

AirTrafficController

Election results leave NATCA in strong position for next four years

While Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., fell short in defeating President Bush, NATCA nonetheless remains confident as the union charts its course during a second Bush administration.

"We have a strong union, a strong membership, a strong treasury and a strong political action committee (PAC). We have powerful allies, political friends and an amazing membership," NATCA President John Carr remarked.

Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin agreed. "The world is not coming to an end. NATCA is exactly where we were on Nov. 1," she noted.

And in the legislative arena, the union saw a major success: over 79.16 percent of Senate candidates and 86.88 percent of candidates for the House of Representatives the NATCA PAC supported won election or reelection—including both Democrats and Republicans.

"We'll continue to fight hard for Congress to pay attention to our issues," Political and Legislative Affairs Director Ken Montoya said.

However, it is not yet clear how the new Congress will address issues important to NATCA, such as privatization and staffing.

Committee Chairmanships

Who takes over the chairmanships of Congressional committees important to NATCA has a

COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE			
FULL COMMITTEES			
House		Senate	
Appropriations	Transportation	Appropriations	Commerce
To be determined	Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska	Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss.	Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska
SUBCOMMITTEES			
Trans. Appropriations	Aviation	Trans. Appropriations	Aviation
Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla.	Rep. John Mica, R-Fla.	Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala.	To be determined

significant impact on the union, since committee chairs control the agenda, hearings and the direction of substantive legislation.

Appropriations

On the Senate's full committee, Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., likely will assume chairmanship and Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., will remain chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee. In the House, Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla., will continue his term as Transportation Subcommittee Chairman. The Republicans will vote on the full committee chair in January.

Commerce/Transportation

In the Senate, Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, will assume chairmanship of the Commerce Committee. It is still unclear if Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., will remain Aviation Subcommittee chair. In the House, Rep. Don

Young, R-Alaska, will remain chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee until 2006, when his term ends. In addition, Rep. John Mica, R-Fla., will continue his stewardship of the Aviation Subcommittee.

On the labor relations front, the union prepares to fight hard for the interests of NATCA members. "We'll do everything we can for the membership, regardless of the occupier of the White House and the composition of Congress," Labor Relations Counsel Marc Shapiro remarked.

Director of Labor Relations Bob Taylor echoed that sentiment. "We have an outstanding leadership team, seasoned activists and strong ties to our friends in Congress. We are prepared to meet the challenges before us."

The election will impact a number of labor-oriented governmental organizations important to NATCA.

continued on page 3

November/December 2004

Vol. 18, Issue 6

Inside this issue



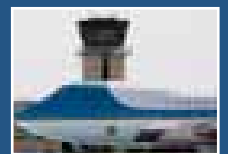
5 NATCA Hits the Trail

Members and national office staffers spend long hours turning out voters in the campaign's closing days.



6 Fralick on the FAA

NATCA's director of Safety and Technology discusses the agency's direction in the coming year.



9 The Challenge of Air Force One

Learn about the extra precautions controllers implement when the president comes to town.



Presidential Perspective

Happy Holidays from all of us at the National Air Traffic Controllers Association. This time of year is magical for many people, and our members are no exception. Fall turns to winter, old year to new, and families and friends gather to celebrate the holidays. The 20,000 men and women of NATCA are dedicated to designing, building, running and maintaining the world's safest air traffic control system, and we are dedicated to the public we serve. The safety of the system is our sacred trust, and we view this holiday season as just another opportunity to shine.

For the last several months NATCA members all over the country have worked longer and harder than they ever thought possible. On the professional front, the staffing crisis Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Marion Blakey testified about continues to loom.

As John Adams said when defending the British soldiers involved in the Boston Massacre in December of 1770, "Facts are stubborn things. Whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

And the facts are these: In just the last year the FAA lost 500 controllers while hiring only 13 replacements. Unfortunately the administration's efforts to date have been underwhelming, to say the least. The agency's requested funding for additional controller hiring in the coming year was zero.

NATCA has advocated a common sense solution to this problem for several years now and our efforts are beginning to

bear fruit. In the recently-concluded legislative session, we lobbied hard for 14 million dollars to begin an aggressive hiring regimen. Congress agreed with the fundamentals of our argument, providing \$9.4 million to begin hiring and training the next generation of air traffic controllers. We view this funding as a necessary first step in a long road of staffing rehabilitation.

Our organization will continue to forcefully advocate for the safety of the system, and yes, Virginia, staffing directly affects safety. While armchair Pollyannas like Bob Poole, the founder of the Reason Foundation, continue to wax philosophical regarding staffing issue, the United States Congress, against the administration's budget wishes, has decided to act. We are grateful for its support, and we will continue to provide the operational perspective found not in the ivory towers of "policy institutes" but rather in the towers, TRACONS and centers across this great country of ours. As an organization, we would rather be despised for caution than ruined for overconfidence.

On the personal front, the last few months have found many of our members hard at work on political campaigns all over the country. The NATCA Political Action Committee (PAC) was busy as well, and when the smoke had cleared on our activism, the PAC had backed winners in 87 percent of the congressional races.

While our chosen presidential candidate did not win, it's important to mark the contributions of so many activists, family members and staff in working to get our voices heard.

"Contract negotiations for our bargaining unit will more than likely get underway this fall, and we look forward to meeting and dealing with the agency in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The only agreements which stand any chance at all of enforcement are those where both parties feel they've won at the table."

Members attended rallies, worked phone banks, volunteered at campaign offices and walked precincts. Family and friends got involved, and ultimately NATCA staff headed into the field to insure every voice was heard, and every vote was counted. The president won reelection by a wide margin, and his team is to be congratulated for a brilliant political campaign. We look forward to working with the administration, and the Congress, and members of both parties in the New Year on the very pressing challenges we face in the aviation industry. We have always maintained that aviation safety is neither Republican nor Democrat, and we have always worked very well on both sides of the Hill, and both sides of the aisle. The coming year will be no exception.

An unfortunate byproduct of the presidential election is the resurgence of a whole raft of rumors concerning the workforce. Rumors are fun, I suppose, and certainly more entertaining than the truth, which is why truth is in such great supply and short demand. But truth eventually intrudes, and all good rumors eventually fade.

