

On the Iditarod Trail



ALASKAN REGION
INTERCOM
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

COVER PHOTO Key roles in the classic Iditarod (Anchorage-Nome) race were played by (from left) Audra Forsgren, wife of McGrath FSS Chief Dick Forsgren; Jim Large, SET at McGrath and Len Canter, ATCS at the San Juan Puerto Rico IFSS who came all the way to Alaska to witness--and help trail-break--for the annual event. All photos courtesy Pete Pedersen, Anchorage FSS/IFSS.

FAA BOOSTS IDITAROD

IDITAROD....a grueling 1,049-mile dogsled race from Anchorage to Nome was won this year by Rick Swenson in a record time of 15 days, 9 hours, and 37 minutes.

When he picked up his \$12,000 first-price check recently, Swenson voiced his appreciation for all who helped along the trail during the tough, exciting event.

Helpers included numerous FAAers. Among the ways they assisted:

TRAIL BREAKING. At McGrath, FSS Chief Dick Forsgren and ET supervisor Jim Large covered 110 miles of rugged terrain from McGrath to the historic goldrush townsite of Iditarod to break and keep open the trail for weary mushers.

AIR SUPPORT. Flying above the race route, ready to provide communications, emergency aid or supplies were Dave Ronaldson of Anchorage TRACON and "Pete" Pedersen of the Anchorage IFSS/FSS, flying in Dave's ski-equipped PA-20.

RACE CHECKING. From the time the first team arrived in McGrath--10:30 p.m. on February 28--to the time the last team moved out--8 p.m. March 5--the varied duties of official checker were shared by FSS specialist Bill Penland and Erin Gerrin, wife of McGrath AF carpenter Jim Gerrin. Their job: check mushers and teams in and out at all hours of the day and night; arrange housing for the mushers' mandatory 24-hour layover; provide a place for them to wash up and rest for a few hours; pass on messages and information to mushers, their families and to writers covering the event. Jim Gerrin and Kandi Penland, Bill Penland's wife, were kept busy assisting Bill and Erin with the care and feeding of dogs that collapsed on the trail and had to be flown out. (Mushers left worn-out or sick dogs at checkpoints along the race route for shipment back to Anchorage for veterinarian services and rest.)

Sixty miles northwest of McGrath at the Ophir checkpoint, Audra Forsgren, wife of FSS Chief Dick Forsgren checked teams through. Audra also provided food and hot coffee for trail-weary mushers. For the dogs, she made available the hot water needed to mix with the dry dog food. She also arranged quarters at Ophir for the mushers. One night, 16 persons slept in the Forsgrens' 16 x 20 Ophir cabin. Audra was assisted by former McGrath FSS specialist Len Carter, now with the San Juan, P.R. IFSS, who made the trip to Alaska to take part in the 1979 Iditarod race.

At Farewell, checking-in was done by Harry Lacy, FSS specialist and his wife, Patty. They, too, helped mushers with food and lodging. A place for making needed repairs was arranged by Bill Guest, Farewell maintenance mechanic.

FUND RAISING. The throng of mushers, newspeople, and tourists who spent the night of March 3 in McGrath were entertained at the town's annual "Chinese Auction" which this year raised nearly \$2,800 for McGrath and Takotna mushers. McGrath FSS specialist Howard "Mike" George turned out to be a capable, entertaining auctioneer.

CLEAN-UP. FAAers were in the forefront of the communitywide McGrath clean-up effort that erased all traces of the 700 dogs which passed through McGrath during the event.

FAA employee's off-duty assistance to Iditarod paid off: in terms of community service and direct, enthusiastic boosting of a colorful, exciting Alaskan event.

QUIZ ANSWERS

Last week's photo quiz in which those who recognized all six people in the picture were credited with being "certified old-timers" brought a bit of dismay to at least one of the contestants. She approached the Intercom editor with the complaint "I was able to identify EVERYBODY in the picture--now I've got to live with the fact that I'm finally an 'old-timer.'" Shucks! And she was so youthful looking, too. For those of you still wondering, the photo contains, (left to right) James G. Rogers, then Director; Rogers Walker, chief, Security Division; Ralph Westover, Defense Readiness Officer; Annette Yaeger, the Director's secretary; George Fay, Public Affairs Officer and Fred Woodlock, Regional Counsel. Our thanks to Bill Williams for the picture and if any of you have photos that Intercom readers might enjoy, send 'em in to AAL-5; we'll see that you get them back.

