

DOT Today

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U.S. Department of Transportation

Moving America Together

HOAXES ARE NO JOKE!

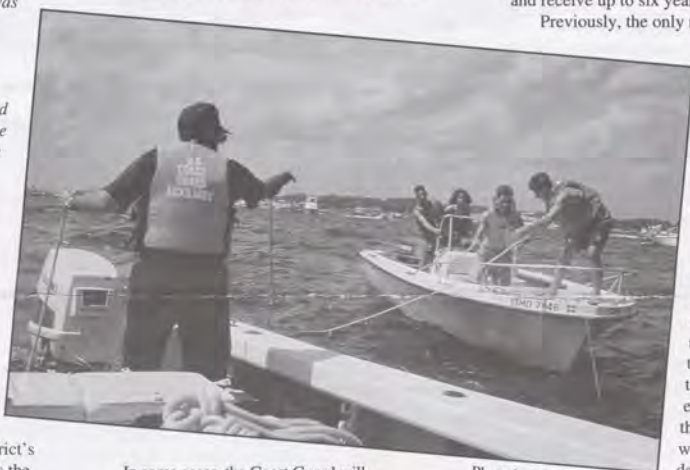
To the Coast Guard

"Vessel sinking 25 miles northwest...six people on board...one pregnant female...abandoning ship into water..." This distress call was heard by several ham operators and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) offices in Vero Beach, Fla., and Washington, D.C. More than a day later, after Coast Guard cutters and aircraft had scoured more than 2,400 square miles, the search was suspended. Why? Because the distress call turned out to be a hoax.

Every year hoax calls waste taxpayer dollars, endanger the lives of Coast Guard men and women and divert valuable Coast Guard assets from responding to real distress situations. There is usually no way of telling whether a distress call is phony or not, so all calls are treated as real.

But now the Guard is playing hard ball in renewed efforts to catch and prosecute those who are making the false calls. LCDR Daniel A. Neptun, assistant branch chief of the Seventh District's search and rescue branch, (which includes the Florida coast), says they are working more closely with the FCC to catch people who are calling in hoaxes.

by PA2 Robert Wyman
U.S. Coast Guard, Seventh District



In some cases, the Coast Guard will give its tape of the call to the FCC. The FCC can voice print the tape and compare that to other calls that are suspected hoaxes. "Once they voice print a

Photo by PA2 Don Wagner

person, it's just a matter of following their rules of evidence procedures and building a case," says Neptun.

Another weapon in prosecuting hoax callers is a law passed in 1990, which says that an individual who knowingly and willfully communicates a false distress message to the Coast Guard, or causes them to attempt to save lives and property when no help is needed, is liable for all costs the Coast Guard incurs as a result of the individual's action. In addition, the person can be fined up to \$50,000 and receive up to six years in jail.

Previously, the only recourse the Coast Guard had was to complain to the FCC and have them take administrative action. "The new law has clearly established a false distress call as a crime," says Lt. Mark Bobotek, chief of the general law section in the Seventh District. Earlier this year, a Fairfax, Va., man pleaded guilty to sending the false distress call about the sinking vessel. Only the third case prosecuted since the 1990 law went into effect, the punishment was the most severe so far. He was fined \$50,000, surrendered his radio equipment and lost his FCC license for life.

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Head Injury Protection for Airplane Passengers

by Van Gowdy, Civil Aeromedical Institute

in crash injury protection that have been developed for airplanes.

Air travel in the U.S. has the lowest death rate of all methods of transportation. Still, DOT and industry are pursuing new technologies that will further improve passenger safety. Federal Aviation Regulations now require seats in new aircraft to be tested under simulated impact conditions. In addition to the structural integrity of the seat, the results of the tests must satisfy requirements to provide protection from serious injuries to the occupant's head, spine, chest, and legs. The regulations affect small aircraft, large transports, and rotorcraft.

The requirement for head

injury protection is often the most difficult of the criteria to meet. In an aircraft accident, head injury can occur from impact with interior surfaces such as the instrument panel in the cockpit, the back of the next forward row of seats, and wall structures in the cabin. FAA's Civil Aeromedical Institute (CAMI) in Oklahoma City, is conducting research on a variety of methods that provide head protection for passengers seated behind walls in aircraft.

Dynamic Impact Tests

In contrast to automobile crash tests, current FAA regulations, adopted in 1988, do not require the entire airframe of an aircraft to be

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The photo shows the setup for an airplane seat test, commonly referred to as a sled test.

Ads for new cars market safety features as a big selling point for many models. Auto manufacturers spend millions of dollars on television advertising showing crash tests and pointing out how well the dummies rid-

ing in the car were protected. Consumer publications and the news media closely monitor the crash testing of new car models and report which cars provide the best protection from injury in a crash. Less publicized but equally significant are improvements

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A Message from Secretary Peña:

I want to take this opportunity to personally thank the employees who are in senior positions here at the department. Many were acting or are still acting as Administrators and Assistant Secretaries. I know that I could not have managed this department for the past months without their enthusiasm, their flexibility, and their commitment to excellence — a commitment I have found throughout this Department at virtually all levels.

