U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

# intercom:

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February 1989 #89-04

# *DOT SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE*

**Doris Brown** receives her award from former **Secretary of Transportation James Burnley.**

( story on page 2)

## DOT SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

**Doris Brown**, an Aviation Safety Assistant at the Flight Standards District Office in Anchorage, received the DOT version of "Queen for a Day" during an award ceremony held in Washington, D.C.

**Doris** was presented a beautifully engraved plaque and a $200 savings bond in recognition of the excellent service she has provided to the aviation community, and the clerical support she consistently supplied to the Aviation Safety Inspectors.

The DOT Secretary established this Award of Excellence in 1978 to provide recognition to outstanding career employees in grades GS-1 through GS-9 and WG-1 through WG-8. The contenders must be in clerical, administrative, technical, or general support positions whose work is basic to meeting the Department's goals.

We are very proud of **Doris** and all the time and effort she puts into her job. She definitely is a very special employee and friend to many people.

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If you have questions, suggestions, or complaints, please call the Editor at 271-5293.

## AN ARTICLE ON INTEREST

For those of you who have been asking whether or not the interest payment you received on your back COLA is taxable, we received the following answer for you from **Bill Schmidtman**.

If you were a General Schedule (GS) employee who worked in Anchorage for the Federal government during 1980 through 1983, and you received a check for interest on the unpaid cost of living allowance from that time, the interest is taxable and should be reported on your 1988 income tax returns. This information was obtained from **Mr. Robert W. Brock**, District Director for the Internal Revenue Service in Alaska.

The following explanation is for those of you who are asking, "What the heck are they talking about?"

Back in 1980, the Federal government's office of Personnel Management reduced the COLA payment to Federal employees. After a class action suit (Alaniz vs. OPM), the reduction was ruled to be invalid. Back pay to cover the unpaid COLA was paid to affected employees.

In 1987, Public Law 100-202 was passed that allowed the payment of interest on back pay awards. Just in time for Christmas of 1988, the interest payments were distributed to those affected employees in Anchorage.

The IRS issued an opinion on the tax treatment of the interest on back pay that was printed in the Federal Register on November 15, 1988.

**NOTE:** If you received the back pay refund but not the interest payment, call Ms. Kelley Dube' at 1-800-252-2652 or write to her at 310 W. Spruce St., Missoula, Montana 59802. A number of checks had been returned to her office due to a lack of current address on many FAA retirees.

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## DELINQUENT FEDERAL DEBTS

**by Charles Monico, AAL-14C**

The Standard Form 171 (Application for Federal Employment) has been changed. One of the changes concerns delinquent federal debts. The Office of Personnel Management will be giving agencies some latitude in determining an applicant's suitability based on a delinquent Federal loan. While applicants will be referred without regard to the response to this question, the existence of a delinquent Federal debt, which the applicant is unwilling to resolve, may be the basis for nonselection and suitability objection to eligibles on competitive certificates. In addition, a delinquent Federal debt may be the basis for determining an applicant's unsuitability for other Federal positions.

The types of Federal debts that are to be considered in these determinations are delinquencies arising from Federal taxes, loans, overpayment of benefits, and other debts to the U.S. Government. These other debts include defaults on federally guaranteed loans such as student and home mortgage loans.

Applicants who are delinquent on a Federal debt will be required to explain the type, length, and amount of the delinquency, and the steps being taken to correct errors or to repay the debt. The appointing office will review the details and explanation. Applicants who are disputing the debt or its delinquency will be given the opportunity to provide documents supporting this claim. Applicants with one or more undisputed delinquencies will be given the opportunity to repay the debts, negotiate a payment plan with the Federal agency to which the debt is owed, or agree to a voluntary salary offset. Agencies will be able to nonselect applicants who have an undisputed delinquent Federal debt of a serious nature ($1,000 or more over 90 days past due) and are unwilling to take one of the above actions.

If you have any questions concerning this change, please call AAL-14, 271-5747.

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## FAA EMPLOYEES MAKE A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

Our gang over at the Merrill Field Tower entered the annual Snow Sculpting contest that was held again this year as part of the Fur Rendezvous activities. This year's Rondy ran from February 10-19.

More than 10 of our air traffic controllers, along with some of their family and friends, began sculpting on February 3, and by February 12 they had created a magnificant sculpture of Merrill Tower with a Cherokee in a take-off position. The Rondy folks thought the idea was so outstanding that they assigned our team one of the prime locations in the snowfield to work on their creation. If any of you are cruising around Anchorage, you might want to drop by the staging area across from Sears Mall (between Denali and A Streets off Benson Boulevard) and see if their work of art is still standing. Sometimes the sunshine and/or vandals don't destroy all the sculptures right away after the contest. Judging was held on February 12. We hope to have results of the contest and a photo in the March INTERCOM.

