to www.natca.org for the latest information from the national office and official points of view, but another online network, created by members, provides additional services to controllers to communicate with each other.

NATCAnet provides completely different options than the union’s homepage. It has bulletin boards that can be read on or off line, private message areas for locals (upon request), chat areas, file archives with

graphics, the collective bargaining agreement and other documents and the NATCA help program.

Every union member and local are eligible for an e-mail address. They may use the address of their choice@natca.net. The service also provides web space for NATCA locals and committees (Microsoft Frontpage 97/98 compatible with private password protected areas) and a file transfer protocol program for building web sites.

“We’ve also just set up a Net Meeting server,” said NATCA Member and NATCAnet founder Doug Holland. “Members who log in using Net Meeting can see who else is online and have a voice conference depending on type of equipment being used.”

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 on to the site, and after 90 days individuals will be dropped.

**Write Us
Call Us**

We want to hear your story ideas!

Contact Courtney Barron at 202/223-2900
or cbarron@natcadc.org

Aviation groups voice concerns on issues relating to agency's reauthorization

Positive interaction between NATCA and the Federal Aviation Administration continues to improve as evident during the March 18 House Aviation Subcommittee hearing. It brought aviation groups together to discuss issues relating to the FAA's reauthorization. NATCA focused on several issues including reclassification, the Federal Service Impasses Panel provisions and the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Today's government standard model determines controllers' pay grades. This method does not account for variants in the rating such as the number of runways at the airport, equipment and instrument traffic. "The standard used for many decades has not been fair or representative of the work we do," remarked NATCA President Mike McNally.

NATCA supports a new classification system, specifically focusing on an updated compensation model. A combined effort between the union and agency over the last three years produced a system addressing the value of experience and stability. The proposed compensation relates to the controllers' knowledge and ability required to safely and efficiently control the volume and complexity involved at each facility.

"We are trying to correct a dysfunctional classification system implemented 30-plus years ago – one never on target for the highly specialized work and complicated levels of expertise required for all air traf-

fic controllers," commented McNally.

NATCA is also working to gain access to FSIP as arbiter in disputes between the union and the agency on personnel reform issues. "We want to gain access because Congress does not need to micromanage labor/management disputes," said McNally. Instituting a change in the legislative language would correct the current system. This alteration should ensure the agency negotiates with its employees in good faith and personnel issues do not overwhelm Congress. Through the FSIP, disagreements between the FAA and its employees would be resolved in a fair and impartial matter.

The Merit Systems Protection Board was also addressed by NATCA. It argued employees who are the subject of adverse action should be able to contest it through either their contractual grievance procedure or by filing a complaint with MSPB. Offering a choice is beneficial because, when appealing to the board, the employee (and his or her private counsel) control the case and will receive a hearing before an impartial decision-maker. Under the contractual grievance procedure, the individual does not pay for representation, but generally the union does not go to arbitration unless it believes it will be successful on its own merits. NATCA believes restoring the board's jurisdiction over FAA employees would preserve an employee's second option in disciplinary cases.



Uncertainty lingers around cause of Guam crash

The objective seemed simple: Determine what made Korean Air Flight 801 crash into Guam's hillside on Aug. 6, 1997. But figuring out the cause was not straightforward because a multitude of elements appeared to have an affect.

After a hearing held by the National Transportation and Safety Board in Honolulu, Hawaii, March 24-26, it is apparent the actions and confusion of the flight's crew members partly contributed to the disaster. The Federal Aviation Administration must also accept certain responsibilities for the inability of the Minimum Safe Altitude Warning equipment to furnish controllers with proper notification of the Boeing 747's decent below a safe altitude.

The crew's performance "was less than what we are taught," remarked Lee Jung Taek, chief of flight crew operations. The cockpit voice recording revealed they were confused and did not follow proper procedures, such as holding several cockpit briefings. Uncertainty also surrounded whether they understood the glide scope, the radio beacon on ground giving

the plane a path to the runway, was out of service.

It is also questionable whether the Korean culture of respecting authority contributed to the crash by preventing lower-level crew members from disputing the captain's decisions. The Korean Air officials deny it played a role, but since have extensively revised training procedures.