Most are career public servants who have shown a willingness not only to lead and to share their expert knowledge with me and my staff, but also to take risks through a difficult time of transition. I would like to thank everyone around the Department of Transportation for their cooperation, their professionalism and their hard work, and particularly these key staff members to whom I owe a great personal debt:

Joseph Del Balzo, Federal Aviation Administration
E. Dean Carlson, Federal Highway Administration
Mark Lindsey, Federal Railroad Administration
Howard Smolkin, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Robert McManus, Federal Transit Administration
Richard Bowman, Maritime Administration
Rose McMurray, Research and Special Programs Administration
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Jon Seymour, Assistant Secretary for Administration
Cdr. Erroll Brown, OST, U.S. Coast Guard
Dennis Murphy, OST, White House Fellow
Kim Kimball, OST, Special Assistant (Scheduling)
ADM William Kime, U.S. Coast Guard
Stanford Parris, St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corp.
Mary Schiavo, Inspector General
Robert Knisely, Transportation Statistics

They have managed our offices, held several positions simultaneously and served as my senior staff. I look forward to our continued working relationships! My sincere thanks to them and to each of you for making this a smooth transition.

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This is your publication, and we value your input.

If you would like to submit letters, comments or articles, please address them to: Editor, DOT Today, OST, Office of Public Affairs, A-20, Room 9419, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. (202)366-5578; FAX (202)366-3703.

The deadline for the August 1993 issue is July 22.

This newsletter is
recyclable



Please Recycle

Secretary Peña Addresses Mariner Grads



Stating DOT's concern for the marine environment, Secretary Federico Peña told the 203 June graduates of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy that their school would be "in the vanguard of our efforts to increase maritime safety

and to protect the environment of our watery planet."

In addition to delivering the keynote commencement address on June 14, the Secretary presented bachelor of science degrees, merchant marine licenses and Naval Reserve commissions to the 14 women and 189 men of the Class of 1993.

Graduates have a five-year obligation to serve in the maritime industry at sea or ashore, or on active duty in the Armed Forces.

The Academy, operated by DOT in Kings Point, N.Y., celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year.

Travel Services at Headquarters

The Amtrak Travel Center offers you extra convenience with Amtrak sales, ticketing and travel planning, and MARC commuter tickets can be purchased in the DOT Nassif Building headquarters. Located in Room 3248, the services are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed for lunch from 1:30 to 2 p.m.). Call 202-906-4969.

Each headquarters building has a contractor-provided Travel Management Center (TMC/Sato Travel) to expedite both official and personal travel. The TMC provides air transportation reservations and ticketing, hotel and motel reservations worldwide, car rental reservations, and meeting arrangements. The Sato Shuttle also provides free shuttle service between DOT and National Airport (call 703-684-8674 for information).

The numbers for leisure travel information are: Nassif Building (202) 554-1716; FAA (202) 554-1740, and Coast Guard (202) 554-1721.

Travel Advance Salary Offsets

Employees with overdue or excessive travel advances recently received notices to submit travel vouchers and/or remit payment. Under a new initiative to recover these monies due the government, employees who do not respond to the notices will incur automatic payroll deductions, plus administrative charges. Payroll

deductions are scheduled to begin September 28.

To avoid salary offsets, remember to promptly file travel vouchers, pay off travel balances on time, and fully document travel advances as they arise. Contact your servicing finance office for more information.

Getting Too Many Copies of DOT Today? Not Enough Copies?

The current distribution list for DOT Today is based on a survey done last year from the Headquarters office, asking offices to list how many copies were needed. As a result of that survey, we have been able to cut the number printed each month by thousands, reducing costs and saving time in distributing the newsletter.

If you need to change the number of copies you're currently receiving in your area, we need to hear from you before we can make the change. Call (202) 366-4600. With your help, we can keep costs down while still getting the information out there!

High Flyer Fred Gibbs

FAA Air Traffic Control Publications Manager

by Susann Lee White, NHTSA

At a time when the federal government is criticized by many, Fred Gibbs of the Federal Aviation Administration — often called the “Friendly Fed” at his local airport — is doing his best to improve its public image.

“I’m trying to overcome the stereotype of government equals over-regulation,” says Gibbs, manager of the air traffic publications branch. People say, “Go see Fred” to pull together things, to resolve problems, to create an idea, to make things happen. His winning philosophy? He says nothing is impossible.

An FAA employee for 22 years, Gibbs says learning to fly was the culmination of a lifelong dream. “Flying changed my life,” he recalls. “It opened up a whole new world, and I discovered that no place is too far away. I also realized that any goal could be attained.”

He has also been an accident prevention counselor for 15 years and a pilot for 20. “Accidents happen because people, being human, make mistakes,” he says. Although he has never crashed, he once had a close encounter when severe icing covered most of his plane.

Gibbs currently holds an Airline Transport Pilot license, is a certified flight instructor for both single and multi-engine aircraft, and has over 5,000 hours of flight time. He joined the Air Force in 1961, hoping to learn to fly. “I was 17 and naive,” says Gibbs. Instead, he wound up 200 feet underground in a silo in the Atlas Mission Squadron. It wasn’t until 1973, at the age of 30, while assigned to the FAA’s Williamsport, Pa., Flight Service Station, that he finally learned to fly.

Before joining the FAA, Gibbs worked in a chemical manufacturing plant. Although he had planned to become an aerospace engineer after attending Northrop Institute of Technology in Los Angeles just out of the Air Force, circumstances and a motorcycle accident changed the course of events. In 1971, a friend from the service who had gone to air traffic control school, was working at FAA’s New York center. He suggested that Gibbs should also apply. A short time later, the FAA offered him a job.

