



Paul Rinaldi & Trish Gilbert

TEAM UPDATE

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In a normal election year, our members' efforts representing our Union in supporting the campaigns of the NATCA Majority – candidates for congressional offices in both political parties who support NATCA – is demanding. In 2020, that work has been uniquely challenging. The pandemic altered traditional campaigning activities away from those that require personal contact. The normal in-person events and face-to-face communication with one another were replaced with various virtual communications. NATCA members invested many hours in these volunteer activities. The dedication and passion of these volunteers for legislative activism furthers our Union's best interests.

The 750 active members and Retired NATCA Active Volunteers (RNAV) members who represented our Union during this campaign demonstrated lots of hustle. They showed resourcefulness and creativity. We had great turnout on virtual events on Zoom and other platforms, where our familiar yellow shirts were again noticed and admired as they have been for multiple other campaigns.

Our team members volunteered 10,750 hours. We had engagement with 103 separate NATCA Majority campaigns, both Republican and Democratic. We had one member put in over 175 hours, three more who put in over 150 hours, and nine others that put in over 100 hours. Additionally, we had 66 members who put in at least one hour of work in each of the 30 weeks of the campaign since early April when we started the bulk of our activity.

Our Union also had a dedicated, passionate, and highly experienced NATCA activist – Steve Weidner – leading our efforts and organizing our entire campaign 2020 team. Steve retired at the end of 2019 after chairing the National Legislative Committee for the previous decade. We asked him to take on the challenge of coordinating our campaign 2020 efforts and obviously had no idea what that would entail after our world changed so dramatically in March.

Steve, member activist volunteers, and NATCA staff created a robust email campaign to provide all members with information about voting in your respective states. They also added a member voter center to the NATCA

website. This is a key repository of voting information that will serve our members well for many elections to come.



During the 2020 campaign, our Union – and the larger labor movement – also benefited from our incredible Boots On The Ground (BOTG) program. BOTG allows mostly retired NATCA members to participate in the labor-to-labor outreach and education program of the AFL-CIO. The program is led by BOTG program manager and RNAV Executive Committee Chair Tom Thompson (retired, Indianapolis Center).

BOTG placed 27 retired NATCA members into 12 states this year. These members worked full time as AFL-CIO staff from July through November in their respective locations. Each state works tirelessly to educate every union member on where the candidates stand on issues important to labor. BOTG members are often assigned with federal races in mind. But as members of AFL-CIO staff, they often assist with city, county, and state elections important to the broader labor movement as well.

“COVID presented numerous challenges to our program this cycle, but by being assigned early, we were able to be at the forefront of problem-solving to ensure the safety of both our members involved in the program, as well as those union members we were reaching to inform,” Thompson said. “Some of the methods used included phone banks, text banks, handwritten postcards, mailers, digital ads, and no-contact literature drops.”

Our BOTG members provided regular updates about how each state was adapting to the challenges of COVID. Their updates provided the national AFL-CIO with additional field



insight that helped maximize our efforts nationwide throughout the cycle. Each state keeps a running total of their efforts with emphasis on whatever method of communication works best for the union members in their state. As an example, here is the total for Virginia:

- Member-to-member texts: 94,953
- Handwritten postcards: 6,925
- Live member-to-member phone calls: 88,276
- No-contact literature drops:

34,288

- Local union mail pieces: 311,592

These total numbers will vary in each state, but this example represents the work of hundreds of union member volunteers that our BOTG members helped recruit, train, and supply the needed materials to accomplish our goals. When you consider we had BOTG members helping to produce approximately a half million member-to-member contacts in 12 different states this cycle, it's easy to see the union member vote is the difference in many races nationwide.

BOTG Program Manager Tom Thompson said, "I am extremely proud of the work our Boots members were a part of this cycle, but I am even prouder of the fact we were able to do it safely."

It has not been a normal year. But during this crucial election, our Union saw the collective voice and solidarity that we have come to expect and appreciate from our many NATCAvists. We thank Steve, Tom, our Government Affairs department staff, and every member activist whose volunteer efforts under extraordinary circumstances lifted us up and carried our Union forward.

In solidarity,

Paul and Trish

Passing of Beloved Longtime NATCA Employee Cheryl Cannon

It is with deep sorrow that we share the news of the passing of Cheryl Cannon on Sunday, Nov. 15, from a brief and sudden illness. She was a beloved and integral member of our National



Office staff. Cheryl was the Union's longest-serving employee, having worked for the last 29 of NATCA's 33 years. She was a steady and friendly presence for all of us at the National Office.