We wonder if they do weddings. You know, the ice sculpture in the punchbowl routine.

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## SAFETY TIP

Here's a worthwhile note we picked up from **Tim Tengesdal** out of the Northwest Mountain INTERCOM.

Since 1982, many makes of cars have been recalled due to possible safety defects. Yet many car owners may be uncertain whether their vehicle has been recalled.

If you would like to know if your auto has ever been recalled, contact the **Auto Safety Hotline** (800-424-9393).

## ANOTHER RUNG UP THE LADDER OF SUCCESS

Congratulations to the following employees who have recently been promoted to other positions:

**Bill Chord** is scheduled to move from the Quality Assurance Staff in the Air Traffic Division to the Anchorage Tower where he will take over the responsibilities of Assistant Manager. **Bill** does have plenty of time to pack up his coffee cup and family pictures since he isn't scheduled to move until May 7.

Over in the Airway Facilities Division there have been three recent promotions. **Thomas Witcher** (Maintenance Mechanic at King Salmon) moved up to a WG-10; **David Presley** (Anchorage Sector Field Office) was promoted to a WG-11; and **Vickie Dukes-Mane** (ET Trainee, North Alaska Sector Field Office) is now a GS-7.

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## ON THE MOVE

**Chris Rolan** and his wife **Sandy** are now settled into Bethel where **Chris** will work as a Developmental FSS Specialist. Their timing was just right if they were hoping to experience some real winter weather in Bethel. We hear the wind chill reading hit somewhere around -100 degrees shortly after they arrived. The welcome was hot from their fellow FAA Bethelonians though. A nice crowd turned out for the special potluck dinner put together in **Chris** and **Sandy's** honor. That was no easy task since the weather was bad, they lost their commercial power, and the backup power was not exactly what one would consider a stable source. Don't worry **Chris** and **Sandy**, you'll love the summers there.

**Jim Huteson** (ET) and **Dan Brekke** (ATCS) should have been excited about leaving the cold of Bethel behind them when they prepared for their transfer to another facility. However, **Dan** left behind some of the worst weather Bethel has ever seen, only to replace it at his new duty station with some of the worst weather Fairbanks has ever seen. Yep, he managed to join the staff at the Fairbanks Tower just in time to experience the record-breaking cold snap that hovered over our largest city up north. **Jim** is weathering out the winter much better in his new job at the Ketchikan FSS.

**Myron Frost** (ATCS, Fairbanks Tower) and his family are probably asking themselves right now why they moved from King Salmon to Fairbanks during this time of the year. They too are learning the hard way how to survive a hostile climate for long periods of time.

**Becky Moore** (Quality Assurance Training Specialist with the Air Traffic Division) packed up her belongings and moved to Fairbanks for her new assignment as an Area Supervisor at the Fairbanks Tower.

Well at least the air traffic was light for **Myron, Becky, Dan,** and the rest of the crew at the Fairbanks Tower since the cold weather kept many pilots hibernating on the ground.

We bet there were a multitude of envious farewells expressed to **Jim Simmen** (Carpenter, King Salmon SFO) as he prepared to leave for his new carpenter's job with the U.S. Navy in Bermuda. Bermuda is the kind of place that daydreams are made of, and right now it could pass as Shangri-la to most of us.

But enough of those daydreams -- back to the war stories of the Alaskan winter of 1989.

We hear from the new Air Traffic Facility Manager at Kotzebue, **Charles Werner**, that daily operations in January were anything but easy in his neck of the woods. Their -40 degree temps slowed down air traffic, froze their water supply more than once and blocked their sewage vent stacks. While everything seemed to be in suspended animation due to the cold, our Kotzebue crew at the FSS utilized the time to provide tours to members of the basketball teams who had been stranded there following their sports tournament.

**Randy Rogers** (AT Manager, King Salmon FSS) has moved from the more temperate climate of Sitka to Alaska's Fishing Capitol in King Salmon. Of course, this time of the year, the farthest thing from anyone's mind is probably fishing; but have faith

-- someday it will be warm again. We might mention that **Randy** was presented a Letter of Commendation prior to his departure from Sitka in recognition of the excellent job he did during his time there.

We haven't heard too much from our folks at Dillingham, but we are guessing it is because they are still buried under their total amount of snowfall that measured over 132 inches and their -70 degree temps. Someone needs to tell Mother Nature that this weather is not funny anymore, and she can take that Siberian Express and put it somewhere else where the sun usually shines. Enough is enough! Meanwhile, keep smiling all you Dillinghamians -- you only have about 3 more months of winter left.