It seems Gibbs has never led a dull life. Take, for instance, the way he has chosen to commute for about the last eight years. On Monday mornings, he takes off in his single engine Bellanca Super Viking four-seater airplane from his hometown of Easton, Pa., 225 miles away, and lands at Hyde Field in Clinton, Md. an hour and ten minutes later. His aircraft has all the instruments to safely fly in just about any weather condition, but sometimes when the weather is severe, he lands a little closer to work at, Washington National.

After he lands his commuter plane in suburban Maryland, he drives his “trustworthy old Ford” to his office at FAA headquarters in Washington, where he and his staff put together air traffic control manuals and documents — about 50 million pages a year. Gibbs spends the rest of the work week at his townhouse in Crofton, Md., then flies back home to Pennsylvania on Friday. For the past 15 years, he has looked forward to his weekends, when he becomes the flight instructor for the Aviation Explorer Program, that includes the largest aviation merit badge camp in the United States for boys ages 12 to 18, many of them Eagle Scouts. Other student flyers include his daughter Meredith, 19, a student at Towson State University in Baltimore.

“Learning to fly is not easy for some of these kids because we play by adult rules,” says Gibbs, who also runs a non-profit corporation called Future Fliers, Inc. “I try to teach the kids to use good, rational judgment, and to learn from their mistakes.” He says the greatest reward for him is to see these young people becoming friends for life, and to have many of them come back later to help other young people in the organization.



Photos by Dennis Hughes, CPP



Phyllis Kaylor was recently surprised by her co-workers in the General Counsel’s office at DOT headquarters. The occasion? Her 48th year of government service — all spent in the aviation area. Phyllis, who is chief of the documentary services division, was former secretary to the Civil Aeronautics Board. Her cake sported a number of personalized headlines from “Aviation Insider,” including one that read: “More Service Than Pan Am.” Phyllis says no one ever asks her about retiring. “I still have work to do,” she explains.



DOT Officials Sworn In

- Mortimer L. Downey was sworn in as the department’s Deputy Secretary of Transportation on June 3 by Secretary Peña.
 - Michael P. Huerta was sworn in June 7 as Associate Deputy Secretary. At the same time, he was appointed director of DOT’s Office of Intermodalism.
 - Stephen Kaplan was also sworn in June 7 as General Counsel.
 - Rodney E. Slater was formally sworn in June 16 as Federal Highway Administrator.
- All four were confirmed by the Senate on May 28.

1993 SAVINGS BONDS CAMPAIGN

Invest Now To Secure Your Future



There is still time to sign up for U.S. Savings Bonds. Bonds are a good investment and it’s so easy to get started. Sign up for the payroll savings plan and watch your investment grow. Remember, there are lots of good reasons to choose bonds:

- Bonds continue to be a better investment than certificates of deposit, money market funds, and passbook savings accounts.

- Bonds offer competitive rates and complete safety.
 - Bonds provide significant tax advantages; interest earned on bonds is exempt from all state and local income taxes.
 - Interest earned on bonds is not subject to federal income taxes until the bonds are cashed or reach final maturity in 30 years.
 - Interest earned on bonds purchased January 1, 1990 and later is exempt from federal tax when used for the tuition and fees of higher education.
 - Bonds save our government millions of dollars in debt interest costs.
- If you are not already investing in bonds, consider signing up; or if you currently purchase bonds, consider increasing your allotments!

"Crying Wolf" (Hoax cont. from page 1)



The boy hopped aboard his family's sailboat to send his regular phony radio message, pleading for help in stopping an environmental polluter who was dumping into the bay. Then, he calmly switched off the radio and went back to his house.

Across the county, Coast Guardsmen were dispatched into the bay looking for what turned out to be another phantom ship. This was one in a series of recent calls that had sent the Coast Guard off on a "wild goose chase." But, later that afternoon, investigative efforts with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) paid off: federal officers went to the boy's home with an arrest warrant charging him with violating federal communications law. It turns out the honor roll student was responsible for at least six fake distress calls.

In this case, after receiving several phony calls over a short period of time, the Coast Guard began tracking the source. To pinpoint it, the FCC was called in, and their investigators fixed the signal to the sailboat. A federal agent was posted near the boat and saw the boy board the vessel. Another distress call emerged moments later. That's when the agents moved in.

The boy's family was fined \$2,000 and the high school student was ordered to do community service work every Saturday for the next three months. He scrubbed walls and floors, dusted

offices and learned something about wax build-up on linoleum. He was also assigned to write a paper outlining what it costs the Coast Guard to chase down false calls and the potential threat it poses to those actually in distress. He must present the paper to the Guard and, finally, to his sailing club. His parents have also administered punishment at home. "I think he knew better," says his father. "But I didn't think he would do something like this." (based on a 1993 story from the *Virginian-Pilot*)

Prank Flares Cost Tens of Thousands

Recently, the Coast Guard has been spending tens of thousands of dollars on another kind of "cry wolf" action—non-emergency flare sightings. For example, a non-emergency flare was reported off the Maine coast last month. The Coast Guard sent a Falcon jet from Cape Cod, a cutter from South Portland and a 41-foot patrol boat from Portsmouth, N.H., to investigate.

Nothing was found.

Eight flare sightings, none of them for emergencies, were reported in a single day in both Massachusetts and Maine. Just as in distress calls, it's the Coast Guard's duty to respond.

In one case, two boys who were kayaking shot a flare off to alert their parents they had arrived safely on a small island. A nearby resident reported the flare, and the Coast Guard sent a patrol boat to investigate.