This fatal accident also motivated the FAA to launch a nationwide review of the 193 MSAW systems installed over the last 20 years. Officials noted Guam's device was not correctly set up to provide its function. It is possible a properly functioning system could have given a warning 63 seconds before the plane slammed into the hillside. Instead the low-altitude alarm did not sound, and it took controllers 29 minutes to alert rescue personnel.

Chuck Mote, senior air safety investigator concluded, "NATCA will submit to NTSB our recommendations regarding areas the FAA should improve, enabling the workforce to handle unusual emergencies and provide better air traffic services."



The Air Traffic Controller: Do you think there are any misconceptions about NARI?

Connor: Some individuals feel threatened by the research because they believe it will impact their job security. None of the projects we are working on will result in lower staffing for the controllers. I see the need for more rather than fewer employees. In fact, over the next five years, the number of controllers will increase by 1,500 to 2,000.

The Air Traffic Controller: What are your hopes and expectations for NARI?

Connor: Currently, we have two permanent employees and between 30 to 50 air traffic controllers on dif-

ferent types of contracts. In the future, we will be using a combination of retired and active controllers. NARI will use the retired individuals to do a lot of the research work and develop test models, because they will be available on a long-term basis. The active workers can step in and validate the information.

We are also looking to bring four or five additional permanent employees in different disciplines such as an office manager, a human factors scientist, a cognitive task scientist, an aviation engineer and additional controllers. It will be too much work for just two people.

In 1997, NARI booked around \$1 million dollars worth of work, and we predict we will garner \$3 to \$6 million dollars in 1998. Our business will continue to increase because we are also putting a website together.



NARI
Executive Director
Mike Connor

Volunteers highlighted for commitment to union

An uncountable number of NATCA members volunteer their time on a regular basis. Two of those individuals include Tom Morin and John Gilbert.

Morin, a controller at Boston Center, has volunteered countless hours on NATCA's behalf. Along with 13 other members, he dedicates time to organizing and maintaining the union's Federal Aviation Administration Critical Response Team. One individual from this group travels to facilities after an accident occurs, and provides support and educational training along with a mental health certified counselor.

Morin has actively fought on Capitol Hill and with the FAA for support because the agency does not recognize or appropriate funds for the program. He also promotes the Employee Assistance Program, which gives counseling services by participating in various training initiatives.

"I do a lot of work on my own time and days off because these are important matters and someone

needs to take responsibility for them. Although I spearhead the team, everyone gives time. Our success depends on each other's contributions."

Gilbert, a controller at Houston Center, voluntarily assumes several different NATCA roles. He is the elected specialty representative for his center and an arbitration advocate. Gilbert also helps controllers and engineers realize the benefits of union affiliation in his role of Southwest Region Occupational Workers Compensation Program representative.

Between writing appeals, attending hearings and teaching at several training programs, Gilbert commits between 10 to 20 hours a week.

"Although I have to jump through hoops sometimes to finally get results, holding these various positions is extremely fulfilling. The individuals I help are always gracious."

Please send any nominations of dedicated volunteers to the national office, attention Courtney Barron or email cbarron@natcacd.org.

*"A committed giver is an incurably happy person, a secure person, a satisfied person and a prosperous person."
- Eric Butterworth*

What's New on NATCA's Home Page

www.natca.org

- * Press releases and testimony on Flight 2000, FAA reauthorization, Standard Terminal Arrival Route, Direct affiliation with AFL-CIO; Public Site News Center
- * AFL-CIO Special Committee on National Charters decisions; Members' Only News Center
- * Recent *NATCA Updates*; Members' Only News Center What's New Affairs
- * Updates from NATCA President Mike McNally will be sent via the NATCA-Alert list and then posted in the HOT area of the Members' Only News Center at least every other week. Reports will usually be posted no later than Monday afternoon.

“This is who we are doing this for,” remarked Scott Marlin to Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., as he held his son at the Southeast Region AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting on April 2. Controllers from Miami Center, Rick Accorto, Russ Hart, Ruth Marlin and Scott Marlin, attended the meeting to hear Gephardt speak on labor issues. He addressed the attacks on and future of labor. “It is great to hear members of Congress supporting labor so strongly,” remarked Scott Marlin.