Our gang in Yakutat will probably go in on that message to Mrs. Nature also; since their snow faucet remained in the on position for quite a while and they are buried under their heaviest snowfall in 6 years. In fact, the 5 1/2 inches of snow that fell on January 22 broke their all time monthly record of total snowfall by January, which is 112 inches.

**Frank Julian** (previously Relief ET, NA-AFS) left Fairbanks none too soon to take over a Technical Inspector position at the Regional Office. Anchorage temps only went down to -40 degrees.

We want to add a special note of praise to our Airway Facilities employees who put in a lot of long, hard hours to keep the systems running during those record-breaking days and nights of frigid temps throughout Alaska.

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## WE'VE GOT OUR ORDER

The official order is now out in print. The President of the United States has signed into law the employee indemnification policy and procedures that protects officers and employees of the FAA from personal liability arising out of conduct taken within the scope of Federal employment.

What this means is that any lawsuit which is filed against an FAA employee within the scope of his/her employment, the United States Government may be substituted for the individual's name for any liability involving the case. In the past, employees could also be personally sued for some action they might have taken during the course of their job responsibilities.

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## FAA EMPLOYEES CREATE THEIR OWN POLAR C.A.P. IN YAKUTAT

A good thing that came out of our cold weather was the establishment of a new Civil Air Patrol (CAP) squadron in Yakutat. **Wil Smith** (ATM, Yakutat FSS) and **Doug Haralson** (ATCS, Yakutat FSS) decided to do something about the absence of a CAP in their area. They surveyed the local pilots and other interested persons, only to find an overwhelming desire to have a CAP established for search and rescue operations. We admire **Wil** and **Doug's** initiative to get this worthwhile idea off the ground. Congratulations!

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## COORDINATING MINDS WANT TO KNOW

For those of you who like to keep track of all our Local Coordinators throughout the state, we have a new person to add to your list. **Bob Nelson** (ATM, King Salmon ATCT) now hangs a Local Coordinator hat in his closet. As of January 1, **Bob** took over where now-retired **Carl Fundeen** left off. Congratulations, **Bob**, and best of luck.

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## OPPORTUNITY STRIKES AGAIN

It was recently announced that **Melissa Berry** has been selected as the Special Assistant to the Regional Administrator for a 1-year time period. This is a wonderful opportunity for **Melissa** to experience the hectic, enlightening, beneficial, fun, and challenging job of becoming another right hand to the Regional Administrator.

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# COOL SCHOOL

**This could be the war story of the year for FAA.**

Here is another record-breaking chapter to add to our book of winter tales in Alaska.

Whenever a new Flight Standards inspector is brought on board in the Fairbanks office, he or she is required to complete the 1-week Arctic Survival Class at Eielson AFB. Normally this would involve no intense hardship. However, the class of January 1989 went through the ultimate survival school. They experienced the second coldest temperatures ever recorded in the history of the school. This scenario was told to us by **Darlene Dubay** (Operations Inspector, Fairbanks FSDO-01), a student in this class.

Following their 2 days of classroom instruction, 40 students and leaders were dropped off in a field 5 miles from Eielson AFB and all civilization. The participants were separated into groups of 10. They scouted the area, cut I I/2 cords of wood from the forest, and hauled it over 150 yards to what would be their fire circle (and the only source of heat for the next 3 days).

**Darlene** and her group of nine guys started a fire and set up their water generator they made out of a parachute. This was a crucial element of their survival since their only water supply for the next 3 days would come from the snow they could melt and collect, and each person was told to drink 6 quarts of water every day to prevent dehydration.

Next, the group made snares out of wire. Their efforts to catch a rabbit or squirrel for dinner were in vain since no respectable critter would be outside in -60°. Only our kamikaze campers would venture into the out-of-doors in the arctic cold.

Fortunately, the trainees were able to take MREs (Meal Ready to Eat) with them for their 1200 calories a day meals that were authorized.

Everyone spent the first evening in a community snow shelter that was there upon their arrival. **Darlene** said they all sure enjoyed the warmth inside the shelter that reached a high of 0°.

The next day's efforts were centered around building individual snow shelters for each person. Construction progress was slow since they had to be careful not to work up a sweat in the -50 temps, plus they couldn't stay away from the fire circle for longer than an hour for fear of frostbite. The remainder of the day was spent building signal fires from scratch -- using only one match for each fire -- not exactly an easy task when there's a couple feet of snow on the ground, -50 temps, and wind. The final exercise of vectoring a rescue aircraft into the area to the simulated survivors was canceled since it was too cold for the aircraft to fly.