The Coast Guard reminds boaters that flares should only be used in emergency situations.

(From the *Portland Press-Herald*)

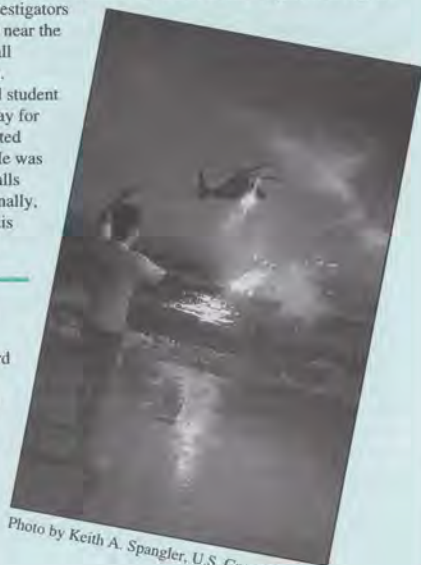


Photo by Keith A. Spangler, U.S. Coast Guard

Head Injury...continued from page 1

tested. Only the seat and some of the surrounding structures are subjected to a controlled impact test. Among other things, federal regulations require seats on new aircraft to withstand a 16G (16 times the force of gravity) horizontal impact test to demonstrate crashworthiness performance. The seat is tested under conditions similar to a vehicle traveling at 44 feet per second, being subjected to a frontal crash, coming to a complete stop in 0.2 seconds, and stopping within a distance of about 45 inches. During the crash, the deceleration forces on the seat peak above 16Gs, meaning each occupant and the seat experience forward horizontal forces equal to 16 times their respective weight. The results of these impact tests must also demonstrate that the seat can withstand the crash loads when occupied by a test dummy the size of an average adult male weighing 170 pounds, similar to the ones used in automobile tests.

Head Protection

The method for measuring potential head injury in an impact test is the Head Injury Criteria (HIC), also used by the automobile industry. The greatest problem in meeting the HIC requirement is the passenger seats located behind a cabin wall, such as those near a bulkhead divider, between first class and coach, a lavatory, or the galley. Passengers in these seats are usually facing forward with about 35 inches between the seat back and the wall. With only lap belts to restrain them in the event of a crash, the upper torso of a person that close to the wall will flail forward quickly during impact. In a severe crash, a passenger's head could strike a wall at high velocity.

Realistic Options

Increasing the space between seats and the wall they face would solve the problem of head impact, but this could cause the loss of a row of seats, something the airlines might find economically unacceptable. Providing shoulder straps is another option. Placing seats in the rear facing position would prevent the high velocity motion into the wall, but would require a change in the conventional arrangement of passenger

seating in aircraft.

Aircraft operators appear open to ideas that do not change traditional cabin layout. The CAMI, in a cooperative research arrangement with the Boeing Company and an engineering subcommittee, is conducting impact sled tests to evaluate various means of providing head impact protection. Several options are being evaluated, including adding energy absorbing material to the walls in areas of potential head strikes; developing a "crash controlled seat pan" (the metal frame beneath the seat cushion), and finally, air bags. The auto industry has made air bags standard equipment in many models, but air bags for airplanes have yet to be developed. CAMI has been conducting a series of sled tests with wall-mounted airbags as part of a research program. These are much larger than automobile air bags, and preliminary tests indicate they perform well.

Research and Development Continues

None of these methods of head protection has yet been developed for practical application. Incorporating laboratory concepts into real world applications has just begun, and economic and operational factors have not been fully evaluated.

The public may never become as aware of advances in aviation safety as they are of the improvements made in automobile safety. One reason is that individuals don't shop for airliners. Passengers on commercial air transports expect the highest level of safety, and the excellent safety record over the past decades justifies their expectations. Seat designers, airframe manufacturers, and FAA research and regulatory activities have all contributed to major advances that have reduced injuries and deaths from airplane accidents. The industry and the FAA will continue to develop and apply new technologies that will further enhance aviation safety.

Thanks to the FAA Aviation Safety Journal for this article. Van Gowdy is the supervisor of the Biodynamics Research Section at CAMI, and has directed testing and research activities in improving occupant protection for the last 12 years.

Calling All Volunteers

The Volunteer Committee at DOT Headquarters is compiling a data base of the employee volunteer efforts going on all over the country. By collecting names of volunteer committee people in all the regions and field offices, and sharing information about community outreach projects, we can improve our efforts as a department nationwide—whether it's "Adopted Schools" or fund-raisers for charitable groups. DOT Today would also like to know what's going on out there by featuring some of those efforts in future issues. Contact Nadine Rawls, 202-366-6388 or write to Nadine at DOT, M-16, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Help build the data base and share your experiences.



Saying it is critical that the Department's reinventing effort includes input from leaders who set the tone at DOT, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration Melissa Allen welcomed about 200 members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) for a special meeting with Deputy Secretary Mort Downey on June 9. "We have found that the department is generally energized by the way we have been asked to respond to the National Performance Review," Allen continued, "and we felt that we needed your expertise as senior

employees who have been here long enough to know what works or does not work in government."

Responding to the Deputy Secretary's invitation that "anything is on the table," many ideas were raised during the nearly two-hour meeting - ranging from greater flexibility of management controls to intermodal consensus building and problem-solving. Deputy Secretary Downey brought up some topics as well, including pursuing innovative research and development efforts, working more closely with private

Senior Executive Service Meets on "Reinventing Government"

industry, and providing better service to DOT customers and suppliers - both internal and external. A Federal Transit Administration SESer reminded this group of executives that they needed to continually develop ways of retaining and rewarding one of their most important customers - DOT employees.