Some of the more notable gossip concerns contract negotiations, pay and whether or not

the administration is out to get us as a result of our political activism. I'll address these in reverse order.

Our political activism is worthy of applause, and our contributions to the political process - while noteworthy from our point of view -- must themselves be kept in perspective. The Bush administration hasn't exactly offered a fountain of labor-friendly initiatives in the last four years, nor has it remained silent on ATC-centric issues. It has stripped you of your inherently governmental status, placed you on a list of commercial activities, cut your budget, slashed your staffing, hypothesized about favorable privatization studies and in fact pursued permission to contract out 20 percent of your facilities. I dare say it's highly unlikely you could make yourselves more of a target than that.

The subject of pay is on everyone's mind, and this year's budget cycle brought yet another attempt at anointing civilian federal employees with second-hand status. The Congress wisely maintained a decades-old tradition of pay parity and we will work again with our friends in the New Year to maintain this rightful recognition of the role

continued on page 4

The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA)

The president appoints members of the FLRA and the Senate confirms them. Currently, one Democrat and two Republicans sit on the authority, and they are all serving out five-year terms.

"Bush's reelection ensures the continuation of the two-to-one split favoring Republicans over Democrats on the panel, even though the exact Republicans on the panel might change over time," General Counsel Rita Graf explained. The president cannot easily remove members of the panel, so the current appointees will serve out the remainder of their terms unless they resign.

The Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP)

Members of this panel, which resolves disputes between federal agencies and their employees, serve at the will of the president, and in 2002 President Bush fired and replaced all seven individuals sitting on the FSIP. Bush's reelection ensures the panel will maintain its current makeup.

Despite the clear obstacles NATCA will face in the labor relations arena, the union will successfully tackle any challenges standing in its way. "We will strategize and walk the talk in improving the working conditions and quality of life for our members and their families," Taylor remarked.



Rep. John Mica, R-Fla., (right) shown here with Jacksonville Center Controller Lance Bonin at a NATCA event earlier this year, will continue his chairmanship of the House's Aviation Subcommittee.

NATCA prepares for change as agency implements DRVSM Jan. 20

At 4:01 a.m. EST on Jan. 20, 2005, the Federal Aviation Administration will implement Domestic Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum (DRVSM), permitting aircraft to fly within 1,000 feet vertically between flight levels 29,000 and 41,000, which will usher in a new era in air traffic control.

One cannot overstate the significance of the program, Cleveland Center Controller and NATCA DRVSM Representative Steve Entis noted. "This is probably the biggest change in air traffic since radar data processing in the early 1970s."

And, he added, it's not simply because of the elimination of the 2,000-foot vertical separation minimum. The addition of six new altitudes and the prospect of hundreds of millions of dollars in fuel savings exists for the airlines at a time when fuel costs are literally eating the industry alive.

"It's a complete culture change for the en route controller. Working DRVSM involves doing things contrary to a lot of the ways we think as controllers," he remarked.

"We have always been trained to think of flight level 35,000 feet as a westbound route. Now, under DRVSM, it's eastbound. All odd numbers are changing from westbound to eastbound. In the past, if I

missed a call sign but catch 350, I would just - based on years and years of experience - go to look to the right hand of the scope because that's where I'd expect to see the aircraft."

"It's going to take some getting used to."

Mike Hull, a Southern California TRACON controller and NATCA's lead negotiator on the issue, helped reach an agreement with the FAA on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) covering DRVSM implementation: "It's a whole new way of doing business."

And, he said, it will create a whole new set of challenges for controllers who have to "mix and match" aircraft equipped with upgrades allowing them to fly in DRVSM airspace with aircraft that are not military aircraft, humanitarian flights, foreign state aircraft and aircraft manufacturers' certification flights.

Hull cited training as one of the issues receiving the bulk of attention during negotiations with the agency. Once the parties reached agreement, the training process for controllers began nationwide.

Entis said he expected training to go smoothly, taking a day for each controller to complete four, one-hour simulated situations.

"Based on every indication we got from controllers during our early training simulation, they started to feel comfortable on

***"Based on every indication we got from controllers during our early training simulation, they started to feel comfortable on the third or fourth trial in the training lab. The comfort level was there."
-Steve Entis***

the third or fourth trial in the training lab. The comfort level was there," he commented.

With the exception of the African continent and much of Asia, most of the world already uses RVSM over domestic and oceanic airspace.

The United States has used RVSM in oceanic airspace for over five years but now joins Canada and Mexico in expanding the program to domestic airspace.

Concluded Entis: "I spoke with air traffic controllers in Europe two years ago and for them, it took a good two-to-three weeks to get used to it and reach a point where it becomes more automatic. It is a cultural change and many things go into it you don't think about. But the bottom line is it is safe."

For many controllers, the holiday season comes with a sacrifice



At first, I planned on using this space to talk about my experience embedded in the re-election campaign for Sen. Tom Daschle, D-S.D. It was a fascinating experience and I have many stories to tell. As I thought about this article, I wanted to encourage all of you to spend the last week before an election working for a candidate you support: To become entrenched in a campaign. It can become the experience of a lifetime. But each time I think about making a recommendation like that, I realize it is one of so many things that we simply cannot do. Our chosen profession comes with many sacrifices, but I think none are as significant as the loss of liberty that comes with the controllers' schedule. Operational necessity always overrides personal liberty. Few occupations demand this sacrifice, and overall we handle it very well.

Over the last four years, I have had something that most of our members do not. *Choice.* While I work nights and weekends, traveling on red-eye flights to squeeze in another day at the office, I do it by choice. The office is closed for every federal holiday (and every weekend) and if I go in, it is by choice. That is the working reality of most

Americans, but not most NATCA members. At this point you are probably asking yourself, "why is she telling us this, we already know, we live it every day." Actually, I am not writing this for our members so much as our other readers. We rarely give them this type of insight into our lives. Very few people realize the personal sacrifice that comes with this profession -- not just for us, but also for our families.

We experience this throughout the year: Missing the kids' ballgames or a family wedding, but the holidays are when it is most acute. Sometimes it seems the entire country is gathered around a family dinner table, celebrating together when we go off to work. As always, we do a pretty good job of coping. I have enjoyed many holiday potlucks at the center. But what of our families?

