Federal Aviation Administration

FOCUS FAA

It's All About You

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Honoring A Warbird

In Santa Monica a classic airplane is being re-born. A DC3 manufactured in that city in 1942 can now go home again. Previously left to rot on the tarmac, a dedicated crew of volunteers is now lovingly restoring this warbird.

Eyre (left) and Galloway are restoring a DC3.

This DC3 had flown missions on the hump run over the Himalayas during WWII and transported Dwight D. Eisenhower on a hunting trip to Mexico. It had been part of a private collection until personal reasons forced the owner to give it up. After that, according to Bill Eyre, manager of the Los Angeles Flight Standards District Office (FSDO), "it was sitting at the airport deteriorating, going downhill, the interior fabric was peeling."

For an aviation buff like Eyre, that was enough to get his propeller spinning. Having restored other vintage WWII aircraft — including a P-39 Aracobra, a B-24 Liberator, and a P-51 Mustang — Eyre and Santa Monica Airport Manager Bill Trimborn thought this veteran warbird wasn't quite ready to fade away yet.

Eyre, along with Los Angeles FSDO coworkers George Erdel and Mark Galloway, decided to help restore it. Every weekend over the course of two years — or a combined 800 to 1,000 hours — they painstakingly restored the DC3 to look like it had just rolled off the factory floor. They are painting it the traditional Douglass colors, white with red trim, and giving it airline livery for the seats.

For Eyre, it was something of a nostalgic trip because he worked on DC3s when he was a maintenance man for Mohawk Airlines. For Galloway, a pilot, it was a chance to be near history. "I would give an arm and a leg to fly it," he said. "It really hasn't been hard [to work on]. It's been a labor of love."

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the project for the team was using the restoration as a "FAA-based teaching program for local college and high school students to get them involved in aviation and work on a real airplane," said Eyre. The three FSDO employees believe teaching is an important part of FAA's mission, whether it's teaching trained mechanics or students.

Some 60 students from two local colleges jumped at the chance to get hands-on experience in riveting, drilling, sheet metal cutting, and re-skinning the flight control surfaces. They worked from 8 a.m. to noon on almost every Sunday, although their enthusiasm sometimes elongated the day. "[On some days] we couldn't get them to leave," noted Galloway. "They said, 'Oh no, let's keep going.' So we went to get pizza for them and they worked until three in the afternoon."

Eyre said a Santa Monica Airport official told him, "If it wasn't for [the FAA volunteers], this project would not have gotten off the ground."

"It was a great program for the FAA because it brought us down from just being enforcement and regulators to the more common level where you're out there working with people side by side," noted Eyre. "People appreciate that."

Galloway works on the DC3.

Honoring A Warbird

Galloway said he was able to recruit safety aviation counselors to spread the word about FAA's mission. "We got a newer respect from the community," he said. "It trickles down from our devotion and commitment [to safety]," he added.

The group worked overtime to prepare the plane for its groundbreaking ceremony on Dec. 17, the 60th anniversary of the Santa Monica Airport. It is on display in a hangar there until restoration is finished. Eyre and Galloway estimate they have another year of work on the plane before it is mounted on a special pedestal for permanent display.

Eyre might be able to make a full-time job of it, considering he's retiring in January. But he's not about to retire his love of aviation. He'll have "a lot more time to snoop around and do more projects like this."

Galloway (center) and Eyre (right) work with a student on the DC3.

"We got a newer respect from the community. It trickles down from our devotion and commitment [to safety]."

Santa Opts For The Train

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While this Santa admitted that flying his magic sleigh is much faster, he said he wouldn't miss his annual holiday train trip to Ft. Worth, Texas on Amtrak's Heartland Flyer passenger train. For the last four years, this Santa has been spotted strolling down the aisle, passing out candy canes, and welcoming passengers with a "Merry Christmas!"