Most of the final day was spent around the fire circle. Once they had broken down their snow shelters and had returned the environment to its original condition at their arrival, their main objective was to stay warm. The outside temperature had not reached above -35° during their entire training session. Everyone was eager to get back to the civilized world with warm beds, hot food, and water that didn't reek of smoke.

**Darlene** thought it was one of the greatest challenges of her lifetime because she showed herself that she could survive off the land with very little in the line of tools. Many people think **Darlene** and any other inspectors who go through this

training at -60$^{O}$ deserve either a medal or hazardous duty pay. It certainly does make the rest of us become very quiet whenever we want to complain about the weather or how cold our office is.

Congratulations, **Darlene**, on being a survivor!

By the way, if anyone can beat this war story, we'd like to hear it.

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## GETTING PINNED FOR GOOD SERVICE

**Nancy Lathey** was presented her 30-year service pin by Regional Administrator **Frank Cunningham**. **Nancy** is the Manager of our Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS) in Kenai. She is the first and only woman in the United States to hold a position of this kind at an AFSS, and we are extremely proud of her accomplishments.

**Nancy** has certainly come a long way from when she first joined FAA back in 1960 at the Salt Lake City FSS. She started as a Telegraphic Typewriter Operator at a GS-4 rating. From that position she saw the opportunity of a career as an Air Traffic Control Specialist on her horizon and moved up into the Air Traffic Control Specialist trainee program. That was the start of her bid to make history. She spent a couple years as an instructor at the Academy in Oklahoma City, worked in the fresh air of the Los Angeles FSS for another couple years, then moved on to the beautiful garden spot of Minot, North Dakota, as the FSS Facility Manager. After all this experience, **Nancy** was a perfect candidate to work as a staff specialist in the FAA Washington Headquarters Air Traffic Service Procedures Division and Resource Management Division.

Finally **Nancy** chose to relocate to a state with REAL clean air -- Alaska. She took over as Manager at the Kenai AFSS in 1987, and is there to this day.

We all think of **Nancy** as a real asset to our organization and we are happy to have her on our team. She certainly has paid her dues over the past 30 years and we hope to have her with us for a long time.

Congratulations on this milestone in your career, **Nancy**.

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Communications Technician-in-Depth **Robert Woolsey** (left) was presented his 30-year service pin from **Ron Cowles**, ZAN Airway Facilities Sector Manager.

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**EARTS Technician, ZAN AF David Penn received his 25-year service pin from Ron Cowles ZAN Airway Facilities Sector Manager.**

# WASHINGTON REPORTS

**Stricter Security:** New Airport Employee Regulations. A new federal rule will require U.S. airports to install stricter security measures to tighten control over airport and airline employee identification cards and keep unauthorized people out of secured airport areas.

This is the latest in a series of beefed-up security measures DOT and FAA have taken in the past year and underscores the need for greater safety vigilance in the wake of the Pan American Airways 747 bombing and crash on December 21.

The rule must be fully implemented at the nation's busiest airports by early 1991. A total of 270 U.S. airports covered by the rule will ultimately have to install a computer access system or other methods and procedures that provide an equivalent level of security.

Computer controlled access systems for employee identification are already in use at some airports and have proved to be highly effective and workable (i.e. Anchorage).

These electronic card systems -- which are likely to be used at the nation's larger airports -- can be programmed to keep a record of employees who try to enter unauthorized areas. They also can reject cards that have been reported lost or stolen or which have not been turned in by former airport and airline employees.

The rule, which became effective this month, will be phased in based on the volume of people who are checked by airport screening systems.

Phase I airports screen 25 million or more people annually or are specially designated for this category because of other considerations. Phase II airports screen more than 2 million annually; Phase III check 500,000 to 2 million annually; and Phase IV less than 500,000.

Phase I airports will have to submit plans to comply with the new rule for FAA approval within 6 months of the effective date of the regulation. Implementation must be complete within 18 months of FAA approval.

Phase II airports will have 6 months to submit a plan for approval and 24 months after approval to implement it. Phase III and IV airports will have longer compliance periods. They must submit plans within 12 months and implement them within 30 months after approval.

Earlier tightening of airport security included that of December 1987, when FAA ordered airport and airline employees -- including pilots and flight attendants -- who pass through public areas to undergo the same screening for weapons as airline passengers before boarding flights.

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**Top Five:** The latest FAA statistics show the number of operations -- takeoffs and landings -- for the nation's largest airports for the first 11 months of 1988. Here are the top five: Chicago O'Hare -- 734,817; Atlanta Hartsfield -- 711,780; Dallas/Fort Worth -- 620,074; Los Angeles International -- 563,934; and Denver Stapleton -- 461,464.