Suggestions for improving department operations included greater departmental use of communication tools such as E-mail and voice mail; using quality management techniques in team efforts; delegating

greater autonomy and flexibility in managing programs; rewarding innovation and risk taking; and forging stronger career employee/political appointee partnerships for success.

The Deputy Secretary's closing remarks applauded these suggestions from DOT leadership and promised that, "This is not just a summer-long effort, but the beginning of what will be a continuing process to improve how we at the Department of Transportation do business."

FAA, FHWA Secretaries Take Top Honors in Essay Contest

Eighty-one DOT secretaries entered this year's annual essay contest to commemorate Professional Secretaries Week. This year's theme was "In Touch With Our Future."

Kristine Scott, who works in the Human Resource management Division at FAA Great Lakes Regional Headquarters in Chicago, took first place; Barbara Smith, Federal Highway Administration, Atlanta, second, and Carole McClure, FAA, Long Beach and Marina Mejia, FHWA, Portland, tied for third. They were all honored at a recent ceremony at DOT's Washington, D.C. headquarters. Here is the winning essay:

Become a Self-Advocate by Kristine Scott

So, you're just a secretary — one of thousands who earn or supplement their incomes by typing, filing, making travel arrangements, and generally making sure everything goes as it should for the "Powers That Be."

Well, wake up, you're not just the secretary, you are a person in control of your destiny, and in a position that offers you unlimited possibilities.

Today's secretaries are on the front lines of a fast-paced track that has change on the horizon.

Tomorrow's secretaries face increasing pressure to bring a more diverse range of skills into the workplace. Competent secretaries, who are fluent in office automation technology, with strong organizational skills, are in diminishing supply.

In order to meet the challenge of the future, you've got to get busy! Determine what path you'd like your career to take and pursue it, tap into available resources, outline a plan for growth and self-development, ask for additional responsibilities and training.

Time spent wishing you were not the secretary is counter-productive! Put the skills and knowledge you employ on a daily basis to work for you. Become a SELF-ADVOCATE, because it all starts with your belief in what you can do.

Finally, remember that the job you've always wanted begins with the one you already have!

Travel Reminder

DOT policy requires that government transportation by plane, train or bus costing more than \$100 be paid for by one of these methods (listed in preferred order):

- a government charge card, e.g., Diners Club card
- a centrally billed account with a commercial travel agent under contract with GSA, e.g., SATO Travel, Inc.
- an individual government transportation request

For transportation costing less than \$100, or in emergency situations with transportation costing more than \$100, cash or personal credit cards may be used and subsequently reimbursed. Emergency situations must be fully documented and appropriate supervisory approval obtained.

To ensure complete reimbursement of your transportation expenses, remember to use one of the above purchasing options. See your servicing finance office for more details.

GLOBE Event Held at Headquarters

On June 15, Secretary Peña joined Rep. Barney Frank, DOT GLOBE (Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Employees) officers and interested employees for a gay pride event held at DOT headquarters. "This is not about special privileges for any one group," the Secretary told the crowd of about 200. "This is about equal protection and opportunity for everyone. We can't afford to waste anyone's talent because of prejudice."

Rep. Frank congratulated the agency for its pioneering efforts and called the event "a strikingly brave act on the part of Secretary Peña." As Maurice Banks, who heads the Minority Coalition at the department told the group, "I hope there will come a day when no minority coalitions will be needed."



Photo by Dominic Tricase

Seaway Corporation Marine Services Division employee Danny Brabon (left) explains the navigational charts aboard the tug ROBINSON BAY to U.S. Merchant Marine Academy junior cadet David Collins

SEAWAY CORPORATION SPONSORS MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY INTERN

The Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation took part in an internship program last month with the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, N.Y. Each year, third year cadets are required to spend two weeks away from the academy gaining hands-on experience.

David Collins, majoring in marine engineering systems and a native of upstate New York, spent his two week internship with the Seaway Corporation's Marine Services Division in Massena, N.Y. He spent his time observing and learning from the nine person crew as they handled marine projects including inspecting foreign-flagged vessels, maintaining navigation aids along the St. Lawrence Seaway, and working aboard the Seaway Corporation's tug ROBINSON BAY.

Marine Services Division Chief Greg A. MacKinnon was impressed with the knowledge and enthusiasm of the young cadet. "He is an extremely sharp person and picked up on everything right away," said MacKinnon. "We kept him pretty busy with the crew and I think he learned a great deal about what we do in marine engineering and also how the Seaway operates."

For Collins, the two weeks spent in Massena was a success. "Everyone was very helpful during my two week stay," Collins said. "They were very happy to show me and help me learn what goes into the Seaway's operations. My two weeks here will certainly benefit me in my studies at the Merchant Marine Academy."

DOTers Selected for Executive Potential Program

Fourteen employees, 13 from the Federal Aviation Administration and one from the Federal Highway Administration, have been chosen to participate in the 1993 Executive Potential Program (EPP).

The EPP is a career enhancement program which provides training and developmental experiences for high potential individuals at the GS/GM 13-14 levels to prepare them for managerial and executive positions in the federal government.