This Santa is Ron Herendeen, a computer specialist in Aviation Safety's information technology branch in Oklahoma City, Okla., since 1993. According to coworker Susan O'Hara, Herendeen is a great Santa. "He really comes out of his shell when he's around the kids. At work he's pretty quiet, but when he puts on the Santa suit, he really turns into Santa, and his genuinely good and sensitive heart shines through," O'Hara remarked.

Herendeen also has delighted kids at the local day care center, made the rounds in the office and at private parties, arrived on surprised friends' doorsteps with presents, and posed with pets at PetSmart stores. But it's the holiday train ride that remains his favorite.

Santa Claus (Ron Herendeen) greets passengers boarding the Heartland Flyer holiday train.

Four years ago, Herendeen was working as a volunteer on the Heartland Flyer's Web site when Amtrak's marketing team came by looking for someone to dress up as the Easter Bunny. Herendeen thought it was a good idea and he was quickly drafted. He rented a bunny suit, overcame his nerves, and hopped aboard. He made his way through the train, winning over children and adults alike with his Easter Bunny antics. "It turned out to be really fun," he said.

When they asked him to be the Santa for the annual winter holiday train ride from Norman, Okla., to Ft. Worth, Texas, he asked "Why not?" As the big day approached, he remembered being nervous about his beard and wig and wondered how to entertain families for the entire 4-hour ride. Being a thoroughly modern, jolly fellow, he turned to the Internet. He read stories and listened to songs. He memorized reindeer names and practiced his jolly laugh. He confirmed the chocolate chip cookie as Santa's favorite, and he found out that broken candy canes are bad luck.

In his dark red velvet suit, white beard, and black boots, Santa became an instant celebrity. The first year, Herendeen said, he had almost made his way though the entire train, greeting kids and posing for pictures, when he finally sat down to have a drink of water.

Santa Opts For The Train

He saw a little head poke around the corner, and he heard a voice shout, "Hey! There he is!" A minute later he was surrounded by a group of little kids. One of them climbed right up into his lap. "At first, I had no idea what to do," he recalled, "then it became obvious. 'Have you been good this year?'" he asked. The little boy looked up at him and nodded. His big eyes were wide as he heard Santa ask, "What would you like for Christmas?"

Even without his reindeer, Santa Claus is a big hit with the kids on the train.

It was then that Herendeen realized why kids love Santa Claus so much. "The kids relate to Santa as being one of their own. He's a link between adults and themselves," Herendeen explained. "For that one minute, the kids have someone that will listen to them. It sounds so corny, but it's Christmas magic," he said. "There's nothing like looking into the eyes of a kid when they know, absolutely, that you are listening," he noted.

To keep up with the most popular requests, he scours the toy store circulars and watches out for the hot toys each year. He's careful to never commit or promise, only saying, "I think I've seen the elves playing with one of those."

According to Herendeen, most kids know exactly what they want, and, "It's never as simple as a football or a baseball these days." But he doesn't see the children as being greedy. They usually ask for just one thing, he said. In fact, a few have even asked him, "What do you want, Santa?"

Not all kids feel comfortable climbing up into Santa's lap. According to Herendeen, little kids, ages one to two, spook easily. He's had kids burst into tears upon seeing him, and he's learned that a loud and deep "Ho, Ho, Ho!" is scary to a room full of excited toddlers. He said that his biggest fans are usually from ages three to ten. "At that age, they're 'pro-Santa' and they still believe," he said.

For Herendeen, the Christmas holiday is all about traditions. Some of his favorites are watching the 1964 television classic "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and reading "The Night Before Christmas" out loud to the entire train. As he has seen the kids grow up from year to year, he said, "I enjoy knowing that I am now a part of their holiday tradition."

Sink or Swim

Holding on to seat cushions, they jump into the water one by one.

After a few frantic minutes, they slowly maneuver themselves into small groups of interlocking arms and legs, and then form one long human "zipper." They keep warmer that way.

Click here to visit the employee web site media library to view the news report. Video courtesy of KGTV, San Diego, Calif.

Three-dozen people, primarily airline flight crews and trainers, are participating in an aircraft evacuation drill that could one day save their lives or the lives of their passengers. Decades of research and workshops have gone into these drills conducted by the Civil Aeromedical Institute (CAMI) at the FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.