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**Airport Delays Down:** Many of the nation's largest airports reported significant decreases in the number of delays for the first 11 months of 1988. The National Airspace System Analysis Branch's latest statistics show the continuing downward delay trend nationwide. Chicago O'Hare was the only one of FAA's 22 "pacing airports" that registered a significant increase -- 29.9% -- in delays over the past 11 months. Much of the rise is due to the FAA imposed cap of 85 landings an hour.

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**1990 Funding Request: $1 Billion in Added FAA Money, 2,146 More Jobs At the Agency:** FAA has asked Congress for an extra $1 billion and 2,146 more jobs -- including 695 new air traffic controller slots -- in FY 1990 to keep skies safe and make major technical improvements in the National Airspace System.

The agency's FY 1990 monetary request that was submitted to Congress reflects a 15.7% increase over the amount okayed for the current 1989 fiscal year.

If approved, FAA's 1990 budget would increase to $7.393 billion. That's up from the current $6.389 billion. The number of authorized full-time jobs would rise to 52,480. The most expensive line item in the 1990 budget would total $1.35 billion to pay for airport improvements grants, with emphasis on expanding capacity, safety, and security.

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**Who We Are?** The typical Federal employee is 49.1 years old and has 13.1 years of government service, according to the Office of Personnel Management. About 57% of us are male, 26.9% are minorities (16.8% black, 5.2% Hispanic; 3.2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.7% Native American) and 7% have handicapped status. About 33% have college bachelor's degrees or higher. Finally, the average annual base salary in 1988 was $28,617, but the average grade was GS-8.3.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

A problem precisely defined is partially solved.

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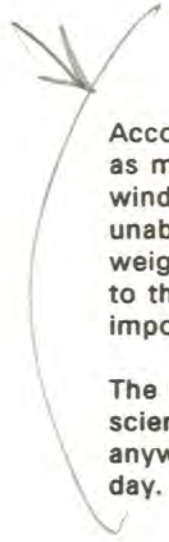

According to the theory of aerodynamics, as may be readily demonstrated through wind tunnel experiments, the bumblebee is unable to fly. This is because the size, weight, and shape of his body in relation to the total wingspread make flying impossible.

The bumblebee, being ignorant of these scientific truths, goes ahead and flies anyway -- and makes a little honey every day.

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## LETTERS TO THE FRONT

**John Gruber** (Technician-in-Depth, ZAN AF), **Chuck Kyle** (Utility Systems Repair Operator, ZAN AF), and **Cliff Hoff** (USRO, ZAN AF) were presented Letters of Appreciation from **Frank Price** (ZAN AT Manager) for their efforts in providing an automatic door from the ARTCC courtyard to the control room. Handicapped employees who are confined to wheelchairs can now park in the covered parking area and access the building without having to brave the outdoor elements.

**Bill Fundeen** (ET, Anchorage SFO) received a Letter of Commendation for his excellent on-the-job performance at the SFO Radar Unit.

Just prior to his retirement, **Carl Fundeen** (former Manager, King Salmon SFO) was presented a Letter of Recognition from **Edwin S. Harris, Jr.**, Associate Administrator for Airway Facilities, for **Carl's** many years of service with the CAA/FAA.

Juneau ATCS **Mike O'Donnell** (right) was presented a Letter of Commendation by ATM **John McLaughlin** for his efforts in instructing facility personnel on the use of the Leading Edge computer.

ZAN AF EARTS Technician **David Penn** (right) received a Letter of Appreciation from **Roland Jones**, Systems Engineer, Crew 5, for the professional job **David** did as Acting Systems Engineer.

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## CONSIDER YOURSELF ONE OF THE FAMILY

We have a number of new faces to welcome aboard this month.

**Jim Pooley** has joined the Labor and Employees Relations Branch as a Labor Relations Specialist. **Jim** has come to us from the Bureau of Land Management.

**Karen Metz** left the Department of Defense Engineering Department behind at Fort Richardson and joined our Airway Facilities Division (AAL-451) as a Civil Engineer.

**Blaine Henry** is our newest Electronics Engineer in the Airway Facilities Division (AAL-452). **Blaine** comes to us from Hawthorne, California, where he worked with FAA in the Western-Pacific Regional Office.

**Charles Monico** is on board with our Staffing and Compensation Branch where he is now working as a Classification Specialist. **Charles** previously worked in the staffing and payroll areas at Elmendorf Air Force Base.

**Edith V. Parish** and her family made the trip from Columbia, Missouri, recently so **Edith** could join the crew at the Anchorage FSS. **Edith** previously worked at the Automated FSS in Missouri as an Air Traffic Control Specialist.