Miami Center controllers Scott Marlin, Russ Hart, Rick Accorto and Ruth Marlin meet with Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., at an AFL-CIO meeting.

For the first time under federal antihacking laws, an U.S. District Court in Boston, Mass., sentenced a juvenile to two years of probation after he pleaded guilty to disabling airport radios and other computerized equipment. According to court filings, the teenager tapped into and disabled telephone system computers that routes signals from the Worcester control tower to a radio transmission tower that communicates with incoming traffic.

NATCA welcomes several new faces to the group. Candi Derr joins the Field Services Team as a representative. Lewis Zietz garners the role of Organization Team lead. The union also promoted Stacy Trigler to a lobbyist for the Legislative Affairs Team.

The National Legislative Committee will offer one-day campaign volunteer training sessions this summer. The focus is going to be on preparing NATCA members to become effective and efficient volunteers on the 1998 congressional campaign. One program will be held during the last two weeks of June in St. Louis, Mo., and the other will take place in San Diego, Calif., within the final two weeks of July. The committee will announce the exact date and location in the June issue of *The Air Traffic Controller* and on the NLC website, nlc.natca.net. Those interested in attending the first meeting should contact Central Region Legislative Chair Dustin Miller at 888/915-8194 and Western Pacific Region Legislative Chair David Caldwell at 888/915-8188 for the second.

NATCA requests social security numbers from members because the Federal Aviation Administration’s forms require them for dues deductions.

NATCA brought the Federal Aviation Administration to its knees as a result of one phone call. After meetings all week between the two groups, the FAA still was not receptive to resolving the critical problems with the Display System Replacement equipment. NATCA turned to the *New York Times* for media coverage which inevitably motivated the agency to listen to the union. Based on the negotiation between the Administrator and NATCA Executive Vice President Randy Schwitz, the union’s identified issues will be rectified prior to Phase III of DSR transition in Seattle. The FAA committed to using controllers, Lockheed Martin and its engineers to reach a solution.

The proposed move of TRACON service for Jefferson County Airport to Houston Bush Intercontinental Airport, both located in Texas, has stimulated a strong response from controllers and their communities.

As a result of the consolidation, the Federal Aviation Administration would reduce Jefferson County from a Level II to I, which may inevitably decrease staffing, training flights and traffic flow.

Despite these issues, the FAA still maintains the change will not endanger safety and will save money. The agency recently postponed discussions.

Over 40 people gathered in Crystal City, Va., for NATCA’s first annual Safety and Technology Conference March 9-11.

Union liaisons, technology representatives, safety committee members, Air Traffic Procedures Advisory Committee representatives and personnel from NATCA’s national office discussed the structure, current position and future goals.

Technology representatives also briefed attendees on the status of various projects including Display System Replacement and Standard Terminal Automation Replacement Systems.

As a result of this meeting, the group decided to develop a technology representative manual and create a facility equipment and unsatisfactory condition report databases.

**Congratulations
100 percent
Facilities**

<u>Towers</u>	<u>Fac Reps</u>
Brown Field/San Diego	David McNally
Fayetteville Grannis	Mark Hurmence
Hillsboro	Robert McClary
Houston Intercontinental	Paul Schauman
La Guardia	Stephen Repetta
Omaha	Mark Falcon
Palo Alto	Eric Cole
<u>TRACON</u>	
Omaha	Edward Morris

Several memoranda of understanding signed

NATCA signed several memoranda of understanding regarding the following subjects:

- X Air Traffic Service Interfacility Data Communications at the New York and Oakland Air Route Traffic Control Centers
- X Mode C Intruder Alert Inhibit
- X Display System Replacement
- X Standard Instrument Departure/Standard Terminal Arrival Route
- X Preferred Route Reduction
- X Prevention and elimination of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Memoranda may be found on the labor relations page of NATCA's Members' Only website.