Jerry McDown is the class leader, and for an aviation researcher, he spends an awful lot of time in the water. But the lessons he teaches could literally make the difference between sinking or surviving a water accident.

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Flight attendants form a human "zipper" to conserve body warmth.

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"The workshop is really directed toward the [airlines'] trainers," said McDown. "It's so they can get a little more insight and share notes with others."

Flight crews and trainers simulate emergency evacuations through an opening in the swimming pool wall that approximates the size of an aircraft emergency exit. They exit twice, first using seat cushions for flotation, then a second time wearing life vests. In the first minutes, participants are encouraged to cling together in small groups. They then practice climbing into small and large life rafts, not an easy trick when you're soaked, cold and have been treading away valuable energy in the water. They also practice pulling "injured" passengers into the raft.

"The most physically challenging part is getting on the raft," said McDown. But psychologically, it is often the

Sink or Swim

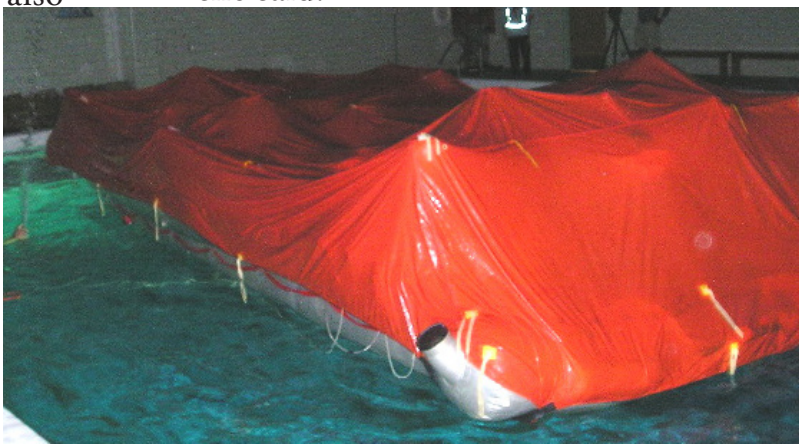
physical contact with strangers that's required to survive. "The hardest thing to get people to do is to get up close to somebody, giving a stranger a hug," said McDown. "Most people have a problem with doing that." But keeping together in frigid water helps survivors keep warm. McDown breaks apart the small groups after several minutes to demonstrate how much heat they lose apart then when together.

Later, McDown directs participants to float on their backs, holding each others' legs and the arms of people around them. This "zipper" formation not only conserves heat, but also creates a large object that is more easily detectable by rescuers.

After survivors scramble onto the large life raft, they cover themselves with a canopy away from the spray of tides and rain, courtesy of a hose that McDown strategically aims at them as he yells, "Here comes a thunderstorm." Lights are dimmed to simulate nightfall. Passengers use cloth pails to bail water to make it dry inside the raft.

Finally, participants are lifted in a metal basket simulating a helicopter water rescue. CAMI members spin them around in the cage as they are lifted toward the ceiling in what looks like a nauseating water park amusement ride.

The workshop's impact on the flight attendants was clear. "Someone has to be in charge," said one flight attendant, when asked what lesson she'd learned. Could she be a leader? "If I had to be," she said.



Flight attendants erect a canopy over their life raft to protect them from sun and water.

It Took An Act of Congress

The Fiscal Year 2006 Transportation-Treasury spending bill passed on Oct. 20, 2005 contained an amendment proposed by Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) that would allow certain former FAA Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS) employees, who would be eligible to retire by Oct. 4, 2007 to be reemployed to qualify for their civil service health and life benefits.

No one thought such legislation could be passed. When told it would take an act of Congress, the FAA's deputy administrator and competitive sourcing office worked with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the U.S. Senate to make it happen.