**Chuck Miller** is now on board as a Computer Programmer in our Financial Management Division. **Chuck** worked with the Department of Defense at Elmendorf AFB prior to joining FAA. There is another new face over in the Financial Management Division, but only for 4 months. **Carol Pollitt** has been detailed from Airway Facilities to fill the Division Secretary position in the Financial Management Division while **Judy Whetzel** is detailed to the Civil Aviation Security Division.

The recent cheering from the Assistant Chief Counsel's office was done with good reason. The long-vacant position of Associate Assistant Chief Counsel will finally be filled by **Attorney Donald Borey**. **Don** and his wife **Patricia**, are expected to arrive here from their previous duty station in the FAA Southwest Region (Dallas/Fort Worth) no later than March 10. Of course no one will be looking forward to **Don's** arrival more than the members of our legal staff. With the present average, daily caseload of over 355 active cases, they are planning on spelling relief -- **BOREY**.

**Donald Graber** and **Rickey Davidson** (both ATCS/Developmental, Anchorage FSS) have reported for duty and are progressing very well. Upon the completion of their training, **Don** is scheduled to be assigned to Dillingham, and **Rickey** is slotted to go to Cold Bay.

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## TO THE LAND OF TRANQUILITY

We express our condolences to the family of **Dottye** and **Charlie Muhs** following the recent death of her father in the Lower 48.

Our sympathies also go out to **Les** and **Edna Kleider** on the death of their son, **Roy Lynn**, who lived in Arkansas.

We were saddened to hear that **Jack Teffeteller** passed away last month in Anchorage. **Jack** worked as an Air Traffic Control Specialist at the International Flight Service Station in Anchorage from 1972 to 1980. Memorials may be sent to College Gate Elementary School, 3101 Sunflower, Anchorage, Alaska 99508.

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## MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS

A recent study found that senior executives spend an average of 17 hours a week in meetings. Some, of course, are unavoidable. To make the most of them, here are a few pointers:

*Keep them short. Make it clear to everyone at the start what the time limit is. This cuts out a lot of unnecessary talk that wastes time.

*Keep them infrequent. Maybe an all-day meeting once a month at a local hotel would be more efficient and more refreshing, since it's in a different environment.

*Limit attendance. The more people invited, the more complicated the meeting gets. Invite only a handful of people and the meeting will go much smoother.

*Encourage other means of communication. Phone calls and memos are highly efficient ways to communicate. A 10-minute chat by the water fountain can sometimes accomplish more than a half hour meeting in the conference room.

*Prepare thoroughly. Require people to come to a meeting fully prepared and you'll save a lot of time.

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## FOND FAREWELLS FOR OUR FAA FRIENDS

Happy trails to some of our FAA family who have decided to take that big step and join the retirement generation.

**Earl Scott** has departed from his Air Traffic position as Facility Manager at the McGrath FSS after serving nearly 35 years with the Federal government. **Earl's** career included tours of duty in other regions in addition to Alaska, and also at the FAA Academy. Many of us remember **Earl** as the recipient of the National Flight Assist Award last year. We hear that **Earl** is going to move to the next biggest state in the country, Texas, to enjoy his golden years in the sun.

**Emery "Bud" Hurley**, Electronics Technician at our Ketchikan FSS, has retired from government service following a career of 30 years with the Federal government.

**Donald Schultz** has retired from his position as a Maintenance Mechanic at the Fairbanks Sector Field Office. **Don** has worked for the Federal government over 35 years.

We wish these three gentlemen a happy and healthy retirement. May they live long and prosper.

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## TOASTMASTER'S CLUB

The Kashim Toastmaster's Club is sponsoring a Speechcraft Workshop. If you have ever thought you would like to improve your speaking and presentation skills, this workshop is for you. The 8-week workshop will begin on March 15, 1989. There will be a $45.00 fee to participant.

For further information, contact **Janet Ulrich** (AAL-421) at 271-5831 or **Vickie Sherburne** (AAL-450.1) at 271-5198.

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## EVERYONE GETS CHILI IN COLD BAY

The people in Cold Bay conducted their first city-wide Chili Cook-Off this past month -- and what a success! Out of the 12 entries, two FAAers went home as winners. **Chuck Taylor** took first place honors with his "Chuck's Chili," and **Dan Vallish's** "Cold Bay Roadhouse Original" took a hot second place.

Both **Chuck** and **Dan** are oldtimers in Cold Bay. **Chuck** is a Flight Service Specialist with 20 months at Cold Bay and **Dan** is an Electronics Technician with 17 months racked up on the old calendar.

We might note that **Dan** holds the longevity record with his 17 months in the electronics section at Cold Bay. He also was recently elected Vice-Mayor of the City of Cold Bay.

Congratulations to both **David** and **Dan** on their recent accomplishments.

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## THE FRIENDLY SKIES CALLING EARTH. COME IN EARTH.