The program holds special significance for employees who need to complement their technical expertise with professional management skills by providing a foundation of management training and developmental experiences. Under the direction of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), this 12-month program is open to all field and Washington, D.C. employees. Participants must be nominated by their agency and applications for the 1994 program are due by December 1, 1993. For information or a brochure on the program, call Norm Riggins at OPM, (703) 235-1102.

Federal Aviation Administration:

Carl Burrus, Budget Analyst, Headquarters

Denise Daniels Ross, Attorney Advisor, Headquarters

Doris DeeAnn Dehne, Traffic Management Coordinator, Western-Pacific Region

Richard Fossier, Evaluation Specialist, Western-Pacific Region

Jerome Jones, Jr., Trial Attorney, Headquarters

Gregory Joyner, General Engineer, Headquarters

Susan Knapton, Computer Systems Analyst, Headquarters

Anne Kusaka, General Engineer, Northwest Mountain Region

Dolores Richard, Program Analyst, Headquarters

Judith Shifrin, Planning Officer, Central Region

D. Marlene Thomas, Deputy Program Manager, Headquarters

Luanne Wills-Merrell, Aviation Safety Inspector, Great Lakes Region

Celio Young, Aviation Safety Inspector, Headquarters

Federal Highway Administration:

Robert L. Lee, District Engineer, Region 4, Raleigh, N.C.

RSPA Employees Work in the "Barrel"

by Mary Elizabeth Peters, RSPA

The Office of Hazardous Materials Standards (OHMS) within the Research and Special Programs Administration has its staff members taking turns working in the "Barrel." Even though it may sound like some form of early American frontier torture, according to Office Director Ed Mazzullo, it actually is an initiative that is significantly improving staff productivity.

OHMS answers public inquiries on the extensive body of Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR). Staff members respond to nearly 50,000 phone calls annually. This can be an overwhelming job for specialists who also have other duties.

In fact, the questions themselves can be quite a challenge. The HMR contain over 1200 pages and apply to hundreds of thousands of hazardous materials, ranging from nail polish to radioactive waste. The regulations cover operating requirements, packaging, and communications, such as shipping papers, labels, and placards. New technologies, laws, or safety problems can also cause rapid changes in the regulations.

But, back to the "Barrel." OHMS established the "Barrel" in February to provide better service to the industry and to the public. The Barrel is in a special location with dedicated phone lines and equipment, including hands-free headsets. The major-



RSPA Barrel Worker
Helen Engrum

ity of incoming calls are now answered immediately by knowledgeable staff members.

Before the Barrel was established, calls were assigned to all of the specialists, who in addition to their regular duties, were providing answers to phone inquiries throughout the day.

Now, the Barrel has six rotating teams of two hazardous materials specialists each. This allows staff members to better plan their other responsibilities, knowing in advance what days they have phone duty. In just a few months, a backlog of calls to be returned has been eliminated, and specialists and callers no longer play "telephone tag" to exchange information.

Eileen Martin, transportation specialist says, "This new system has been a tremendous relief. Typically, we used to answer 20 to 30 calls a day, ranging from 5 to 30 minutes each. The new system now frees us 5 out of every 6 days to manage our other projects." During the first month of operation, the Barrel handled an average of 100 calls a day.

Why is it called the "Barrel," anyway? Two reasons. First, in the days of the great sailing ships, sailors were detailed "in the barrel" to pack preserved sardines in barrels for the journey. Today, specialists are detailed "in the Barrel" to assist the industry and the public with the complexities of transporting hazardous materials. Second, the name serves as a reminder of changing technology. At the beginning of this century, the wooden barrel was the packaging used to transport many materials and it was one of the first packagings to be specified in government regulations (around 1914).

Word has spread in the hazardous materials community about the new, more efficient setup in the Barrel. The number of calls is definitely going up.

TRAVEL TIPS

by Mandinema R. Kumbula, DOT Summer Intern

For many Americans, hot summertime weather signals preparation for family vacations. Whether traveling within the United States or abroad, tourists should plan way in advance to maximize fun and relaxation. In order to ensure that vacation time is hassle-free, some travel tips might be in order:

Take to the Highways

According to the American Automobile Association (AAA), the most popular travel destinations for Americans this summer are Orlando, FL;



Branson, MO; Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming; Washington, D.C.; and the Los Angeles/Anaheim Area. (Branson, MO, otherwise known as the "new Nashville," is quickly becoming a top year-round tourist attraction, noted for its country music theaters, theme park and museums.)

Auto travel will account for 82 percent of all summer trips this year. AAA says it is best to:

- Use major interstates and highways because of better services and road conditions.
- Always use seatbelts. Children who weigh less than 45 lbs. must use car seats.

- When leaving the car, be sure to keep all valuables out of sight, in order to avoid crime.

Traveling by Plane

About 15 percent of all vacations this summer will involve plane rides. Here are some tips for plane travel:

- Confirm airplane reservations at least a few days in advance.
- Consider paying by credit card, because of insurance and other protections.
- Schedule morning flights. That way you're more likely to avoid flight delays.
 - Carry personal items such as medication with you at all times, in case luggage is lost in flight.
 - Not only put identification tags both inside and outside of baggage, but avoid confusion by removing luggage tags from previous trips.
- Be wary of distraction theft — especially when traveling overseas. Perpetrators usually pretend to be lost or hold up the metal detector line, and then take this opportunity to steal from travelers around them.
- Any child flying unaccompanied for the first time should get familiar with the airport before flight time. Take a brief trip there

to show him where the ticket counter, information center and departure gates are located. Children should also be equipped with a travel card, something that contains vital information such as the child's



name, flight number, and telephone numbers both at home and his destination. Always impress upon children not to leave the airport with strangers and to carry both identification and some cash, in case of emergencies.