Because of the continuing resolution, however, the legislation was not passed before the turnover to Lockheed Martin, who included this initiative in their proposal, according to Joann Kansier, director, Office of Competitive Sourcing. Because of this, she added, the FAA will have to rehire those employees and then re-retire them. But, overall, "this little piece of legislation could change some people's lives," said Kansier.

> *"This little piece of legislation could change some people's lives."*

The impact of the largest competitive sourcing in government history was especially hard on those closest to retirement. The FAA's Office of Competitive Sourcing estimates that over 100 people are eligible to come back to the FAA to earn the retirement service credit needed to receive an annuity. An additional feature the legislation offers is that employees, who were not eligible to retire on Oct. 3, 2005, but had annual leave that would get them to retirement, will have the option to use their annual leave get them to whatever retirement plan is most beneficial. This includes air traffic retirement. However, those who will be hired back by the FAA to get their retirement will not be getting what they call, "good time" towards controller retirement because the AFSS is no longer a government function.

"The point of this legislation was to make sure these people got their retirement annuities, and health and life benefits," said Kansier. "We feel good about having been part of something that provides a benefit never before available to federal employees."

It Took An Act of Congress

Those who it directly affected were obviously glad for the help, especially since before this legislation, if they were within two years or less of reaching eligibility for a retirement annuity and would have had very limited chances to complete their Federal careers elsewhere.

"This is an unprecedented piece of legislation that offers a number of former AFSS employees an opportunity to reach eligibility for an immediate annuity or improve their retirement option," said Ventris Gibson, assistant administrator for Human Resource Management.

According to OMB data, in FY 2004, a total of 217 U.S. federal agencies completed public-private competitions involving 12,573 full-time-equivalent employees. The result is an estimated net savings or cost avoidance totaling $1.4 billion over five years.

Since the announcement, the FAA has worked to place qualified employees in various jobs through its preferred placement programs. Even after separation, former government flight service specialists will receive preferred consideration for many FAA jobs through the selection priority program for two years. The FAA has hired 456 flight service employees under the preferred placement programs.

Abbey Smith, a manager for safety evaluations for the Air Traffic Organization's western service area, recently hired 42 flight service specialists. "We hired them on to help train employees on the new processes for en route and terminal safety assurance evaluations. They're happy to be here and we're happy to have them," she said.

On Feb. 1, 2005, when the performance award decision was announced, there were 2,300 employees in the AFSS workforce. The table below is a general breakdown of their employment status.

# of Employees	Employment Status
1,272	Retired
547	Separation - RIF
456	Other FAA Employment
11	Resignation
10	Other Federal Employment

Survey Says

Following are some snapshots of employee comments gleaned from a survey about the most recent Town Hall meeting. While the meeting was wide-ranging in subject matter, as were the survey responses, this article focuses primarily on issues that were repeated throughout the survey.

Not surprisingly, the Air Traffic Organization and its restructuring received much attention. "I am extremely satisfied with the ATO but would like it to move forward," noted one employee. But like many restructurings, the current environment of change in ATO has caused some heartburn in the field.

Marion Blakey at the Town Hall meeting.

There is also an employee suggestion column at right about how to improve future Town Hall meetings.

ATO Restructuring

This issue by far got the most comments. Repeated mention was made about the Air Traffic Organization's reorganization and how it affects staff and support offices. Specifically, making the transition from three regional offices to one service area office was mentioned numerous times.

— "Can you imagine how negative it is when the agency cannot make a decision as to where the third service center will be?" asked one employee.

— "No one seems to know where the ATO is going! Are we going to be relocated to a service area? Will we

Employee Suggestions For Future Town Hall Meetings

- *Improve audio/visual feeds.*
- *Provide written responses to Town Hall questions and disseminate them to the field. There were numerous complaints about technical difficulties in listening to the meeting.*
- *Limit the administrator's presentation to one hour with no Q&A. Have individual lines of business conduct similar meetings with their organizations.*
- *Executives should write articles describing/updating goals and what actions they think would be helpful in achieving Flight Plan goals.*

Survey Says

Clay Johnson speaks at the Town Hall meeting.

be allowed to service other regions but remain at our designated work stations?" asked a second employee.