Our spouses and children are home without us or are with their extended families explaining our absence. Or we decide to move the holiday - Christmas for my family this year will be on the 26th because my husband, Scott, has an 11-7 shift. I know we are not alone; thousands of our members families that adjust their lives out of "operational necessity." But we should recognize it is a heavy price to pay. We need to remember that it can be even harder on our families than it is on us. While we are at work, they are often stuck waiting, putting their lives on hold for operational necessity as well.

Lately, the agency has started a nationwide push to reduce the amount of scheduled leave to contract minimums. I hear those outside our profession defend this action by stating that most Americans only

"Over the past four years, I have had something that most of our members do not. Choice. While I work nights and weekends ... I do it by choice."

get two weeks of vacation a year, and consequently wonder why are we upset about a two-week limit. Well, to us - and our families - we are not talking about vacation. We are talking about the ability to have something close to reasonable family life. Most Americans are not limited to two Saturdays a year with their kids.

Too often this toll on the family life goes unnoticed until it is too late to fix. We have all seen families that have not survived the strain. It seems that given the staffing shortages facing us in the immediate future, the stresses will only get worse. We need to look out for each other and our families. We need to take to step back and assess how the work is affecting us and get help if needed. Many things get easier over time. This doesn't seem to be one of them. In fact, it seems to grow in difficulty the older we get.

The holiday season is the hardest for those working and those left at home without them. Maybe absence makes the heart grow fonder, but for NATCA members spending time away from their families, sacrificing valuable quality time around the holidays comes with a price.

continued from page 2

you all play in advancing our nation's causes.

Contract negotiations for our largest bargaining unit will more than likely get underway this coming fall, and we look forward to meeting and dealing with the agency in an atmosphere of mutual respect. As anyone with a shred of experience will tell you, the only agreements which stand any chance at all of enforcement are those where both parties feel they have won at the table. I'm certain the agency has a list of things it would like to achieve in contract negotiations, and we do as well. I am

excited at the prospect of meeting with them to address our mutual concerns.

NATCA enters 2005 a strong, vibrant, healthy, financially secure union. We are comfortable with our successes but we never lose sight of the dangers that may yet come. In this holiday season, when not a creature is stirring, we do not ignore the possibilities, but rather multiply them. As the natural order of things unfolds we do not forget the disorder that may come...we prepare for it.

Our minds are not troubled by worry, because a mind thusly troubled cannot focus on victory. After all...if you can

solve a problem, there is no need in worrying, and if you cannot solve it, then there is no use. Our efforts and energy are instead focused on the future, and on moving swiftly into the next year with strength, determination and resolve.

Controllers, national office staffers hit the campaign trail as election nears

As the campaign season wound down, NATCA members and national office staff labored from sunrise to sunset, subsisting on coffee and adrenaline as they blanketed battleground states in a final get out the vote push.

Tony Yushinsky, a controller at Albany Tower in New York, traversed the country to attend Kerry rallies - something he said he has never done before. "I never donated to a campaign or attended rallies."

"I hadn't been politically active before. I felt secure under former President Bill Clinton," he explained.

Yushinsky attended the large Oct. 26 lunchtime rally in Philadelphia where President Clinton joined Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass.

"Over 80,000 people were present, and we saw Kerry really connect with the crowd. And it was great to see so many other like-minded people."

Kathy Clifton, a controller at Daytona Beach Tower, also got politically active for the first time. She attended a Kerry rally in Daytona Beach, Fla., and volunteered to work at the polls on Election Day.

"This is bigger than us - such a worthwhile endeavor," she remarked. Clifton said she wasn't very interested in politics until she attended the union's NATCA in Washington conference earlier this year.

"When I watched the AFL-

CIO's 'Show Us the Jobs' bus tour video and learned how Bush administration policies had hurt so many people, I felt I had no choice but to get involved," Clifton commented.

When Clifton attended the Kerry rally, she took along some important activists in the making. "I took my kids with me. It's a great family thing to do," she explained.

The activist bug didn't just bite NATCA members - a large number of national office staffers hit the campaign trail as part of the AFL-CIO's Labor 2004 program, which boasted over 225,000 volunteers nationwide.

Ken Montoya, NATCA's director of political and legislative affairs worked the weeks leading up to the election as the AFL-CIO's field director for Shannon County in South Dakota, home to the Lakota tribe's Pine Ridge Reservation.

For Montoya, pride rests in the numbers. "In the 2000 election, 2,100 native people voted; this year, over 4,500 cast ballots," he explained. "We had a turnout of 57 percent, which is incredible."

Montoya logged long hours with little sleep as he traversed a reservation the size of Connecticut for votes. "I drove close to 5,000 miles in the three weeks I worked at Pine Ridge," he remarked.

"We'd start the day with an 8 a.m. conference call, then I'd

NATCA members from Philadelphia Tower show support for the Kerry campaign at a rally in Philadelphia (right). Over 80,000 people attended the event, where former President Bill Clinton also spoke.

organize the 10 field personnel and we'd spread out over the reservation," Montoya explained. As part of their get out the vote initiatives, Montoya and his field staff would leaflet and talk to Native Americans about the importance of voting.

"I enjoyed working with the Lakota. They're a proud people and were very gracious," Montoya remarked.

While the overall experience was a positive one, Montoya was disturbed by the widespread poverty he found while working at the reservation.

"Unfortunately, the standard of living is horrendous," he reflected. "The reservation spreads across two of the poorest counties in the United States, and many people do not have basic amenities."

Stefan Sutich, a labor relations staff representative, helped with get out the vote operations in suburban Philadelphia, and worked as a poll watcher in Reading, Pa., on Election Day.

"We had to make sure no obvious voter intimidation happened, and were there to generally make sure election officers followed the rule of law," he explained.

Overall, the experience was a rewarding one.

"I enjoyed meeting different people from a variety of backgrounds," he commented.