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FUNDS. . .AND A TRAIL. . .



GOING. . .gone--proving extremely adept at raising funds for McGrath mushers at a "Chinese Auction" was McGrath FSS Specialist Howard (Mike) George who added almost \$2,800 to the race coffers. Keeping score is Betty Magnuson, McGrath resident.

TRAILBREAKERS. . .Dick Forsgren (left) McGrath FSS Chief and ATCS Len Canter of San Juan, P. R. IFSS prepare to board snowmobiles to push through the trail for more than 50 dog mushers.



FOR MUSHERS: AIR SUPPORT



Dave Ronaldson, ATCS with Anchorage TRACON, flew this Pacer in air support for the Iditarod race. Dave worked with Pedersen on this vital volunteer service to the classic Alaskan event.

Pete Pedersen, formerly with McGrath FSS and now with Anchorage FSS/IFSS helped Iditarod mushers by providing air cover for trail-breakers during preliminary phase of the race. Aircraft provided trailbreakers with guidance they needed when there was a question about the direction trail should take.



MINORITIES LISTED

The Civil Rights staff is required to inform all employees annually that a minority group designation is recorded in the Personnel Management Information System (PMIS), the computerized record of information on agency employees. Upon request, a person may determine how he or she is identified in the PMIS--black, caucasian, American Indian, etc. The designation in the PMIS is based entirely on visual observation and, as a result, mistakes have been made. If you want to check your designation, submit a request in person or via mail to the chief of the Civil Rights Staff, AAL-9, or call 271 5289. If you cannot provide suitable identification, you will be required to sign a statement asserting your identity and attesting that you understand that knowingly and willfully seeking or obtaining access to records about another individual under false pretenses is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine up to \$5,000. A signed, notarized statement of identity may be required. Information requested by mail will be sent via sealed envelope marked: "To Be Opened By Addressee Only."

AGE 60 RULE STAYS

The age 60 rule will stay as it is, Deputy Administrator Taylor told a House Select Committee on Aging last week, until practical medical procedures are developed to identify pilots beyond age 60 who can safely serve as airline pilots. The rule now says that a person who has reached his or her 60th birthday may not serve as pilot of an aircraft engaged in air carrier operations under Part 121 of the FAR. Taylor said that despite significant advances in medical science since the rule was adopted 20 years ago, there still isn't a reliable alternative for identifying individuals who could safely serve as air carrier pilots beyond a chronological cutoff age. The age 60 rule has been challenged in the courts and elsewhere, Taylor noted, but in each instance it has withstood the test. In fact, ICAO recently adopted the age 60 cutoff as the international standard for commercial aviation. However, Taylor told the committee, the FAA will continue to keep close track of advances in medical science to identify and adopt new concepts that prove to be practical and useful in the medical certification of airmen.

REPORTS AVAILABLE

Among the Department of Transportation and National Transportation Safety Board reports released this month is a DOT report, "Transportation for the Elderly and Handicapped--Programs and Problems," which includes a section on driver training and auto equipment selection. The NTSB publications are ten reports covering general aviation accidents, entitled, "Briefs of Accidents Involving...Weather as a Cause/Factor, Midair Collisions, Alcohol as a Cause/Factor, Missing and Missing-Later-Recovered Aircraft, Commuter Air Carrier and On-Demand Air Taxi Operations, Corporate/Executive Aircraft, Aerial Application Operations, Turbine Powered Aircraft, Rotorcraft, and Amateur/Home Built Aircraft."

ALTITUDE READOUT IS AT NYC

Altitude monitoring capability will be added late this year in the towers of the three New York metropolitan airports---J.F.K., LaGuardia and Newark, to enhance air safety there. This capability had not been available at the towers previously because the Common IFR Room, which handles approach and departure control for the three airports, is equipped with the ARTS IA system, and altitude readouts cannot be remoted from that system without major alterations. It had been planned to remote the readouts from the new Common IFR Room, which is being built in Garden City, Long Island, N.Y., and which will be equipped with the more sophisticated ARTS III system. But the new facility is not now scheduled to be commissioned until the fall of 1980. However, under the revised plan, the altitude information will be remoted to the individual towers from equipment installed at the new facility and hooked up ahead of schedule.