— "Most people I have talked with about the impact of the ATO restructuring ask what the big secret is and why doesn't management just come out and say what's going on," a third employee questioned.

Contracting Out Jobs

A few employees expressed concern about contracting out FAA jobs to the private sector.

— "I do believe that many FAA people view this action plan as a way to contract out as many functions as possible," said one employee.

— "I think the administrator could have addressed where the FAA is heading in the future. Specifically, addressing rumors about consolidation, doing away with positions, etc.," said another.

— One employee wanted the administrator to address the topic of the FAA continuing as a governmental entity.

— Still another was concerned about the agency outsourcing information technology jobs to a contractor.

— "What I am hearing," said one employee who listened to the meeting, "is that no job is secure and there is a very good chance for more jobs to be contracted out."

Money Matters

A number of responses bemoaned how a cost savings mentality is driving the agency. "The bean is king! Nothing else matters," said one employee.

— Another noted, "'More work, less money to do it' is starting to get a bit old. What can we do other than work harder and smarter?"

— "[I] still do not understand why management wants to run FAA like a business. We are not a business nor do we have many of the characteristics of a business. [There is] no competition for the service we provide," noted another employee.

> *"The bean is king! Nothing else matters."*

Core Compensation

Nearly all of the comments on this subject were negative to very negative. Some samples:

Survey Says

— Core Compensation was deemed "a cancer that is eating away at those employees that have been forced into the system."

— Another asked, "How many times and by how many people does the agency need to be told that Core Compensation is a total and complete failure before they do something to fix it?"

— "I would like a better explanation of why we are allowing employees in our pay banding system to fall behind their counterparts in the rest of the government who are under the old GS system."

In related messages about salaries, one employee thought the administrator "needs to more fully develop the agency's inference that it will cease to attack current staff on compensation and achieve reductions on the backs of the new hires."

Communication To The Field

Some employees in the field feel out of touch with decisions and decision-makers. One employee said he/she was getting information on a detail to a manager's position. "I am concerned that I will lose the information flow when I get out of the management position."

— "There seems to be information coming from fewer sources, but there is not much information being shared," said another employee.

"There seems to be information coming from fewer sources, but there is not much information being shared."

— Yet another employee said more information is needed on the ATO restructuring and holding employees accountable for their actions.

— "The action plan isn't conveyed down to the employee level," said an employee. "Management-wise, I believe it appears effective. We need to continue the communication to the basic 'grunt' level."

— But one employee noted the difficulty in helping employees realize that management can not "completely share 'tentative' decisions that must still be coordinated with others or the Congress without looking like they are hiding a big secret." The response continued that the agency must help employees adjust to "a more realistic and accommodating view."

Your Two Cents

This will be the last issue of Focus FAA for 2005. We're planning changes for the new year if the resources become available. When Focus FAA debuted in April, the intent was to bring news and human interest stories to readers with a focus on employees in the field and "in the trenches."

Thanks to all who have communicated with Focus FAA over the past six months. And special thanks to contributors to the publication throughout the agency.

Early next year we plan to — hold your breath — launch a survey of readers to get their opinions about content, style and navigation of the publication. I know this agency has been over-surveyed, but we hope you'll take the time to help us make this publication better and even more relevant to your professional lives.

In the meantime, happy holidays from all of us here at Focus FAA. Have a question or a comment: email jim.tise@faa.gov.

Feedback

Aloha 'Oe

With Pearl Harbor all but forgotten in yesterday's news, it was inspiring to read Jerry Johnson's account (Dec. 6 issue, "Aloha 'Oe") of his father's role in the battle.

Ed O'Connor
Headquarters

Incredible Sacrifices

I want to thank you for the "gripping" story about George Johnston and his Pearl Harbor experience. We all need to be reminded of the incredible sacrifices made by individuals to protect our way of life. Mr. Johnston's efforts throughout the war are exemplary. I'm sure there are many individuals humbly making those sacrifices today in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Scott A. Burk
Western-Pacific Region

Holiday Wishes

I wish all our troops were ordered back home.
I wish for world peace.
I wish for prison confinement without the possibility of parole for all repeat child abusers and molesters.
I wish for an end to racism.
I wish for a cure for diseases.