Labor Relations Staff Representative Kevin Sills, who



NATCA HITS THE TRAIL

The following national office staffers went on the campaign trail:

- ♦ Policy Counsel Eugene Freedman in Florida;
- ♦ Chief of Staff Adell Humphreys in North Carolina;
- ♦ Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin in South Dakota;
- ♦ Political and Legislative Affairs Director Ken Montoya in South Dakota;
- ♦ Labor Relations Staff Representative Naveen Parmar in Pennsylvania;
- ♦ Staff Researcher Kelly Richardson in West Virginia;
- ♦ Labor Relations Staff Representative Kevin Sills in Pennsylvania;
- ♦ Eastern Region Administrative Assistant Sallie Sullivan in Long Island, N.Y.;
- ♦ Labor Relations Staff Representative Stefan Sutich in Pennsylvania;
- ♦ Labor Relations Counsel Marc Shapiro in Wisconsin;
- ♦ Director of Labor Relations Bob Taylor in Missouri.

also worked in Pennsylvania, agreed. "We just made sure people's right to vote was upheld."

CAMPAIGN QUICK FACTS

- ♦ Over 225,000 union members hit the campaign trail as part of the AFL-CIO's Labor 2004 program.
- ♦ Labor 2004 undertook the largest get out the vote effort in Ohio's history on Nov. 2, 2004.
- ♦ In addition, Working America, the AFL-CIO's new organization for working people, made contact with a total of 1.1 million members of working family households, offering information on where the candidates stand on key issues.

Safety and Technology Director Fralick assesses future challenges



Doug Fralick, NATCA's director of Safety and Technology, reflects on modernization programs.

What major challenges will the Safety and Technology Department - and the controller workforce as a whole - have to contend with in the coming year?

I believe the biggest challenge we have to face is the impending controller retirement surge. If the Federal Aviation Administration and the White House do not face reality, we will begin to see many air traffic facilities stretched to the breaking point.

More and more of our facilities' controllers now must work mandatory overtime due to a lack of personnel and no magic technology bullet exists that can replace controllers. It's time the administration accepted that fact and addressed it.

What major technological initiatives do you think the agency will pursue next year? And what do you want to see the agency push?

I believe the agency has neither the money nor the will to pursue many new initiatives in the coming years. It is barely able to keep the projects it has committed to up and running.

Two ventures which continue to receive full funding are En Route Automation Modernization (ERAM), which we see as vitally important and Capstone, which Automatic Dependent Surveillance - Broadcast (ADS-B) technology in Alaska uses.

We believe Airport Surface Detection Equipment - Model X (ASDE-X) needs to receive full funds, and the agency needs to deploy Advanced Technologies and Oceanic Procedures (ATOP). We also need Automated Radar Terminal System Color Display (ACD) replacements for outmoded displays in our TRACONS.

In addition, our ERAM work needs to continue unabated, and National Airspace Redesign (NAR) needs full funds. These are some of the items the FAA needs to push.

Which specific programs will receive the most attention in the coming year? Why? And which programs likely will face further budget cuts?

Almost every program will face budget cuts in the future, but I believe ERAM has the most public face right now. It will see close scrutiny because its budget line is large.

The project also is vital to the agency's credibility in that the FAA must bring it to

completion at or near cost estimates.

What important projects will NATCA's liaisons and technical representatives work on in the coming year, and what results do you anticipate?

I believe all of our liaisons and Article 48 representatives do important work. Some projects are more visible than others, but all have an impact on our members. If our people did not present NATCA's input and expertise to the many program offices, many projects would now sit on failing legs today.

If the agency ever decides it no longer wants a collaborative relationship with its experts - the men and women who actually do the work - the aviation world as a whole will suffer.

Remember the Advanced Automation System (AAS) program: "it may be regarded as the greatest failure in the history of organized work," as one participant put it. The agency wasted \$1.5 billion on that ambitious project because it put excessive faith in new technology and sought no input from controllers. The FAA must continue to seek our support if it is to develop and field successful projects.



To some NATCA members, man's best friend is more exotic than Lassie

After a long day of working traffic in the nation's busy airspace, many controllers like to unwind with their pets, but what these NATCA members consider pets is sometimes surprising.

James Garrett, a controller at Arizona's Prescott Tower, controls traffic not only in the tower, but also in his home. Garrett calls three cats, three dogs and three pythons part of the family.

"Pythons actually make great pets as long as you have the right breed," Garrett said. "They are very sociable animals who recognize each member of the household. They quickly learn who belongs and who doesn't. They develop a trust or distrust and have a good memory."

One of Garrett's dogs is a deaf retriever. Though a challenge at first, the dog quickly became one of the gang.

"We have managed to get around the hearing problem with a few basic hand signals," Garrett explained. "He is more than happy to retrieve anything for you, but he can't hear what you want so he brings you his favorite items. He is a great dog and needs a hug every time he sees you."

John Schmitz, a controller at Kentucky's Louisville Standiford Tower, shares Garrett's affinity for reptiles. But his pets of choice have sharper teeth: they are a pair of alligators named Spike and Angel after two vampires from the television series, "Buffy: The Vampire Slayer."



One of Louisville Standiford Controller Doug Schmitz's "boys": his pet alligator Spike. The alligator is currently about 22 inches long.

"I grew up in Florida, so I always had a
continued on page 7

Critical Incident Stress Management Program is a model around the world

Don Hill
Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team Member

Interest in the international air traffic community about the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks remains high and NATCA continues to educate controllers around the world about that tragic day. The concerns and curiosities air traffic controllers shared about what it was like to work on that day know no borders.

The first formal request came in early 2003 when the Air Traffic Control Association of Israel hosted a conference on the effects of terrorism on aviation and asked the union to provide a speaker on behalf of those working on Sept. 11. New York TRACON Controller Brian Fallon and I attended the Israeli event. Fallon had already published an article in the *NATCA Voice* entitled "September 11, 2001: The Day the Vectors Stopped," and I spent the four weeks immediately after Sept. 11 working with many of the controllers most impacted by the attacks.

The conference, held in Tel Aviv, Israel, took place mere weeks after the United States invaded Iraq. Things were a little tense in the Middle East—especially against the backdrop of attending an anti-terrorism conference, but Brian and I had already committed and everything went just fine. The Israeli controllers were very gracious and empathetic hosts.

Later in 2003, the International Federation of Air

Traffic Control Associations (IFATCA) invited us to reprise our presentations at their Americas regional meeting in the Dominican Republic. There, we had a chance to reach out to controllers from 29 countries in the Caribbean as well as North, Central and South America.

