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On International Women's Day

Celebrate NATCA Women In Control



Pictured from top to bottom, left to right: Candice Gertonson (HCF), Dawn McFalls (MRI), Alyssa Kurenyshev (DPA), Kristen Lewandowski (P80), Jerah Kavooosi (FCM), Executive Vice President Trish Gilbert, Allison Schwaegel (STL), Jamie Green (PVD), Kristen Laubach (PHL), Trisha Pesiri-Dybvik (SBA), Lisa Schaefer (CMA), Dawn Forde (EE1), Kristin

Especially today as we celebrate [International Women's Day](#), NATCA salutes all women in aviation. We recognize the many women in our Union who make vital contributions, improving the safety and efficiency of National Airspace System.

We asked some of them questions, ranging from their definition of leadership, to their motivation for becoming involved in NATCA, about their pastimes, and how they manage multitasking. Here's what they had to say:

What motivated you to become involved in our Union and/or the aviation industry? What do you foresee in your future, in regards to your role in the Union and aviation?

Allison Schwaegel, Central Region, St. Louis ATCT (STL) FacRep-- My involvement began because I grew up in a NATCA house, so initially I was just learning more about something that I've heard about since I was a little girl, but the more involved I get, the more I realize that integrity is a true core value of this organization. I couldn't imagine not giving back to a system that has worked so hard for me.

[Click here to see other responses to this question.](#)

What advice would you give to any female member who wants to get involved but doesn't know where to start? What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions within the Union and in their aviation careers?

Jerah Kavooosi, Great Lakes Region, Flying Cloud ATCT (FCM) FacRep-- It may seem difficult or uncomfortable talking to others about your goals and career aspirations. You may be concerned that you will not be supported or taken seriously, or you may question your own abilities. I myself have always felt very supported and encouraged by my male associates. Find the person you feel comfortable with, reach out to them and don't quit trying! Don't let the fear of taking that first step inhibit you. Our working careers will pass quickly -- you don't want to be haunted by the regret of not giving it a try.

[Click here to see other responses to this question.](#)

Define a great leader. What are some traits you think great leaders possess?

Trish Gilbert, NATCA Executive Vice President -- A leader brings people together, cares about results and not getting credit. They are not afraid of taking action, and in fact learn from the past and from mistakes, without blaming others, and they improve upon them. They are not troubled by competition but rather create opportunities for others to follow and participate. Traits include integrity, one who is inspiring, being generous, and motivated.

[Click here to see other responses to this question.](#)

What's one leadership lesson you've learned in your role and career?

Dawn Forde, Region X, EE1 FacRep -- One of the leadership lessons I have

learned in my career and roles is my commitment to representing NATCA both inside and outside of our Union. I am consistent in inspiring and maintaining enthusiasm for all that NATCA represents: the values of working together in solidarity. Another lesson I've learned is to never lose sight of NATCA's purpose. I always treat everyone with respect, even those who may be creating problems for me. I have learned to be tough with the problem, not the person. I encourage communication and seek ways to use conflicts constructively.

[Click here to see other responses to this question.](#)

What do you think is the most significant barrier to female leadership?

Lisa Schaefer, Western Pacific Region, Camarillo ATCT (CMA) FacRep --

Gaining respect. I was told a long time ago by my male radar instructor that I would have to work traffic twice as good as the guys if I wanted them to respect me like an equal. I think that perspective plays into any leadership role in aviation because it is a male-dominated industry.

[Click here to see other responses to this question.](#)

What woman inspires you and why? Who is your role model, and why?

Kristin Simms -- Western Pacific Region (NWP), Oakland ATCT (OAK)

FacRep, NWP Reloaded Rep -- Two women in my profession stand out to me above others as inspirational role models. This will come as no surprise to everyone, but Trish Gilbert has earned the recognition and is widely respected in a world of male dominance. She has the ability to appear fearless and is a true testament as to how intellect and confidence can allow for one to accomplish astronomical things. Second, Trisha Pesiri-Dybvik is not only intelligent and strong, but she has the ability to convey her empathy and be everybody's friend. Finding the right balance of being both kind-hearted and heard on a national level is no easy task. Trisha masters this. These two women are prime examples of what one can accomplish when they set their sights high and take the importance of leadership and selflessness seriously. They are who I channel when I find myself outside of my comfort zone and when I am in need of some encouragement.

[Click here to see other responses to this question.](#)

The March 22 issue of the Insider will feature the remaining questions and answers in this two-part series celebrating women in our Union.

Detroit TRACON Takes on Big Changes


Detroit TRACON (D21) is a Level 11 facility commissioned in March 1986. The aviation safety professionals there are responsible for approximately 40 miles, surrounding Detroit Metro/Wayne County ATCT (DTW), and up to 17,000 feet, including a portion of Canada. They interact with many facilities

[illegible]

A History of Leadership at NCT



McCoy has been a FacRep for 22 years. He was the first FacRep of Northern California TRACON (NCT), which was opened in 2002 after four different TRACONs of varying pay levels were combined into one. Prior to working at NCT, McCoy worked for the first 10 years of his career at Bay TRACON and was a FacRep for several years there as well.