CRASHWORTHY TOWERS

The agency is getting ready to replace the rigid supports for approach lighting systems at some airports with breakable ones. An improved fiberglass support strong enough to hold approach lights in place, yet fragile enough to break cleanly if hit by an aircraft, has been developed and successfully tested at Lakehurst Naval Air Station early this year. The test, using a Piper Navajo wing section, demonstrated that only moderate damage to the wing would result from a collision with the support towers. These towers, up to 40 feet high, are constructed of frangible fiberglass tubes that have breakable joints built in every 42 inches. Although the tube is still strong enough to support the lights in winds up to 100 miles an hour, it will snap off at these breakable joints if hit by an aircraft wing without affecting the flyability of the wing. If towers more than 40 feet high are needed, frangible tubes, 20 feet high, will be mounted on top of more conventional steel supports. Although the new frangible towers were designed primarily for use with high-intensity approach light systems, variations of these towers also will be used with some medium-intensity systems. In all, the fiberglass towers will be installed, in several variations, in more than 200 existing systems, and they will be the structures of the future. Already programmed to get these fiberglass supports are 16 existing high-intensity system and 12 existing medium-intensity systems.

WOMEN FLY INTO HISTORY

An all-female air carrier crew--captain, first officer, and cabin attendant--believed to be the first in aviation history, flew recently for Hawaii Airlines. The women flew into history on a Honolulu to Molokai flight. They flew a 30 passenger, British built Shorts SD-330 turbojet. The first woman ever to fly for an airline as a crewmember was Ellen Church, a registered nurse, who was signed on as an "air hostess" by United Airlines in 1930. She flew in a Boeing trimotor.

TOUGHER TIRE STANDARDS

The agency has proposed new and more stringent standards for aircraft tires as a result of several recent accidents caused by tire failure. The new standards, which would apply to both the contraction and testing of the tires, would result in a 61 percent increase in their load bearing ability. This means that a typical tire for a widebody aircraft that is rated at 53,800 pounds would have to be able to support a load of 86,618 pounds. It is now required to support no more than its rated load. The new standards, which are set forth in a Notice of Proposed Rule Making published in the Federal Register of February 19, are expected to go into effect 2 years after the effective date of their adoption and apply to all tires made after that date. It also is envisioned that the agency would require the use of the stronger tires on all wide-body aircraft--the aircraft which have had the most serious problems with tire failures--by the same date. Comments should be sent in duplicate before April 18 to the agency, Office of the Chief Counsel, ATTN: Rules Docket (AGC-24 Docket No. 18887).

AIRSPACE TESTIMONY

On Capitol Hill last week to discuss agency proposals on controlled visual flight rules, Administrator Bond promised the House Subcommittee on Aviation that he would do his best to minimize the burdens of the rules "while maximizing the safety benefits for all airspace users." Bond also said that, while he believes the proposals are a logical evolution in the ATC system and a reasonable step to promote aviation safety, he expects to benefit from public comments on the proposals. He noted that more than 38,000 comments have been received since the NPRM was issued January 4. The comment period closes April 4. Bond said: "We welcome that interest because the public attention focused on our proposals will help us to shape them in the most reasonable manner feasible." In reviewing the proposals for the subcommittee, Bond noted that they do not serve as a vehicle for establishing additional TCAs, as some commentators have been led to believe. Each TCA proposal will be handled by separate rulemaking actions, he said.

MORE COMMENT TIME

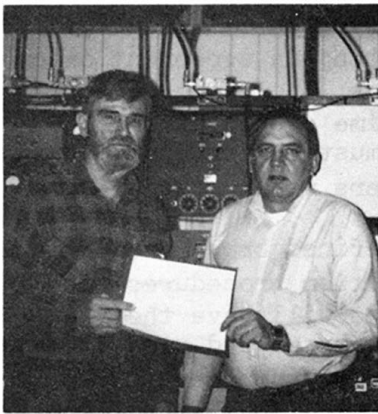
FAA has given the public an additional 60 days--from March 31 to May 31--to submit proposals for the agency's planned overhaul of the rules governing the operation and certification of helicopters. The purpose of the review program is to update existing helicopter regulations to reflect recent advances in the state of the helicopter art. A Regulatory Review Conference will be held this fall to discuss the proposals.