"It's so amazing to go to an IFATCA gathering and hear what some of these controllers have to tolerate," said Fallon. "In some regards NATCA is facing a tough road but it certainly puts our struggle in perspective when fellow controllers around the world face fines, arrests and even possible military interrogations."

Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin was also in attendance. "Our CISM program has always been successful, but I doubt any CISM program in aviation has demonstrated as high a level of measurable success as ours did in response to Sept. 11. The Federal Aviation Administration could have lost years' worth of productivity to controllers who were unable to return to duty, but instead our team met their needs swiftly and aggressively."

More recently, Fallon and I accompanied NATCA President John Carr to the IFATCA meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where we attended a special pre-IFATCA conference on human factors in air traffic. Controllers from over 20 countries attended and, in the words of Carr, "the crowd was completely blown away" by the NATCA presentations and, as a new addition, a screening of the "You Are Not



COURTESY DON HILL

NATCA's Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program members Don Hill and Brian Fallon (from left to right) and other members of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations (IFATCA) gather for a photo after a meeting in October in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Alone" video, jointly produced by NATCA and the FAA.

We stressed the importance of the collaboration between the union and the FAA in the aftermath of Sept. 11. As I explained, the higher-ups at FAA weren't exactly sure what we did, but early in the morning of Sept. 12, they told us to keep doing it. They put our entire team on open travel orders and allowed us to tackle the enormous tasks we faced with full support and very little push back.

My presentation, entitled "Helping Our Own: the U.S. Air Traffic Response to the Sept. 11 Terrorist Attacks," is really a two-in-one deal. The first part includes a brief overview of critical incident stress - what it is and how controllers experience it—and a discussion of the joint NATCA/FAA CISM program. The

second half focuses on how the team responded to the terrorist attacks and the subsequent shutdown and restart of the national airspace system.

It's humbling beyond words to see a brother Israeli or Haitian controller show us empathy and compassion as Americans in light of the terrorism and violence he or she has to cope with on a daily basis.

More and more countries are initiating CISM programs, but most controllers in the smaller, poorer countries face an uphill struggle. We are providing as much technical and informational support as we can, but many of these controllers are fighting every day just to stay out of jail and get a paycheck.

Unfortunately, their employers still view CISM programs as a luxury.



To learn more about the Critical Incident Stress Management program, please visit <http://cism.natca.org>.

continued from page 6

fascination with alligators," he recalled. "I think they are beautiful animals, the last of the dinosaurs, and watching them hunt live food, working as a team, is a thing of beauty."

Schmitz' girlfriend and her children were afraid of the reptiles at first, but have since taken to them nearly as much as

Schmitz himself.

"She will feed them now," Schmitz said. "We even take them for occasional walks outside and they always attract attention. They are still wild animals so you always have to show them that respect. But I'm happy to share my environment with them."

The alligators' growth is something on

which Schmitz and his family are keeping close tabs.

"They grow three to six inches each year, but I control their diet so they will stay on the lower end of growth," he explained. "I plan on keeping them in my house until they are four-feet-long, at which time a friend of mine with a farm will take them."

Mount St. Helens' minor eruptions cause some disruptions for controllers

Recently, as Mount St. Helens began spewing steam off its mountainside, controllers at the surrounding facilities have had to adapt to the mountain's unpredictable quirks.

As a result, the Federal Aviation Administration has implemented a temporary flight restriction (TFR) within a 10-mile radius of the volcano. For Seattle Center Facility Representative Jack Fader, who works in the sector which covers the airspace over Mount St. Helens, the steady stream of steam and ash flowing from the mountain has caused little disruption.

"The steam is spreading a few thousand feet into the air, and so far it hasn't posed a serious threat," Fader remarked.

However, given the mountain's unpredictable nature, Fader said the precautions will help ensure no pilots stray into a potentially dangerous area.

John Shrock, the facility representative at Portland Tower

in Oregon, said controllers at his facility are making sure they can protect the flying public in case the unthinkable happens.

"We're preparing for possible ash on the runways. If that happens and the ash gets wet, it can create a really slippery surface; we want to make sure we're ready and can move air carriers along as safely and quickly as possible," he noted.

In addition to creating potentially hazardous conditions on runways, volcanic ash also can cause extensive damage to a plane's engine. "It's really like throwing a handful of sand into an aircraft's engine. If pilots fly into ash, it can create a serious safety hazard," Shrock commented.

Portland International Airport sits a mere 35 miles from Mount St. Helens, so controllers at the facility take all possible precautions.

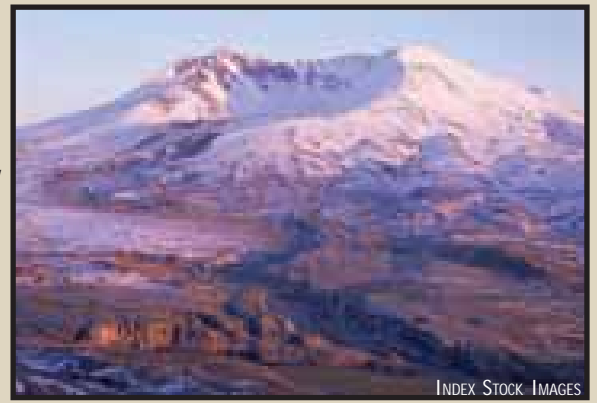
Doug Bubb, the facility representative at Portland TRACON-

co-located with the tower-has deviated numerous aircraft away from the mountain's steam and ash plumes.

"Our main arrival route is about five miles away from Mount St. Helens," Bubb explained.

The volcanic TFR along his arrival route extends upward 15,000 into the air, so working traffic around the mountain is "like vectoring around a weather buildup," Bubb explained.

So far, the activity at Mount St. Helens has not made a serious impact on the national airspace system. "We've seen a series of very small explosions which haven't had a significant



INDEX STOCK IMAGES

Mount St. Helens has recently begun spewing steam into the air. While the minor eruptions have not had a major impact on the surrounding airspace, they have led to some diversions and a temporary flight restriction (TFR).

effect on commercial aviation so far," Seattle TRACON Facility Representative Rich Nolan observed.

However, NATCA members are preparing for every contingency in case a larger eruption happens. "It's really like trying to look into a crystal ball," Fader remarked. "It could get really violent, but at this point no one knows what it's going to do."