Your Two Cents

I wish everyone had decent housing, food and clothing.

I wish a 50 percent decrease in the cost of fuel and natural gas.

Charlotte Eutsey
Western-Pacific Region

Pay It Forward

My wish is for each and every person to just (as the movie says) pay it forward. Every single person: do one thing for someone else.

There are so many people in our own towns and cities that have nothing and no one. It doesn't have to be anything big or costly. How about a smile? My favorite thing is to see an elderly person sitting on a bus stop bench or just walking past with a look on their face that says I am lonely and with a huge smile I say "Hi." It is amazing how their face lights up and they smile back.

My brothers and sisters are starting a new tradition, instead of giving each other gifts, we are putting that money that we would have spent for gifts together, tossing the names of our favorite charities in a hat and dividing that money up to go to two or three charities. How about serving a meal at the homeless shelter once? I'll tell you, my kids have never been the same since they did this.

Can I have one more wish? I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas.

Sue Buhr
Great Lakes Region

Seeking an Answer From Santa

I would [like] to have Santa tell me why the FAA wants to close the Los Angeles Flight Standards District Office this coming year?

George Braun
Western-Pacific Region

Outward Crust

[My holiday wish is] to be more dedicated and true to my religious convictions and, thus, focus on the hearts of others and not their outward crust.

Lee Whilden
William J. Hughes Technical Center

Nice Words

I just wanted . . . to thank you for providing myself and other FAA employees with [Focus FAA]. It's a wonderful communication tool that helps keep me informed of what is going on in the FAA. The articles are interesting and the layout is easy to follow. I especially enjoy the design and Flash site. I look forward to checking in over the upcoming year.

Thank you and happy holidays!

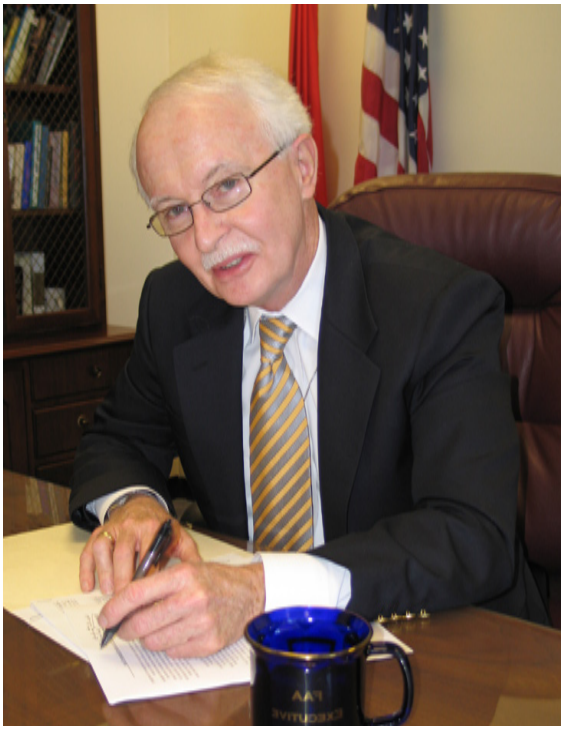
Maria Robinson
Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center

The New Yorker magazine for December 19 has a cartoon titled "The Perfect Holiday Card."

It's "politically correct" in every conceivable way. It's a totally blank card "printed on 100% recycled, biodegradable paper" with captions on the side explaining its additional benefits: "No phony, banal greeting printed insides…no tedious family newsletter enclosed …no signature, so there's none of that 'now we have to send them a card' stuff … and it's "image-free, so no one is alienated."

Perfect. It shows how squeaky we've gotten about this Christmas thing.