Discover Pedal Power

Finally, many people forget that bike riding is an ideal way to see a city or the countryside. Many locations will be renting mountain bikes this summer at about \$25 per day. This is a cost-effective way for travelers to tour without the hassle of renting and parking a car — and it doesn't contribute to air pollution, either.

Have a Great Vacation!



FAA Employee Named New Mexico Public Servant of the Year

Jerry Johnson, manager of the Albuquerque Air Traffic Control Tower, was honored as Distinguished Public Servant of the Year in New Mexico and presented with an award by New Mexico Governor King at a May 21 banquet.

Here is an excerpt from his nomination, which was submitted by his FAA associates:

"Mr. Johnson's leadership has improved the control tower workplace for all employees, and led to greater understanding and appreciation of the complex challenges of tower operations.

Mr. Johnson introduced the concepts of employee self-empowerment and team-oriented, consensus decision making with his participative management style. He has increased FAA employment opportunities for women and minorities by his Equal Employment Opportunity outreach and affirmative action efforts.

He has skillfully worked with municipal aviation officials, the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard to assure their needs are met by controllers. He also has effectively reached

out to local neighborhoods to facilitate their communications with the City of Albuquerque Aviation Department in matters of noise associated with approach and departure flight path changes during runway reconstruction.

Mr. Johnson is chairman of the Greater Albuquerque/ Santa Fe Federal Executive Board and active in several other organizations which enhance the effectiveness of the local FAA. They include the Federal Women's Organization, the National Hispanic Coalition and the National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees.

His work has been fair, honest, friendly and helpful, and in the best tradition of America and the goal of government service."

Congratulations from DOT on your accomplishment!



At the awards ceremony: Larry Craig, Director, FAA S.W. Region, Air Traffic Division (Left) Governor Bruce King of New Mexico (Center) and Jerry Johnson, Manager, Albuquerque Air Traffic Control Tower (Right)

Secretary Hosts Brown Bag Lunch With Toastmasters

On June 2 Secretary Peña hosted a brown bag lunch with Federal Toastmasters Club 1037 and their guests at headquarters. With a theme of leadership and communication, the Secretary made brief remarks and then responded to questions from the group. The agenda was based on a format similar to that used by the club during its regular weekly meetings. The mission of the Federal Toastmasters is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every member has the opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth. Improving the public speaking skills of its members then helps them become more effective in both their careers and in community service. For information on joining the group, call Bob Harter, president at (202) 366-2026 or Lang Nguyen, president-elect at (202) 366-0498.

TO ALL DOT EMPLOYEES

Congratulations to the following Department of Transportation employees recently selected for the Senior Executive Service (SES) Candidate Development Program (CDP):

June 18, 1993

Bernestine Allen, OST
Jeri Alles, FAA
Marilyna Amoni, NHTSA
Geary Andrews, OST
Robert Ashby, OST
David Bernstein, USCG
James Buckles, FAA
John Colomy, FAA
Richard Cronin, OST
James Dann, OST
Theodore Davies, FAA
Kathleen DeMeter, NHTSA
Richard Doyle, FTA
Joseph Fee, FAA
Edward Fleischmann, FTA
David Ford, FAA
Richard Freethy, USCG
Thomas Gassert, FAA
Stacey Gerard, RSPA
James Hackney, NHTSA

Jeffrey High, USCG
Jill Hochman, FHWA
Clarke Hutchinson, OST
Harry Kane, FAA
Joseph Kaniathra, NHTSA
Joann Kansier, FAA
Robert Klothe, OST
Dennis Koehler, FAA
Mary Kay LanganFierson, OST
Merry Lawhead, OST
John Leeds, FRA
Dayton Lehman, OST
William Lindsey, FAA
David Litman, OST
Nancy Lobue, FAA
Herman Lyons, FAA
Charles MacGowan, FHWA
Manuel Marks, FHWA
Anthony Martoccia, FHWA
Brian McLaughlin, NHTSA

Patricia McNall, FAA
Thomas Merlo, FHWA
Alan Moore, FAA
Catherine Moran, NHTSA
Edward Moy, FAA
Charles Nemmers, FHWA
Douglas Powers, FAA
Edward Pritchard, FRA
Robert Probst, FHWA
Patricia Proserpi, OST
Carl Rappaport, OST
Alberto Santiago, FHWA
Naomi Lee Saunders, FAA
Vincent Schimmoller, FHWA
James Shrouds, FHWA
Donna Smith, OST
Donald Steinke, FHWA
Alice Wong, FAA
Frederick Wright, FHWA
Robert Wright, FAA

The CDP is a highly competitive executive development program designed to prepare a ready source of candidates to meet present and future challenges facing the department. This year's group of 60 CDP participants remain in their jobs during the developmental phase and participate in both formal training and rotational assignments. Upon successful completion of the program, participants receive certification by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Qualifications Review Board, and become eligible for noncompetitive appointment to the Senior Executive Service.

Please join me in congratulating this outstanding group of employees who represent the future of the Department of Transportation.

Federico Peña, Secretary

RETIREMENT PLANNING - The Thrift Savings Plan Can Help

by Sonja Dara Jones, DOT summer program

Every month, thousands of federal employees around the world retire from their civil service positions; however, not all of them are fully prepared for the challenges that sometimes result from living on a fixed retirement annuity.