The number of radio contacts that our people at the Flight Service Stations receive each month would astonish many people. **Richard Kauffman** (ATM, Ketchikan FSS) and his crew began using a counter to register all the extra radio contacts they were receiving that were not being recorded on the flight progress strips. They found their radio contact totals to be doubled, and they calculated over 202,000 radio contacts had been received over the period of 1 year. In July alone they counted 25,367 radio contacts. For those of you who wondered what the people at FSSs do -- they talk on the radio a lot (among other things).

## I WANT YOU! TO HELP SPREAD THE NEWS.

**by Mary Lou D. Wojtalik**
**INTERCOM Editor**

The best news stories are always the ones that come in from the employees themselves. Because of the vastness of the Alaskan Region, it is impossible for me to travel around the State in search of news. That is why I depend on each and every employee to help keep me informed on the most up-to-date facts and figures.

The following guidelines are meant to help you prepare articles for submission to my office.

### DEADLINE

Submit articles no later than the first Friday of each month, but don't become impatient if your article does not appear right away. Items are prioritized according to their timeliness, quality of information included, and newsworthiness. I often have to edit and revise because of limited space.

### COPY PREPARATION

Write full name, title, and duty station for everyone discussed in the article, including yourself. Don't assume everyone knows what you are talking about. Write as though you are communicating with new employees -- avoid the use of acronyms unless they have been spelled out at one point somewhere in the information.

Be sure to include background information. You might be closely associated to the project or person, but everyone else is not.

### PEOPLE ITEMS

Our columns on people seem to be our most popular section of the INTERCOM. Many of us rely on this source to keep track of friends and acquaintances throughout the region. Be sure to answer the following questions for each story:

**WHO** is the story about?

**WHAT** is the event?

**WHEN** did it or will it happen?

**WHERE** did it happen?

**WHY** did it happen?

**HOW** did it happen?

### PHOTOGRAPHS

Include a photograph if it helps "sell" your article. Black and white photos are preferred but color photos can be used. Be sure to identify each person in the photo. Include their title and duty station.

If you want photos returned, include a note to that effect with your name and routing symbol.

When taking photos, be sure to pay attention to your background.

**Do** create contrast of light vs. dark colors within the photo. This will print much clearer in the newsletter.

**Do** use adequate lighting.

**Don't** shoot directly into a mirror, glass window, or framed picture. Shoot on a diagonal to avoid a glare from light or flash bouncing back at you.

**Don't** put a subject in light-colored clothes in front of a light-colored background and vice versa with dark clothes and dark background. Everything will blend together with no definition.

**Do** try to have subject(s) look at the camera rather than shooting their profiles.

**Do** try to show some action in the photo: i.e., subjects shaking hands, sitting on corner of desk, holding award in both hands as if he is showing it to you, etc.

**Don't** stand subject in front of window unless you have adequate lighting from inside. Otherwise your subject will be silhouetted.

**Don't** have your subject standing with a plant or picture on the wall behind him so that it looks like it is coming out of the back of his head.

So let us hear from you. Send in articles, information, and/or photos to Mary Lou at AAL-5B. Just use a plain envelope or holy joe envelope. I'll be watching my mail.

## THE UPS AND DOWN OF BLOOD PRESSURE NUMBERS

**by Pat Sanders, R.N., AAL-300**

Two questions are almost always asked by people who have just had their blood pressure taken:

1. What is my blood pressure?
2. Is that OK?

The first question is usually easy to answer -- though once in a while blood pressure determination can be a little tricky. The second question is difficult to answer with a simple "yes" or "no". The decision as to what numbers really are high has more than trivial consequences: The person labeled as having high blood pressure usually faces a life-long commitment to drug therapy and higher life insurance costs.

First, a brief explanation of how the numbers are determined and what they mean is in order. The traditional blood pressure cuff around the arm is designed to apply air pressure against the major artery that runs through the arm. Once the pressure in the cuff has been raised high enough to stop all flow of blood through the arm artery, the pressure is slowly lowered while the examiner listens with a stethoscope placed below the cuff. When the sound of pumping blood from each heartbeat is heard, the pressure is noted as the maximal arterial pressure that can break through the cuff's resistance. This is called the systolic pressure because it reflects the wave of maximal pressure that develops in the arterial system during the moment when the heart is contracted. Once that number has been noted, pressure in the cuff is further released until the sound of pumping blood disappears altogether -- indicating that point of minimal pressure in the arteries. This is called the diastolic pressure because it comes during the resting phase of the heart cycle known as diastole. For years, health professionals were taught that the second pressure was more important than the systolic pressure because it reflected the baseline pressure in our arteries apart from the brief period of heart contraction. Most decisions as to whether blood pressure is high are based on the second number, which is usually more consistent and less likely to undergo temporary elevations. Research indicates the first number also is important and should not be lightly dismissed when high. But because it is more important in treatment considerations, we will focus on the second number.