On one extreme, you have thousands of people writing the White House criticizing the President and the First Lady for sending out a holiday card instead of a Christmas card. On the



Gerald Lavey

other extreme, you have the politically-correct zealots prowling the premises for any public mention of Christmas.

My feelings are decidedly mixed on the subject. Demanding that the President send out a Christmas card, instead of a holiday card, conveniently ignores that the President is president of all the people, not just one segment of society.

And for those who tsk-tsk any mention of Christmas in public, let me say this: For someone who grew up with Midnight Mass, the crèche showing Mother and Child, presents under the Christmas tree, Handel's "Messiah" on Christmas morning, and Bing Crosby singing "Holy Night," it's not easy to give up the habit of wishing people a "Merry Christmas" or sending Christmas cards versus bland Holiday cards. It's in my DNA, and lumping Christmas with Presidents' Day or even Thanksgiving in the general category of holidays just doesn't cut it.

Yet, at dinner last weekend with a Pakistani Muslim friend of ours — a recent widow — we asked how she was going to spend Christmas. Interestingly, she is going to celebrate it with a tree, presents, not unlike how we are going to celebrate it with family and friends. Closer to Christmas, a Jewish couple, best friends of ours, will join us at a Christmas sing-along and join in lustily singing Christmas carols with people of all backgrounds. They do not feel compromised, nor do we.

So, if Christmas can bring people of different faiths and backgrounds together and all I have to do is surrender some cherished habits of speech dating back to my childhood, I am more than okay with that.

Happy holiday and best wishes to all for the coming year.

Gerald E. Lavey

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

Note: Please keep in mind that links to some outside publications mentioned in AOA Highlights work for only a few days and after that many publications no longer provide free access.

Two Red and Two Yellow: The latest executive Flight Plan review shows that through November two performance targets are red and two are yellow. The reds are "A&B Operational Errors" and "Airport Average Daily Capacity" at the 35 OEP airports.

A lot of work is going on within ATO to address operational errors. Across domains, we are working to develop a metric that measures risk, not just number of errors, and toward an automated reporting system for the terminal area.

As for "Airport Average Daily Capacity," weather and runway construction were factors. Even though our experience has taught us to back out causal factors over which we have no control, e.g., runway construction, that's not as easy as it looks. So, we're trying to get smarter on the use of this as a performance target.

The two yellow performance targets are the "Airline Fatal Accident Rate" and "Alaska Accidents." As a reminder, when it comes to safety performance targets, we must do better than the target goal by at least 10 percent to warrant a green. If it isn't better than 10 percent over target, it gets a cautionary "yellow" tag.

From 9 to 3, and 3 to 2: On December 5, too late to include the news in the last *Focus FAA*, Chief Operating Officer Russ Chew announced the restructuring of the ATO administrative and support functions in the field. The number of service areas is being reduced from nine to three and flight service areas from three to two. By eliminating duplication of administrative and support services, the agency can reduce the ATO's operating costs by an estimated $360-$460 million over the next ten years. In a later message to all employees, the Administrator called the realignment "necessary" as the agency continues to seek ways of reducing operating costs.

Fewer Americans Subject to Significant Aircraft Noise: Last week, the Administrator gave opening remarks at an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Day program at

FAA headquarters featuring discussions of the environment and safety. Of particular interest in her remarks is the progress she says has been made in aviation related environmental issues over the past, say, 30 years.

According to the Administrator, "We've made tremendous progress on noise reduction with 90 percent fewer Americans exposed to significant aircraft noise today than in 1975. Fuel efficiency in aircraft has improved by two-thirds." While that's impressive, the environmental challenge remains, as both the Administrator and Carl Burleson, director of FAA's environmental office, pointed out. Kate Lang, head of Airports, can tell you how tough a challenge that is.