New online "NATCA Store" for union merchandise is now up and running

Now, members' one-stop source for NATCA merchandise-the online "NATCA Store"-is up-and-running.

"We've never had the opportunity to offer so many products to the membership - we're very excited about this," Lew Zietz, NATCA's membership and marketing director remarked.

The comprehensive Web site offers members a chance to purchase brand new apparel, drink ware, tools and auto accessories.

In addition, the site also offers wall clocks, watches, pillows and a leather portfolio-all emblazoned with the NATCA logo.

"We haven't had a chance to offer most of this merchandise to the membership as a whole. If you didn't get a chance to go to the union's most recent convention, you probably haven't seen our new items," Zietz commented.

The union's offering of drink ware includes not only shot glasses and mugs, but offers a

full array of glassware from votives to tankards and wine glasses.

While the clothing selection includes old favorites like NATCA polo and t-shirts, it also features colorful and stylish fleeces, jackets, sweatshirts and wind wear in a wide enough assortment of styles to please virtually anyone's fashion sense. In addition, the NATCA Store offers turtlenecks and stonewashed t-shirts.

Another new addition - a popular sale item at the union's 10th Biennial Convention - is the NATCA logo baby bib. But the site's children's selection isn't just limited to infants. Members can outfit their children with NATCA wear from birth to adulthood.

The NATCA Store also offers members a chance to show their NATCA pride while traveling: everything from luggage tags to tire covers and trailer hitch protectors allows them to show off their membership

*"We've never had the opportunity to offer so many products to the membership. We're very excited about this."
-Lew Zietz*

regardless of how they travel.

As an added bonus, NATCA members visiting the site will see familiar faces as they peruse the many options available to them.

"We don't use models on our site. Everyone you see is a NATCA member, NATCA employee or is a member of a NATCA family," Zietz commented.



To view the many offerings available at the NATCA Store, please visit www.natcastore.com.

Throughout the campaign season, Air Force One added complexity to ATC

During the campaign season, NATCA members in battleground states worked hard to ensure the national airspace system ran smoothly when the presidential candidates arrived to woo voters.

Julie Stewart, the facility representative at Cedar Rapids Tower in the hotly contested battleground state of Iowa, worked with Air Force One several times during the campaign. "It's intense - secret service agents come into the tower cab; it adds more excitement to the day."

"You get used to it even though it's hectic," Stewart added.

Air Force One requires the placement of temporary flight restrictions (TFRs) within a ten-mile radius of the president at all times-including when he's on the ground campaigning or giving speeches.

"Our overall traffic workload is a little lighter when Bush is in town," Stewart reflected. General aviation aircraft are restricted when a TFR is in effect, and only scheduled air carrier traffic can fly within the restricted areas.

"We sterilize the airspace for him," Cleveland Hopkins Tower Facility Representative Dick

Pinkston explained.

Air Force Two, Vice President Cheney's aircraft, requires a three-mile TFR.

Pinkston, whose facility lies in Ohio, the epicenter of the 2004 campaign, frequently cleared the presidential candidates to land at his facility.

"Many additional things go on-we're constantly in touch with approach control and the center on where the president and vice president are at all times," he remarked.

Numerous preparations also impact the controllers' workload when either the president or vice president arrives in town, and secret service agents closely watch controllers as they do their jobs.

"We have to shut down part of the airport an hour before Air Force One arrives so we can make sure everything's ready," Maria Messier, the facility representative at Manchester Tower in New Hampshire, remarked.

While the watchful secret service agents add an extra element of pressure, most controllers have worked with them easily, performing their jobs just as seamlessly as if they weren't there.

"We live for this kind of challenge. It definitely adds an exciting element to our day. With secret service personnel



Air Force One arrives at Daytona Beach Tower for an event earlier this year.

listening to communications on the president's whereabouts in the tower cab, the pressure is on," Messier remarked.

For the most part, the secret service agents cause little disruption as they observe controllers.

"The agents usually stand in the background observing, and make sure all aircraft are where they belong. No one can use runways 10-15 minutes before and after the president and vice president arrive," Pinkston remarked.

The secret service agents install a phone line in the control room while they observe the controllers at work, and the room is filled with a constant buzz of activity as the agents monitor the president or vice

president.

Since New Hampshire was both a battleground state during the presidential campaign and the site of important primaries, visits from the president and vice president have become commonplace at Manchester Tower.

"We're really getting used to this. It's become pretty routine at this point," Messier commented.

While Pinkston noted controllers at his facility have adapted to the quick changes official visits require from the president or vice president require, they also add an extra element of pressure.

"But the impact isn't too long-lasting. And it's nothing we can't handle," Pinkston reflected.

Independence Air substantially increases Dulles Tower's traffic flow

"We're really going through some growing pains right now," Dulles Tower Controller Rudy Reid explained. With the recent opening of Independence Air, traffic at his facility and various others across the country has expanded considerably.

Controllers at Dulles, the hub of the new airline, have felt the strain: the tower is now the fourth-busiest facility of its type in the country. "We now have to work 1,750 operations per day.

This time last year, we only had to deal with 1,050," Reid explained.

And the number of controllers at the facility has not kept pace with the increased traffic flow. "Our staffing level hasn't increased since the traffic seriously began to spike about mid-July of this year," Reid remarked. Currently, three trainees are on board at Dulles, and Reid observed "we're getting the numbers we need slowly, but

we still could use more bodies to share the workload."

But the Federal Aviation Administration has not updated the staffing standard for the facility.

"We should have more controllers in here. In addition to the staffing standard, some of our procedures need to change. Our old procedures for handling traffic on the ground don't work as well because we have so many planes now," Reid noted.

The traffic increases Dulles controllers have felt since Independence Air opened are not limited their facility: Russ Halleran, the facility representative at Newark Tower, noted the impact controllers there felt after Independence began offering service to his airport. "Dulles is overwhelmed and basically we have to implement time restrictions on flights into

continued on page 10

For some NATCA members, controlling is truly a family affair

Air traffic controllers have different reasons why they got into the profession. For some, it was the continuation of a career started in the military.