McCoy was born and raised in Long Island, N.Y. His wife, Roanna, is also a controller at NCT, and they have four kids: Kelsey, Katy, Madison, and Matthew. McCoy knew he wanted to be an air traffic controller since his youth. “My father was a volunteer fireman in Coram, New York, (on Long Island) and many of the volunteers were also PATCO controllers,” he said. “I actually worked for one of them who had a carpet business, and I grew up hearing their stories and knew right away what I wanted to do with my life.” McCoy joined NATCA without hesitation, the first day he walked in to Bay TRACON. [Read more.](#)

A Shout Out for Solidarity

NATCA members Rick and Laura Heckman, both retired controllers from Philadelphia ATCT (PHL), sent NATCA a shoutout and thanks for the solidarity of our NATCA family in always lending a helping hand in times of need.

Rick, who had a lung transplant in November 2017, works for Regulus Group on Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) modernization initiatives. Rick was on travel in that role to the FAA William J. Hughes Technical Center in Egg Harbor Township, N.J., and was feeling poorly. On Feb. 20, Laura, who was at home in Philadelphia, was unable to reach Rick by phone. She asked his friend and colleague, NATCA Houston Center (ZHU) member Eric Labardini, to enter Rick's hotel room to check on him. Rick was incoherent, unknowingly suffering from a dangerous infection related to his transplant. [Read more.](#)



ZFW Member Connie Harbin, a "Cornerstone" of Southwest Region, Retires With a Smile and a Legacy of NATCA Family and Activism



Connie Harbin spent the entirety of her sterling, 25-year career working as a controller in the RDR Raider Area of Fort Worth Center (ZFW), displaying a wide smile and positive attitude that was infectious to all who interacted with her. Her motto was the famous quote by American philosopher William James: "We don't laugh because we're happy, we're happy because we laugh."

"Controllers are a fun group of people and I can honestly say that I have laughed out loud at work more days than I have not," said Harbin, who retired last week from a career that left her feeling grateful to have the opportunity to do something she loved very much.

"Throughout my career, my advice to new controllers has always been to overlook the negative things, such as shift work and working holidays and weekends, and to love this career for all the positives that it offers, because there are so many positives," she said. "It has been a job that I have loved going to every day, not only because I actually love the work, but because of my amazing co-workers." [Read more.](#)

Controllers Speak at Cirrus Owners and Pilots Association Training Conference

NATCA members Evan Munro (Miami Center, ZMA), Jen McCoy (Tampa ATCT, TPA), Fabian Sanchez (Central Florida TRACON,

F11), and Andrew Leppert (TPA) spoke to pilots on "Air Traffic Control (ATC) and You" at the recent Cirrus Owners and Pilots Association (COPA) training conference in Lakeland, Fla.

Their presentation discussed ATC airspace, VFR flight following and separation, ATC pet peeves, the types of ATC facilities, uncontrolled fields, IFR clearances, and clear, concise communications with ATC.

"It's important for pilots to know we are here to help. We're not this scary voice," Munro said.

"We want to talk to you and have you on frequency. It gives everyone a better picture of ATC and the traffic around you."

The NATCA presenters highlighted some ATC and pilot saves from Communicating For Safety, and answered questions regarding local airspace, ATC communications, and flight in Central/South Florida and the Bahamas.



NATCA News and Notes

ZFW's 3rd Annual "Honor our Retired Members Night"



Fort Worth Center (ZFW) NATCA had 50 attendees during its annual ZFW NATCA "Honor our Retired Members Night." Retirees were in attendance from Colorado, Alaska, and all over Texas.

"We presented Paul Lastrapes, former ZFW NATCA FacRep, with the 2018 ZFW NATCA Legacy Award," ZFW member Nick Daniels said. "It was an amazing night and our local and Union are stronger because of the hard work and sacrifice of those we honored."

CAE Member Matt Trimble Thanks Sponsors of Harvest Hope Food Bank



Columbia ATCT (CAE) FacRep Matt Trimble (far left) and CAE Professional Standards Rep James Driggers (far right) were invited by Harvest Hope Food Bank to speak at the South Carolina Governor's mansion to join Governor Henry McMaster in thanking sponsors who make the food bank's work possible. During the government shutdown, CAE members and their families were among the thousands of families Harvest Hope helped during those hard times. Five of the CAE members who received support from Harvest Hope have children that are less than a year old.

"After over a month of no pay all the while still coming to work to keep the flying public safe, people were faced with difficult decisions, such as do I pay for gas to drive to work, or food for my family?" Trimble said at the event. "Thankfully, because of the support that you all provide to Harvest Hope, we were able to get much needed relief and keep pushing through the tough times."