Arbitration ruled controller utilized poor judgement

An arbitration took place regarding a controller's use of poor judgement while working. The individual claimed multiple personal problems influenced him. The arbitrator denied the grievance, and ruled personal tragedies cannot be used to brush aside serious infractions.

Arbitration terminating controller appealed

NATCA will appeal an arbitration decision terminating a controller. The Federal Aviation Administration employed him as a full performance level employee for nine years before placing him on a Performance Improvement Plan, which he successfully completed. After transferring to a different tower for a "fresh start," the FAA classified him as "developmental." He later failed in his training program. The agency denied the union's request to transfer him to a less complex facility stating his poor judgement would jeopardize safety at any facility, and should be terminated.

New features added to labor relations web page

NATCA added several new features to NATCA's website labor relations page including:

- X NATCA and Federal Aviation Administration Federal Service Impasses Panel decisions.
- X A list of the five most recent arbitrations.
- X Samples of information requests, a grievance elevation letter, an authorization for release of information and a formal grievance form.

Members wrestle with switching retirement programs

Federal Employees should consider numerous variables when deciding to switch to Federal Employee Retirement System or remain in Civil Service Retirement System during the upcoming open season.

Age - The older an individual is, the less advantageous it is to switch to FERS because there are fewer years left prior to retirement to take advantage of the government matching contribution to the Thrift Savings Plan. Also, the waiver of the government pension offset provision doesn't kick in until individuals have been in FERS for five years. If one retires with less than five years, it does apply, and Social Security benefits are reduced.

Salary - The amount people can afford to contrib-

ute to the TSP depends on how much disposable income they have. Naturally, the more one earns, the more he or she can save. If one doesn't plan on making maximum contributions to the TSP, forget about switching to FERS.

Individuals' investment return - Even if one contributes the maximum permissible amount to the TSP, the size of individuals' TSP account at retirement depends on how well their investment did. This is one of the greatest uncertainties facing feds who are considering switching to FERS. People just don't know how their investment will fare. If individuals are conservative and invest only in the government bond (G) fund, it's very unlikely they will benefit from switching to FERS. The only way to come out ahead is to make maximum TSP contributions and hope the market will continue to generate returns in excess of 20 percent a year. Although that's possible, it's extremely unlikely.

Remember FERS retirement benefits are not fully indexed to changes in the rate of inflation and benefits for those retiring prior to age 62 are less generous than CSRS benefits. On the plus side, if one remains in FERS for at least five years and has prior coverage under social security, the waiver of the government pension offset can be a significant benefit. Undoubtedly, the Office of Personnel Management and other sources will provide material to assist individuals in their decision making

Editor's note: This is an excerpt from Milt Zall's article, "Switch to FERS or Remain in CSRS," in the Federal Employee's Edge. Reprinted with permission. Copyright 1998.

Hosting a party?	
	Planning an event?
NATCA has a banner you may use.	Contact Katie Wittig 202/223-2900 kwittig@natcadc.org

Bulletin Board

May

- 2 Pensacola Tower & TRACON Charity Golf Tournament
- 4-8 Great Lakes Region Town Hall/Local Meetings, Ohio
- 4 Eastern Region Facility Representative Meeting, Atlantic City, N.J.
- 5 Engineers receive and count local ballots for elected officers
- 6 Engineer officers installed
- 8 Proposed constitutional amendments due
- 11- New England Region Facility Representative Mtg., Providence, R.I.
- 12 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 22 Communicating for Safety Conference, Orlando, Fla.
- 20 Arbitration, Article 63
- 20 Arbitration, Denial of official time

- 25 Memorial Day, offices closed
- 27 Great Lakes Region Third Level Quarterly Grievance Review

June

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

- 22- Great Lakes Region Town Hall/Local Meeting, N.D./S.D.
- 24 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 30 Arbitration, Removal

July

- 7-8 Alaskan Region Facility Representative Meeting, Anchorage, Ala.
- 13- Southern/New England Regions Preconvention Facility Representative Meeting, Atlanta, Ga.
- 15- Great Lakes Region Facility Representative Meeting, Elmhurst, Ill.
- 16 Facility Representative Training, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 24 Southern Region End of Year Bid Brokering, Atlanta, Ga.

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