To help, more than half of the government's 3 million employees are contributing to the tax-deferred Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). There are three funds:

The relatively safe G-fund, which is invested in short-term non marketable U.S. Treasury securities, has the investment rate set monthly. An added incentive to this fund is that there is no credit risk (risk of non-payment of principal or interest). The high-risk C-fund is invested in a stock index fund that holds all stocks in Standard & Poor's stock index. The risk of investing in the C-fund is that stock values can rise or decline sharply. The F-fund is invested in a bond index fund that holds a large representative sample of the securities in Lehman Brothers Aggregate bond index. The return on this fund fluctuates; its best returns are in periods of declining interest rates. The way you invest your contribution is up to you—all of it in one fund; or split among two or three.

Workers in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)—nearly everyone hired after 1983—can invest up to 10 percent of their salary. Even those not contributing still receive a one percent government contribution. An added investment incentive: invest

at least five percent of your salary and Uncle Sam will match it! The first three percent you contribute is matched dollar for dollar; the next two percent is

matched 50 cents on the dollar. Those in the old Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) can invest up to five percent, but don't get agency contributions.

Congress established the contribution limits of between five and 10 percent when the TSP was created. The 10 percent FERS limit, along with agency matching contributions, was intended to provide FERS employees with retirement benefits comparable to those offered under the CSRS annuity. Each January, the IRS announces the maximum amount employees can contribute to the TSP. This year it is \$8,994.

At DOT, 82 percent of FERS employees and 57 percent in the CSRS system are now contributing to the Thrift Savings Plan. One clear advantage over some other plans is that all contributions and earnings under TSP are tax-deferred, until you withdraw your money. Workers who leave government before retirement can roll the investment over into IRAs. In some cases, employees can also borrow from their contributions and

earnings to buy a house, pay emergency medical bills or finance an education, then pay themselves back at the going rate of the G-fund the date they applied for the loan. Here's one



THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

investment strategy, prepared with the assistance of Paul A. Yurachek, JD, CPA, a financial planner, representing Dennis M. Gurtz and Associates, a Washington financial consulting firm:

Young federal workers (ages 20 to 40) who invest aggressively in the TSP could wind up with million dollar accounts by the time they retire. Even very careful investors could have six-figure accounts, according to Yurachek, who offers this advice: "Invest heavily in the C-fund because of long-term growth and inflation protection. It offers the highest total return over extended time. Put in as much as you can at a time, because you'll leave it there from 20 to 40 years." Yurachek suggests that mid-career federal workers (ages 40 to 50) follow the same guidelines.

However, he advises that about-to-retire workers (age 50 to retirement), lighten up on the C-fund, perhaps putting about 60 percent of their contribution there, then

splitting the rest between the F and G-funds.

There are, of course, other approaches; employees should choose one that provides a level of risk with which they are comfortable.

"But I can't afford to..."

Many people argue that they just don't have the money to spare for the TSP with the demands of housing, child care, food and other expenditures. Yurachek asserts that you can't afford not to invest in his "Price of Procrastination" analysis:

"If you saved \$2,000 each year from age 21 to 30 and then stopped investing, and that money earned eight percent a year, it would grow to \$235,315 by the time you reached age 60—money you saved over a period of only nine years. If you waited until age 30 to start saving and saved \$2,000 a year until age 60 (30 years) and that money earned eight percent a year, you would have \$226,566 at age 60."

"The moral: There is a tremendous cost to you in putting off whatever you need to do to attain financial security."

Government employees have an open season through July 31 to join the Thrift Savings Plan or change payroll contributions to an existing account. You can get the most recent fund returns by calling the TSP Inquiry line at 504-255-8777 or ask your personnel office for the brochure "TSP Fact Sheet on C, F, and G-Fund Monthly Returns."

(Thanks to John Budnik for his help on the article.)

CALENDAR

July

July 4 Independence Day

13-15 Seminar on Transporting Dangerous Goods by Air, JFK Airport area and July 26-28, in the LAX Airport area. Offered by Transportation Development Group, the three-day program, "Initial Air Acceptance Class" will cover topics such as identification and classification, packing, labeling, and DOT rules and changes. Training and testing for forwarders, shippers, truckers and other hazmat handlers is required by new DOT rule HM126F. Class size is limited. Call (310) 364-5226 or 800-949-4TDTG.

August

16-20 National Hispanic

Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees Annual Training Conference, "Breaking Your Boundaries," Oklahoma City, OK. Exhibits, motivational speakers, training sessions and seminars, cultural events and workshops. Special conference rates with Sheraton-Century Center Hotel. An information package is available by calling Nora Leal (405) 954-5773 or Monica Burton (405) 954-5536.

Upcoming Reunions and Conventions

Denver Tower/TRACON

Reunion will be held September 24-26 in Denver. Featured will be a golf tournament, reunion dinner and a chance to see the Denver Air Show at the New Denver International Airport. If you have not received information yet and wish to attend or have questions, call Chris Laschinger (303) 457-2270 or Libby Brothers Sanders (303) 431-6848.

Grand Aviation Reunion,

sponsored by the Air Traffic Control Association in cooperation with the Southern Region FAA Retirees Association, will be held in Nashville on October 23, two days prior to ATCA's 38th annual meeting. To get on the mailing list and receive more information about the reunion, write: ATCA Grand Aviation Reunion, 2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 711, Arlington, Va. 22201.