Our hearts are broken, and we extend our deepest sympathies to Cheryl's children, Justin and Michelle (pictured with her). Many NATCA members and staff have asked about donating funds to assist them. A GoFundMe campaign has been set up for them. Please [click here](#) to donate.

Cheryl was the receptionist at the front desk at the National Office for many years. Most recently, she worked as Senior Membership Services Coordinator. She was often the first person that so many of our members saw – or talked to on the phone – when they interacted with the National Office or visited in person to do the work of the Union. Cheryl relished that role and said she absolutely loved working at the front desk. She recently said, “The most rewarding part of being a member of NATCA's staff is the day-to-day interactions with NATCA members and helping them with their needs.”

Cheryl was a native Washingtonian and lived in the city or surrounding area all of her life. She started working for NATCA in 1991. About her hiring she stated, “I was working in a veterinary hospital and was pregnant for the first time. My daughter was born two months premature. I was not sure if I was going to go back to work full time at that point. I decided to do temp work at that time. The agency placed me at NATCA and after a month, I was offered a full-time position. The hours and benefits were what I needed, and my daughter was doing great, so I took the position.”

In addition to her children, Cheryl had a deep love for dogs and took pride in her passion for training and showing dogs at competitions since the mid-1970s. She showed dogs in the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, and Europe and won all the way to Best in Show, competing in all of the major dog events in this country, including the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. She and her dogs also competed in performance events like obedience. Cheryl was also a breeder of Briards, German Shepherds, and Rhodesian Ridgebacks.

She will be missed by her many NATCA friends and colleagues. Please keep Cheryl,

her children, her extended family, her friends, and all who loved her in your thoughts and prayers.



Many NATCA Members' Good Work Recognized with FAA ATO Awards

The FAA Air Traffic Organization (ATO) hosts an annual awards program honoring the outstanding achievements and contributions of its employees. This year's recipients were selected from 314 nominations across the National Airspace System (NAS) for superior individual and team performance, and we are proud to honor and recognize several NATCA members and facilities.

The **Collaboration, Partnership, Success Award** is presented to an individual or team for successful implementation of one or more solutions or projects by building partnerships based on trust, respect, and responsiveness with internal or external customers and stakeholders to advance ATO goals.

Congratulations to **Beth Adams**, Traffic Management Unit Command Center (DCC), for her work on the Space Operations Team.

Congratulations to **Jordan Klein**, New York TRACON (N90), and **Shawn Reddinger**, Engineer/Southern Region (ESO) for their work on the JFK Runway 13 Left CANARSIE Team.

The **Exemplary Program Management Award** is presented to a team that shows significant accomplishment in meeting program deliverables, milestones and functionality, managing program costs, mitigating risks, collaborating with stakeholders, and communicating the program well to colleagues and leadership.

Congratulations to **Fred Karl**, Engineer/Aeronautical Center (EAC), for his work on the N47 Part 135 Certificate Team.

The **Administrative Excellence Award** is presented to an individual or team for demonstration of customer service excellence and a "can-do" attitude in

accomplishing administrative processes, procedures, and support, contributing to ATO goals.

Congratulations to the members of the National Validation Team (NVT): **Jonathan Bouhebent**, Denver Center (ZDV), **Mark Collins**, Engineer/Great Lakes Region (EGL), **Scott Fineron**, Northern California TRACON (NCT), **Gilbert Geer**, Joshua CCF (JCF), **Corey Grafe**, Philadelphia ATCT (PHL), **Brody McCray**, Washington Center (ZDC), **Heather McNevin**, Minneapolis Center (ZMP), **Matt Scala**, Denver TRACON (D01), **Rich Santa**, Eastern Regional Vice President, **Steven Spiller**, Boston ATCT (BOS), **John Tornatore-Pili**, San Francisco ATCT (SFO), and **Mike Weekley**, Columbus (Ohio) ATCT (CMH).

The **World-Class Learning & Development Award** is presented to an individual or team for excellence in the design, development, or implementation of technical or non-technical programs. This award acknowledges excellent application of any creative, innovative method, or mode of sharing and imparting knowledge to the workforce.