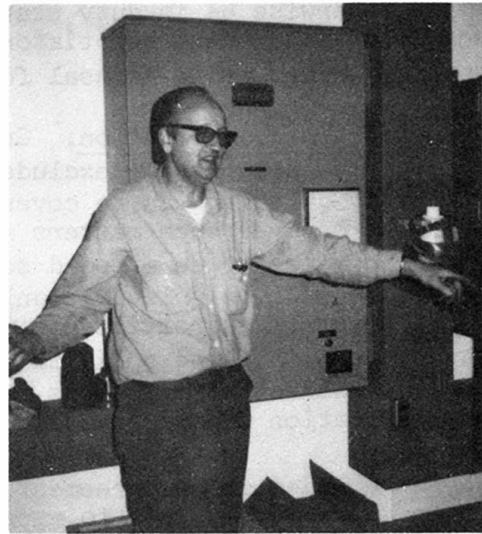
SHARON FAIRCLOTH, Logistics specialist, Big Delta, receives her three-year pin and Career Service Certificate from MANNY HERNANDEZ, SET.



JACQUELINE TEAGUE was presented a Letter of Commendation for her performance as an air traffic control specialist developmental.



Electronic Technician DEAN VANCE received an Outstanding Award for Sustained Superior Performance from ROBERT SALZMAN, SET Nome Sector Field Office.



Merrill Field Maintenance Mechanic WENDELL BURNS is presented an Official Letter of Commendation for his extra efforts in installing the new steam boiler at the Anchorage Center while also carrying out his regular duties at Merrill Field.



WANDA STRINGFELLOW, administrative clerk typist, receives a Letter of Commendation from Programs Officer, ANC FSS/IFSS JAMES LOCKARD.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM ACT - 1978
Title VII - Federal Labor-Management Relations

This is another in a series of AAL-10 articles informing employees about the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-454) which has changed the Federal Labor Relations Program from an Executive Order to a law as of Oct. 13, 1978. Major changes that are now law include:

Management Rights: Agency officials have the authority to decide and take actions not subject to collective bargaining, excluding bargaining on federal pay and benefits or non-voluntary payments to unions by employees.

Changes in management rights will prohibit agencies from bargaining on mission, budget, organization, number of employees or internal security. The changes will permit but not require them to negotiate on methods, means and technology of conducting agency operations. Management will have the right to determine whether vacant positions may be filled only by persons within the agency or by persons within and outside the agency.

Official Time: Employees representing the union in negotiating an agreement on or after Jan. 11, 1979 receive official time impasse proceedings, including time they would otherwise be in duty status. Employees on official time cannot exceed the number of management negotiators. Internal union business must be performed during non-duty time, while excusal for other labor relations matters remains negotiable.

Grievances and Arbitration: Grievance procedures will be defined broadly under the Act. Matters currently excluded from grievances and arbitration procedures, as statutory appeals, can be covered under the Act. The parties will have the flexibility to cover such matters as denials of within-grade increases and reduction-in-force appeals. Once a broad scope is established, all matters under negotiated procedure will be grievable only under that procedure. Excluded from negotiated procedures are suspensions or removals for national security reasons; matters relating to prohibited political activity; retirement, life insurance and health insurance issues; examinations, appointments and certification decisions and classification of any position not involving reduction in pay.

Where provided in an agreement, employees may use negotiated procedure in lieu of other statutory avenues to appeal discrimination, suspension in excess of 14 days, reductions in grade or pay, furloughs of 30 days or less, and removals.

Existing negotiated grievance procedures can continue in effect until renegotiated under a unilateral or mutual reopener clause in the agreement.

Arbitration awards are generally reviewable by the FLRA on limited grounds. Judicial review of awards applies only to those involving unfair labor practices, discrimination complaints and adverse actions otherwise reviewable by the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB).

Dues Allotments: The new law continues the employee's right to participate or refrain from union membership. However, union dues revocation, formerly allowed every six months (usually in March and September) now is permitted only once a year. Current agreements must be honored for the first six-month period occurring on or after Jan. 11, 1979.