But for others, it was literally in their blood. Their parents or siblings were controllers and for a few, now their children are exploring an ATC career. Here's a look at a few NATCA members' stories:

Tom Gray, Oakland Tower (OAK)

Joe Gray was a trainee at Minneapolis Center in 1981 and, on a couple of special occasions, took his younger brother, Tom, to the facility with him.

"I remember sitting at the radar suites as a 12-year-old and playing with the buttons," Tom recalls. "Computers, with their keyboards and screens of the radars, were a new technology to the average consumer at the time and since I was young, I was fascinated by them."

Twelve years later, Tom was using the same equipment at Oakland Center. "By then, it was antiquated," he jokes.

Joe lost his job after going out on strike with PATCO in 1981, but Tom always knew how much his older brother loved his job and that love grew in him as well. While Tom trained for his own career, Joe often regaled him with stories about what to expect when he eventually arrived at his first facility.

"He was right on," says Tom, now in his seventh year at Oakland Tower after beginning at the center.

Matt Gregor, Green Bay Tower, Wis. (GRB)

Matt's father, John Gregor, a Wisconsin native and former Air Force controller, was a controller and supervisor at GRB for over 30 years.

Matt says growing up in a controller household allowed him to enjoy a great amount of exposure to the profession. His parents never pressured him to

be a controller himself. Rather, they encouraged him to explore all of his interests first.

"I think it was a combination of my love of aviation and the professionalism my father showed on the job that ultimately made me choose the same path," Matt remarked. "I have always been proud of my dad for the work he has done, and I hope to bring the same dedication to the job he did."

"It was an honor to work with the same man whom I had literally looked up to as a little kid who couldn't see above the tower equipment panels."

Doug Hornback, Sioux City Tower, Iowa (SUX)

Hornback's father, Don, was a controller in the Navy in the 1960s and started his FAA career at St. Louis Lambert Tower, near the family's roots, before transferring to Houston Intercontinental Tower, where he worked until his retirement.

"I knew he made a good living and was able to provide for

the family so it was something I was considering," he added.

With guidance from Don, Doug also sought out the military for his training and, like his father, ended up as a Navy controller and quickly discovered that he really loved the work. "It just kind of came easy for me," he commented. "I guess I was just meant for this."

However, Doug couldn't find work in the FAA after his military duty so he bugged the contract tower companies for a job until they finally gave him one in Jackson, Mich. After a year and a half, he finally was hired by the FAA and began his position at SUX in 2001. He was recently selected to transfer to Little Rock Tower in Arkansas.

"It is really nice to have a father who knows what I do," Doug stated. "We always talk about things going on and I've really enjoyed having someone to ask questions when he comes up. He really knows his stuff and has become a great mentor and friend."

continued from page 9
the airport."

In addition to Independence Air, other airlines have stepped up their operations to better compete. "Other air carriers - Air Shuttle, American Eagle and Continental - have also increased service to Newark from Washington, D.C. Taken together, these add up to 60 new flights per day," Halleran remarked.

Reid noted Independence's competitors beefed up their flight routes to compete with the new carrier. "Not long after Independence began offering service, United offered new flights along the same routes as Independence to compete."

For controllers at frenetically-paced Dulles, the most taxing time of day is between 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. "It's sometimes erratic, but we're always on our toes in the afternoon and late evening."

To help meet the added demand, the

agency is building an additional runway at the facility, which will provide it four in total. Construction on the runway will wrap up in 2006 - the same year NATCA members will move into a brand new air traffic control tower.

The marked increase in traffic at Dulles is likely to remain for the foreseeable future. "Dulles is a very attractive market. If Independence stays in business, we'll probably stay very busy," Reid observed.

The higher rate of traffic at Dulles - and all the airports where Independence Air offers service - may lead to new ways of looking at how to handle air traffic.

"As long as we continue to experience rapid traffic increases, we'll have to make sure we can handle this on a system-wide level," Halleran commented. "And we've got to find a way to reduce delays into the Washington, D.C., area."

Despite the added stress of working at



Low-cost carrier Independence Air, using Dulles as its hub, has ramped up traffic at the facility, making it the country's fourth-busiest tower.

Dulles, Reid and his fellow controllers enjoy the faster-paced action.

"It keeps me on my toes and makes the day go by more quickly," he noted.

"It's intense and does increase the stress level, but we're all professionals and know how to do our jobs well."

LR Report

Agency Denied Exceptions in Excused Absence Case

The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) recently denied the agency's exceptions concerning Arbitrator Sharnoff's award in the excused absence case. Arbitrator Sharnoff ruled the Federal Aviation Administration was still obligated to pay employees premium pay and differentials they would have earned even though they received an excused absence because of weather conditions. The agency appealed but the FLRA ruled the exceptions were premature. The parties now most likely will present evidence for the remedy portion of the case.

Official Time Arbitration

In 60 FLRA no.68, issued on Oct. 8- American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) vs. The Department of Housing and Urban Development-the FLRA upheld the arbitrator's award, which found the legislative history of Section 359 of Public Law 106-346 requires employees working at home or at alternative sites to perform "officially assigned duties" only-and union representational duties do not meet that definition.

This is a far-reaching ruling that may allow agencies to cancel earlier agreements or practices. In this particular case ruling, the parties' collective bargaining agreement (CBA) did not allow for representational time or duties while employees were on tele-working status. In addition, the arbitrator could find no established past practice; it was basically absent. This ruling has no chilling effect on NATCA CBAs or other agreements.

Settling the Puerto Rico School Controversy

NATCA sought a temporary restraining order (TRO) to force the agency to certify the children of controllers at FAA facilities in Puerto Rico, in conjunction with an unfair labor practice (ULP) charge against the FAA in August.

The request for a TRO is an unprecedented move. Rarely do labor organizations request such orders, and very rarely are

they granted. Temporary restraining orders require the demonstration of irreparable harm. After the FLRA authorized seeking this legal action and announced it would seek the order in federal district court at the end of August, the FAA agreed to resolve the issue outside of court.

As part of the settlement, the agency will pay for English language schools for all children of NATCA members attending school in San Juan this year - including those who were not certified to attend the DoD schools.

Certification of FAA Employees' Dependents to Attend DoD Schools in Puerto Rico

NATCA met with the agency and received a briefing on the agency's formal position regarding the issue of certification. Essentially, it does not want to certify these kids. After the briefing NATCA submitted, the union's first proposal regarding the issue, both parties met Wednesday, Nov. 17.