Congratulations to **Mark Rogers**, Miami Center (ZMA), of the Aircrew Training Group Team.

The **Outstanding Controller Award** is presented to an Air Traffic Control Specialist who has achieved the highest level of performance, resulting in significant contributions to the safety and efficiency of the NAS. The controller may be from any of the following specialties: En Route, Terminal, Flight Service Station, or Traffic Management.

Congratulations to **Eric Tarnow**, Fargo/Hector Field ATCT (FAR).

The **Outstanding Air Traffic Facility Award** is presented to air traffic service facilities that demonstrate overall outstanding performance and accomplishments.

Congratulations to **Fort Wayne ATCT (FWA)**, led by FacRep Jordan Hefner, **Indianapolis ATCT (IND)**, led by FacRep Matthew Gladieux, and **Dallas/Fort Worth TRACON (D10)**, led by FacRep Terry Donaldson.

The **Outstanding Flight Service Specialist Award** is presented to a Flight Service Specialist who has achieved the highest level of performance, resulting in significant contributions to the safety and efficiency of the NAS.

Congratulations to **Renee Magnuson**, Flight Service Station ENA (FS1).

Congratulations to the 2020 NAS First, People Always award recipients!

Excused Absence v. Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)/CBA Leave

We want to remind all members of when it is appropriate to be placed on excused absence, sick leave or, as qualified, leave under the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)**.

- If you are asymptomatic (meaning you have no symptoms) and have been placed under quarantine by a health care provider or prohibited by the Agency from reporting for duty, you should be placed on excused absence.
- If you are symptomatic (meaning you have symptoms), you generally have the choice to use either sick leave or, as qualified, Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) under FFCRA.
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19, whether asymptomatic or symptomatic, you generally have the choice to use either sick leave or, as qualified, Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) under FFCRA.

Below is information regarding the FFCRA Memorandum of Understanding:

On May 8, 2020, NATCA and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding Human Resource Policy Manual (HRPM) Policy Bulletin 115, Paid Leave under FFCRA. Policy Bulletin 115 generally and the MOU specifically address the FAA's implementation



of FFCRA, which was signed into law on March 18, 2020. The FFCRA provides expanded paid leave options for NATCA bargaining unit employees (BUEs), who have been affected by COVID-19. FFCRA provides two forms of paid leave: Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Expanded Leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which can be utilized for the employee's own health needs or to care for family members.

- Emergency Paid Sick Leave quick reference guide [here](#).
- Expanded FMLA Leave quick reference guide [here](#).
- FFCRA Frequently Asked Questions can be viewed [here](#).
- Download the full MOU [here](#).
- Download only the FFCRA leave request form attachment [here](#).
- Comparison of the Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Expanded FMLA Leave [here](#).

If you have questions regarding this information, please reach out to your regional NATCA leadership.

**2020 Produces Several Successful
NCF Campaigns**



This year has been challenging for the NATCA Charitable Foundation (NCF). The pandemic delayed plans for NATCA in Washington, the Biennial Convention, and Communicating For Safety until 2021, so opportunities to raise money were limited. But thanks to NCF leaders' creativity and hard work – and our generous members once again stepping up to answer calls for need – the recent 25 for 25 pushup campaign became the most successful fundraising effort in NCF's 26-year history.

The three-month campaign raised \$88,257 to support NCF and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), one of the [four charities](#) benefitting from our 18th Biennial Convention in Houston which is now scheduled for May 25-27, 2021. That is nearly double the previous record amount raised, \$47,878, at the 16th Biennial Convention in San Diego in 2016.



"During a Convention year, NCF typically raises approximately \$100,000 over the three NATCA events," said NCF President Corrie Conrad (Portland, Ore., ATCT, PDX). "NATCA members, family, friends, and corporate partners came together to raise a record amount of money for the NCF and AFSP in a virtual pushup challenge. It was inspiring to see so many of us come together for two great charities while raising awareness for suicide prevention."

Additionally, NATCA locals have donated just over \$35,000 this year.