Newark Tower Donates to Community FoodBank of New Jersey



Members of Newark ATCT (EWR) donated \$1,545 plus another \$1,000 from the NATCA Charitable Foundation to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey as thanks for the organization's assistance to federal employees during the shutdown earlier this year. Pictured (left to right): Two food bank representatives, Director of Corporate Relations at Community FoodBank of New Jersey Debby Scheinholtz, EWR Vice President James Lovett, EWR FacRep Bill Striffler, and EWR Treasurer Chris Mitrotasios.

NATCA Members Visit Ireland and Irish ATC and Thank Them for Their Kindness and Support During the Shutdown

Many months before the government shutdown was even a thought, Cat Lovetro (N90), Pete Tracey (C90), and Eric Winn (ZHU) planned a vacation to beautiful Ireland.

During the shutdown, Irish Air Traffic Controllers were very vocal in their support of NATCA and workers that were affected. In Houston specifically, they provided a lot of pizza for the local controllers during their "unpaid internships."



"It was great that we were able to contact some of the Irish Controllers and visit their facilities in Dublin and Shannon and provide some NATCA swag and some cupcakes as a small thank you to repay the kindness they showed before," said Winn. "It is a beautiful country and should be on the top of everyone's bucket list to visit!"



Nominate Your Colleague for an Award!



Don't miss out on nominating a deserving aviation safety professional, to be recognized at the 15th Annual Archie League Medal of Safety Awards ceremony. The award was named for the first air traffic controller and highlights a variety of aviation saves, some which involve a team of professionals working together, while others are the result of just one person's efforts. Any NATCA member can nominate another member in good standing, but the April 30, 2019 deadline is drawing near. [Click here](#) for more information. The awards will be presented on Sept. 18, 2019 at Communicating For Safety.

NATCA 101 Course

WANT ONE?

NATCA *FREE Bumper Sticker!*

NATCA RELOADED
UNIONISM THROUGH EDUCATION

**If so, then
TAKE NATCA 101**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 15
1:00 PM**

ALL CLASSES EASTERN TIME

The Shutdown illustrates the importance of NATCA in our lives.
I want everyone to sign up for NATCA 101, to learn about
NATCA's history, how the local and national offices operate,
and what benefits we get from NATCA.
Sign up at portal.natca.org

Having a **basic understanding** of your Union, and then
building on it with **personal involvement**,
are the first steps toward a **stronger local**,
a more **powerful national Union**, and
a BETTER FUTURE FOR YOUR FAMILY!

THIS INTERACTIVE COURSE IS TAUGHT VIA
GO-TO-MEETING. TO SIGN UP VISIT
portal.natca.org
QUESTIONS? CONTACT CHRISSEY PADGETT AT
cpadgett@natca.net

SHAPING NATCA'S FUTURE BY INSPIRING UNIONISM AND PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

If you've never taken a NATCA 101 course, or feel you need a refresher post-government shutdown, you can register on the [NATCA Membership Portal](#) for the upcoming March 15 course.

Through this interactive course, you will learn about NATCA's history, how the local and national offices operate, and benefits that NATCA provides. Register today.

Email Chrissy Padgett if you have any questions: cpadgett@natca.net.

NATCA Store Item of the Week: Large NATCA Sticker



Back by popular demand: this 13-inch diameter white vinyl sticker comes with an adhesive back. It features the NATCA logo with full wrap-around text. It's ideal for your wall and available for immediate shipment. Union-made in the United States.

Price: \$6.

To see the item and how to order: [Click here](#). Select USPS or UPS as your shipping preference on your orders. To check on stock availability or for further assistance, call 800-266-0895 or email natcastore@natcadc.org.

NATCA Benefits: Theme Park Discounts

Old man winter may still be sticking around now, but summer is just around the corner. That means it's time to start thinking about the family vacation. What do you have planned for fun with the kids this summer?

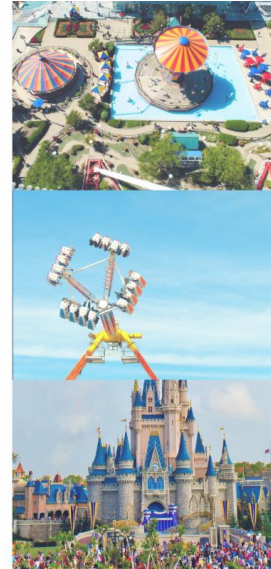
[Look no further!](#) Disney, Six Flags, and Kings Island theme parks await the kid in all of us, at discounted prices that won't break your vacation budget. When you're done making your heart race on dry land, take the kids somewhere to cool off in the refreshing waters of a fun-filled waterpark. NATCA has discounts for all Great Wolf Lodge and Schlitterbahn parks across the nation.

USE YOUR



BENEFITS

**FOR A GREAT
VACATION!**



You work hard all year taking care of the flying public, and your family. Don't you think it's time to have some serious fun on a vacation as well?

[Click here and login](#) with your member account for your NATCA discount codes at these parks:

- [Disney](#)
- [Great Wolf Lodge](#)
- [Kings Island](#)
- [Schlitterbahn Parks](#)
- [Six Flags](#)