Closure of the Roosevelt Roads School in Puerto Rico

NATCA filed an unfair labor practice charge over the agency's failure to properly notify and bargain with the union over the closing of the Roosevelt Roads School in Puerto Rico. The Boston Region of the FLRA issued a complaint. Prior to the hearing, the Boston Region of the FLRA accepted the agency's settlement offer to resolve the dispute on the basis that the FAA would agree to bargain over the closing of the school with the union.

NATCA objected to this settlement because it felt that parents who were harmed by the closing of the school were entitled to a return to the status quo whereby affected children could enroll in English-speaking schools and if necessary face reimbursement for the cost of school tuition if the children were unable to attend the DoD Schools. NATCA submitted a letter to the FLRA's Boston Region with its objections and asked the FLRA's regional director to reconsider. However, the regional director still opted to settle. NATCA is in the process of drafting an appeal to the FLRA

general counsel in Washington, D.C.

Contract Negotiations for the Civilian Air Traffic Control Specialists at the Cherry Point Marine Corps Base

The parties reached a tentative agreement after undergoing contract negotiations the past two years regarding the term agreement for the bargaining unit employees located at the Cherry Point Marine Corps Base in Havelock, N.C. NATCA's chief negotiator is Labor Relations Staff Representative Melinda Kim.

The union's negotiations team members also consist of Labor Relations Staff Representative Kevin Sills and Controllers Vern Geddings, Joe Hennessy, Belinda Holbrook and Terry Tolster at the Cherry Point local. The parties' three-year agreement was rolled over from the effective date of Jan. 21, 1994. The agreement is now subject to the ratification process.

Currently Scheduled Arbitrations

- ♦ Travel Reimbursement issues in Burlington, Mass., on Nov. 17;
- ♦ Discipline case in Kansas City, Mo., on Nov. 17;
- ♦ Change of shift to accommodate an operational error (OE) investigation case in Tennessee on Nov. 18;
- ♦ Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA) case in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 1;
- ♦ Pay violation case in Kansas City, Mo., on Dec. 8;
- ♦ Suspension case in Miami on Jan. 26, 2005;
- ♦ Discipline case in Dallas on Feb. 2, 2005;
- ♦ Overtime bypass case in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 4, 2005;
- ♦ Case regarding the video "That'll Never Happen to Me" at the agency's Washington, D.C., headquarters on Feb. 11, 2005;
- ♦ Case regarding the operational error/operational deviation (OE/OD) form in Washington, D.C., on March 5, 2005;
- ♦ CRU-X case in Washington, D.C., on April 19, 2005;
- ♦ Reduction in pay case in Atlanta on April 20, 2005.

NATCA Regional Vice Presidents

Alaska

Ricky Thompson
 PO Box 233291
 Anchorage AK, 99523
 phone: 907/346-3372
 fax: 907/346-3373
 rtnatca@pobox.alaska.net
 PIN: 11001

Central

John Tune
 27094 Hospital Dr.
 Paola, KS 66071
 phone: 913/294-2861
 fax: 913/557-9966
 jtune@natca.org
 PIN: 12001

Eastern

Phil Barbarello
 1303 Main Street
 Port Jefferson, NY 11777
 Phone: 631/331-3273
 Fax: 631/331-2986
 nearvp@natca.net
 PIN: 13001

Great Lakes

Pat Forrey
 1910 Highland, Suite 210
 Lombard, IL 60148
 Chicago Phone: 630/268-9430
 Chicago Fax: 630/268-8476
 Cleveland Phone: 440/930-7801
 Cleveland Fax: 440/930-7802
 nglrvp@comcast.net
 PIN: 14000

New England

Mike Blake
 20A Northwest Blvd.
 Suite 226
 Nashua, NH 03063
 Phone: 603/673-7443
 Fax: 603/673-3432
 mblake@natca.org
 PIN: 15001

Northwest Mountain

Carol Branaman
 PO Box 2250
 Monument, CO 80132
 Phone: 719/487-7711
 Fax: 719/487-7722
 carolrvp@earthlink.net
 PIN: 16001

Southern

Andy Cantwell
 100 Hartsfield Centre Pkwy.,
 Suite 510
 Atlanta, GA 30354
 Phone: 404/766-3118
 Fax: 775/262-5180
 nsorvp@natca.org
 PIN: 17001

Southwest

Darrell Meachum
 1001 W. Eules Blvd.
 Suite 215
 Eules, TX 76040
 Phone: 817/540-6661
 Fax: 817/354-8589
 nswrvp@natca.net
 PIN: 18001

Western Pacific

Bob Marks
 751 Rancheros Dr.
 Suite 1
 San Marcos, CA 92069
 Phone: 760/752-3400
 Fax: 760/752-3434
 nwprvp@natca.org
 PIN: 19001

Region X

Jim D'Agati
 231 W. Main Street
 Suite 207
 Carpentersville, IL
 60110
 Phone: 847/551-3320
 Fax: 847/551-3396
 jdagati@natca.org
 PIN: 32000

The Air Traffic Controller is published bimonthly by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association AFL-CIO. First-class postage paid in the Washington, D.C. POSTMASTER; Send address changes to NATCA Membership Department, 1325 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: 202/628-5451 Fax: 202/628-9558 Web: www.natca.org Virtual Flight Surgeons is available to members toll-free at 866/AEROMED.

Adam Justice, Editor and Photographer

E-mail: ajustice@natcadc.org *Phone:* 202/220-9814

John Carr, Publisher *E-mail:* jcarr@natcadc.org

Courtney Portner, Executive Editor *E-mail:* cportner@natcadc.org



Controller Dynasties
 Learn about NATCA mem-
 bers for whom control-
 ling traffic is a family
 tradition.

**Fralick Discusses the
 Agency**
 NATCA's Safety and
 Technology director dis-
 cusses the FAA and the
 modernization front.

Elections Aftermath
 Read about the union's
 position in the wake of
 the recent elections.

Inside this Issue

1325 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20005



PRESORTED
 FIRST CLASS
 U.S. POSTAGE PD
 LANHAM, MD
 PERMIT # 4410