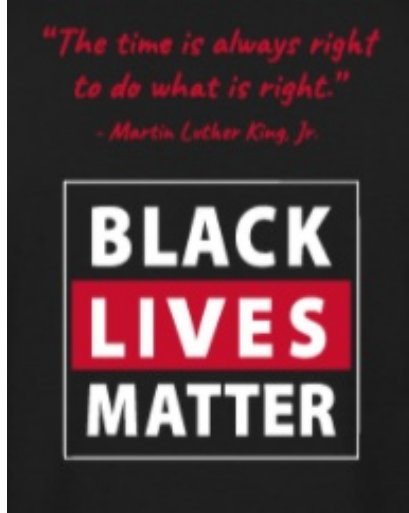
NCF has also been boosted by several other campaigns in recent months:



NATCA is offering a new T-shirt to honor members of our Union who are military veterans and support both the NATCA Charitable Foundation (NCF) and the Lone Survivor Foundation (LSF). More than 500 of these shirts already have been purchased, raising

more than \$2,500 for these charities. The sale of the shirts continues in the NATCA store: [Unisex shirts](#) | [Women's shirts](#).

The Black Lives Matter T-shirt sale raised \$7,818 for NCF and Black Girls Code, a not-for-profit organization that focuses on providing



technology education for Black girls, helping them to become the leaders and programmers of tomorrow.

The sale of Pride masks raised \$1,300 for NCF and The Trevor Project, a national nonprofit that provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ+ young people. Also, NCF contributed an additional \$2,000 donation to The Trevor Project in 2020. The sale of these [masks](#) continues in the NATCA store.



The 19th Amendment T-shirt sale raised \$956 for NCF and the League of Women Voters.

NATCA Charter Member Retires

Charlie Blankenship is one of 28 remaining charter members in our air traffic control (ATC) or traffic management unit (TMU) bargaining units. Additionally, he is one of 101 total charter members across all bargaining units that are still active members. On Nov. 30, Blankenship will retire, ending a streak of 65 straight years between his father Charles, his brother Steve, and himself as active controllers. He has been a dedicated NATCA member and never once in his 34+ year career had a break in his

membership.



Blankenship's career in ATC began in 1982 when he joined the Alabama Air National Guard while attending the University of South Alabama. After basic training at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) and ATC school at Keesler AFB, his first assignment was at Moody AFB in Valdosta, Ga., as a tower operator, gaining his control tower operator certification. From there, he spent time at Tinker AFB for third mobility school, and at Maxwell AFB, completing proficiency training. Blankenship worked air shows from a portable tower in Evergreen, Ala., and also traveled and worked in Villafranca, Italy as an ATC liaison.

In May of 1986, Blankenship was hired with the FAA and reported to Jacksonville Center (ZJX) in September after completing his training at the FAA Academy. He filled out his application to become a NATCA member in April of 1987, prior to NATCA's official Federal Labor Relations Authority certification date of June 19, 1987. "When I was first hired, it had been several years since PATCO controllers were fired and my thoughts were that a union was needed to help protect our interests as air traffic controllers," he said. "That is why I signed up when I heard NATCA was being formed because a union provides representation and speaks for individual employees as well as employees as a unit."



Within NATCA, Blankenship has served in countless roles, committees, and

teams including as a DSR (design system replacement) Cadre, helping to design and coordinate the airspace that is now known as Panama Low, as an Area Rep at Memphis Center, and as a subject matter expert for various projects. "I feel a sense of security knowing I have had a union supporting me and being there for me as I navigated my career," said Blankenship. "It gave me the opportunity to volunteer on several airspace committees and teach others how to use new equipment."

As his career with the FAA is coming to a close, Blankenship said he has had the privilege of having a job and being involved in a union that he's truly loved and enjoyed, from the very first day until the last. "Job security, benefits, better training, safer working conditions, and updated equipment are just a few of the many examples of what a good union, such as NATCA, can provide," he said. "It is with pride and a little sadness that I say I will definitely miss it."

Alliance Members Discuss Conditions of Safety



Paul participated in a tech talk recently with Global Air Traffic Controllers Alliance President Paul Winstanley, hosted by RTCA, Inc., to discuss what conditions are like for aviation safety professionals on the other side of the frequency due to the ongoing global pandemic.

"We've dealt with crises before, but this is different, different from the start. And we haven't even seen yet how it's affected the entire aviation industry," began Winstanley. He then talked about the effects of the pandemic on members of the Alliance, the decrease in demand for air travel in their respective countries, and the subsequent effects on workers. "Some ANSPs (air navigation service providers) are reducing trainees in the system," he said. "The traffic will come back and there is already a shortage of air traffic controllers in the world. This is short-sighted, and once we recover, it will take a long time to bring back air traffic controllers."