The Future is Now: ATO's Chuck Martin recently received a brochure from a company called Rocketplane Limited, Inc., out of Oklahoma City claiming it will begin offering commercial space flights within two years. According to the brochure, the passenger's experience starts with four days of training. On launch day, "The Rocketplane XP will lift off from the Oklahoma Spaceport runway, climb to an altitude around 25,000 feet, and light the rocket engine. In less than two minutes, 36,000 pounds of thrust will launch you to 330,000 feet at Mach 4 speed. You're granted a stunning view of Earth and experience the unique sensation of weightlessness." No doubt. It's hard to imagine that we're thinking in such terms, after decades of reading about this stuff in science fiction.

The World is Flat: Tom Friedman's book, *The World is Flat*, is a compelling read, as we have mentioned here before. In virtually every chapter, you find yourself saying – "wow, I didn't know that." One of the latest wows had to do with Rolls Royce engines, which power many types of airliners in the U.S. and world airline fleets. From the ground, Rolls Royce is able to monitor the performance of their engines in flight and, if they detect a malfunction or operational anomaly, they can actually fix it while the aircraft is speeding to its destination. That's pretty amazing, but not quite so amazing to Nick Sabatini, who explained how

common this is becoming across the industry and not just with engines — at Boeing, for example, and no doubt the same thing is true of Airbus. Sabatini cited in particular how prevalent self-monitoring is in the latest generation of "very light jets" built by Eclipse, a venture started six years ago by CEO Vern Rayburn.

So Much for the Experts: *The New Yorker* (Dec. 5) has a review of a book by Philip Tetlock called "Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?" Tetlock's contention is that "people who make prediction their business – people who appear as experts on television, get quoted in newspaper articles, advise governments and businesses, and participate in punditry roundtables – are no better than the rest of us."

Tetlock says that when the pundits are wrong, "they're rarely held accountable, and they rarely admit it, either. They insist that they were just off on timing, or blindsided by an improbable event, or almost right, or wrong for the right reasons."

He further says that "the better known and more frequently quoted they are, the less reliable their guesses about the future are likely to be." In fact, he says, "The accuracy of an expert's predictions actually has an inverse relationship to his or her self-confidence, renown, and, beyond a certain point, depth of knowledge." Moral of this story: Be careful what you read and hear, *including in these pages*, I make haste to add.

Here and There with FAAers: ***Dr. George Nield, Deputy Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation***, has been elected to the grade of Fellow by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. AIAA bestows this prestigious honor only on exceptional individuals who embody the highest standards possible in the aeronautics and astronautics field.

Steve Baker has been sworn in as only the second president of the Federal Aviation Administration Managers Association (FAAMA), following the recent resignation of John Fisher. Baker is a front line manager at the Kansas City Airport Terminal Radar Approach Control. David Conley of Hammonton, New Jersey was elected FAAMA Vice President. Conley

is the Traffic Management Officer at Philadelphia International Airport.

Dr. Jon Jordan, FAA's Federal Air Surgeon for the past 15 years and a member of the Office of Aerospace Medicine for the past 36 years is retiring January 3. His office and its designated medical examiners throughout the country conduct more than 425,000 medical exams a year. It also operates the FAA's world-renowned Civil Aeromedical Institute in Oklahoma City.

The Last Word: We mentioned Jon Jordan above because he has had such a strong, but quiet impact on aviation safety, but there are many others retiring at year's end. We would mention two, both longtime colleagues and friends, whom I have had the honor to serve with for many years: Anne Harlan, director of the FAA's Technical Center at Atlantic City and John Clabes, Public Affairs Officer for the FAA's Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City and the agency's Southwest Region in Fort Worth. A word about both.

For Anne, I just want to mention the efforts she put in communicating with her employees. She didn't delegate communications to someone on her staff. She saw communications as integral to her leadership, as a good executive should, and she put a great deal of effort into it. Her weekly reports were absolutely first-class and a model for how it should be done.

John is retiring after more than 27 years of Federal service, the last 20 with the FAA. If you were looking for a model of how a good Public Affairs Officer should act and conduct himself, you'd pick John. A consummate professional and a gentleman to the core. He leaves with the highest respect and affection of his colleagues, and it doesn't get any better than that.

Gerald E. Lavey

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Internal Communications

The Wrong Brothers invent all-weather emergency equipment.