Many people agree that, in adults, diastolic pressures over 100 are high and under 90 are normal. There really is no such entity as "low" blood pressure unless the person feels abnormal because of the pressure. In other words, "the lower the better" as long as you feel OK. So we come down to the controversial territory of diastolic pressures between 90 and 100.

Studies can be interpreted to mean that all persons with diastolic pressures above 90 should be treated with the goal of reducing the pressure to below 90. Side effects of treatment are common, although often relatively minor. For this reason, some highly respected authorities disagree with treating everyone in this category. The opposition typically argues that numbers in the low 90's and maybe even in the high 90's should not be treated unless the individual is at unusually high risk for complications. At particularly high risk are blacks, people with a family history of hypertension, the young, and those with already existing complications (heart disease, strokes, kidney impairment). In such circumstances, the level of the systolic blood pressure would also help in the decision. If it were greater than 100, plus the person's age, most physicians would agree that treatment should be undertaken.

Obviously, we have failed to answer the leading question with an easily applied rule. But we have defined the territory of debate. If your diastolic pressure is under 90, relax. If it's consistently between 90 and 100 or more, consult a physician. Many in this gray zone will be surprised to learn that initial treatment steps are often directed to diet and exercise, rather than to drug programs.

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## WE'VE ALL BEEN UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE LATELY

According to the National Weather Service, truer words were never spoken. During January and February we have seen some of the highest sea level pressure figures ever recorded.

The highest barometric pressure ever recorded was figured at 32.01 inches of mercury in Agata, Siberia, U.S.S.R., on December 31, 1968.

The second highest reading was 31.86 inches of mercury in Barnaul, Siberia, U.S.S.R., on January 23, 1900.

The third highest barometric level was noted at 31.85 inches of mercury at Northway, Alaska, U.S.A., on January 31, 1989.

Because of this high pressure system that covered a major portion of the State of Alaska, the FAA was compelled to issue an emergency Notice to Airmen that would prevent pilots from making instrument approaches and night Visual Flight Rules approaches to most airports. This precedent-setting ruling was necessary since aircraft altimeters were not capable of accurately measuring altitude once the barometric pressure exceeded 31.00 inches of mercury.

FAA employees were not the most well-liked people in the state, but we did what we had to do in order to assure safe and efficient air travel. After all, it is easier to deal with a few hard feelings here and there than with a funeral parlor full of bereaved families.

We all hope the worst weather is over and as time goes by the public will again understand that FAA is only concerned with their well-being as it pertains to air safety.

We commend the men and women of Air Traffic, Flight Standards, and the Assistant Chief Counsel's office for all the midnight oil they burned in researching the ramifications of their precedent-setting decision

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## TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD -- MARCH 14 THROUGH APRIL 14, 1989

The recently passed PL 100-654 added a section to the Federal Employees' Health Benefits (FEHB) law extending coverage to temporary employees who have completed one year of current continuous temporary employment without a break of 5 days or more.

For temporary employees who have completed their year of temporary service, this open enrollment period is your opportunity to enroll in a health benefit plan.

To enroll you must file a Health Benefits Registration Form (SF2809) with AAL-16B (following a pay period during which you were in a pay status).

In Alaska, you may select a plan from the 13 plans without stars on page 8 of the Special Information Guide. All other plans are limited to specific employee groups or geographic areas and will not cover Alaskan enrollments.

Temporary employees who complete their year of continuous employment after this Special Open Enrollment Period may enroll within 31 days after becoming eligible.

You can obtain your FEHB information Guide and SF 2809 enrollment form by contacting **Jean Pershall**, Employee Relations Specialist, AAL-16B at 271-5804.

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## WASHINGTON D.C. SAW GREEN IN JANUARY

Nancy Green and former Administrator Allan McArtor

The folks in Washington had the opportunity to meet our very own **Nancy Green** last month at a special award ceremony. **Nancy**, a Program Analyst in the Airway Facilities Division, was the Alaskan Region's recipient of the 12th Annual Administrator's EEO Award. She has worked incessantly as a member of the Federal Women's Program (of which she now serves as its Chairperson), and it is due to her achievements in that program that she was selected for this honor. Whenever any FWP activity is taking place, you can always count on seeing **Nancy** in the middle of it. She has worked very diligently with this organization and certainly deserves to be recognized.

The Washingtonians gave **Nancy** the "red carpet" treatment when she was there to receive her award. We can't think of a better person to receive this special attention.

Congratulations to you, **Nancy**.

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