"Fortunately," Paul said, "the FAA understands that it takes approximately three years to fully certify air traffic controllers, and they are not interested in reducing staffing." He then described how NATCA and the FAA worked together to ensure procedures were put in place to keep members safe. "Air traffic controllers cannot telecommute, so we had to quickly acquire personal protective equipment and figure out how to social distance, a term that wasn't used before March," he said. "Facilities were initially shut down for several days if someone contracted the virus to be properly cleaned. We had to figure out with the Agency how to put people in groups and shifts to work effectively, efficiently, and safely."

“Now we are working on bringing training back, but we are working on that while figuring out how to socially distance safely.”

The pair pivoted to discussing what we could be focusing on in aviation due to the lull in air traffic.

“Now would be a perfect time to focus on what is needed in the airspace,” said Paul. “We could start focusing on implementing technology.”

“Technology will have a large impact on our system going forward, said Winstanley. “Collaboration is key, no matter how difficult conversations are. We need to make sure the aviation sector we all love rebounds.”

New Video Shows Why Unum Is One of NATCA's Most Valuable Benefits

We are proud of the amazing benefits package that we offer our members. One of the most valuable benefits is long-term disability (LTD) insurance from Unum. The NATCA group LTD program from Unum is the insurance that provides protection and peace of mind in the event you lose your medical and are disabled. Don't miss this opportunity to enroll. The current open season is scheduled to end on Nov. 30.



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You've seen the member testimonials these past few weeks in NATCA's member publications and social media. Today, we have a new video with an important message. See the video below:



ITF Releases Position Paper on Remote Tower Operations

NATCA is a proud member of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), which fights passionately to improve working lives, connecting nearly 700 affiliated trade unions from 150 countries. ITF, headquartered in London, helps their members to secure rights, equality, and justice, and is the voice for nearly 20 million working men and women across the world.

Trish serves as Vice Chair of the ITF Air Traffic Services Committee. Last week, the ITF released its first position paper on remote tower operations, a key issue for the future of global aviation. It's entitled "Safe Skies: The ITF Approach to Remote Tower Operations," and can be downloaded and read from this [ITF website page](#). NATCA is represented on remote tower projects at Leesburg Executive Airport (JYO) and at Northern Colorado Regional Airport (FNL), working with the Federal Aviation Administration.



The ITF expressed general support of new technologies in the field of air traffic services but stated that it – and its affiliates – “are seriously concerned about the current direction of national and international policy on remote towers. Unless policymakers take great care in the development of these operations,

they risk causing serious damage to aviation safety, public confidence in air travel and regional economies for the sake of minor and still unproven cost reductions in service provision.”

“Safe Skies” is the first major contribution to the debate from a worker and union perspective. In particular, it highlights the need for workers and their unions to be at the table from the beginning to help proactively shape national and international policy on remote tower operations, rather than be excluded until the end. As longtime staunch advocates of pre- decisional involvement on matters of aviation safety and technology projects and procedures, NATCA agrees completely with that statement.

Federal Benefits Open Season

Open Season for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB), Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), and the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS) began on Monday, Nov. 9 and goes through Monday, Dec. 14.

Find more information [here](#).

Revised Date for Proposed Amendments for 18th Biennial Convention



As a result of the rescheduling of NATCA's 18th Biennial Convention in Houston to May 25-27, 2021, the time period to submit proposed amendments to the NATCA Constitution and/or resolutions for consideration at the Convention has been extended to 11:59 p.m. EST on Monday, Jan. 25, 2021. In accordance with Article XIV,

Section 1 of the NATCA Constitution, this new date for the submission of proposed amendments is 120 days prior to the beginning of the Convention (Tuesday, May 25, 2021).

As a reminder, all proposed amendments are required to be sent to Executive Vice President Trish Gilbert (tgilbert@natcadc.org) for submission to the National Constitution Committee.

All proposed amendments already submitted will remain in consideration at Convention provided the author is still a member in good standing. There is no need to re-submit any previously submitted timely amendments.

The Constitution Committee will create a new booklet that will be mailed out to all members following the Jan. 25, 2021 deadline.

Members with questions about this process should contact their [Constitution Committee representative](#) or NATCA General Counsel Marguerite L. Graf (mgraf@natcadc.org).

