



ALASKAN REGION

INTERCOM

VALDEZ CS/T

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

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VALDEZ COMBINED STATION/TOWER by g. grove

"You mean you get paid for working here?" That was my first impression of the Valdez, Alaska combined station/tower. Surrounded on three sides by impressive mountains and on the fourth by the waters of Valdez harbor, the scenery was astounding.

While Anchorage was seeing the last of the winters snow, Valdez still wore at least five feet. Thirty five feet of snowfall a year is average for Valdez, this year they had over sixty. Over thirty feet of the white stuff was still covering Thompson Pass a short way out of town. Tower controllers showed me a roof vent on the terminal that had been crushed by the weight of snow.

The Chief of Valdez CS/T, Gary Near, is fairly new to the facility. He arrived in late February from McAllen, Texas. Although Gary is new to the facility, he's not new to the State; this is his fourth trip to the Last Frontier.

Both Valdez controllers are pilots and airplane owners. Tom Meisner owns a Piper tri-pacer converted to pacer and Gene Wehe is the proud owner of a Cessna 175 with a 185 horsepower engine. They've both been quite active in area aviation activities. A year and a half ago Wehe found a downed pilot by following the lost pilot's ELT.

Due to the efforts of these men and their chief, public relations between the FAA and local media has been high in Valdez. Whenever an announcement is made by the FAA or Valdez tower, it's publicized by newspapers and radio, with few, if any, negative comments.

Because of the mountainous terrain, Valdez has no instrument approach at the present time. "We're probably the only tower in the country with a 3,500 foot mountain in the control zone," Wehe told me. Although the most maneuverable aircraft make right traffic to Runway 6, most pilots don't want to try it. The mountain is less than a half mile from the runway centerline.

The fourth FAA employee in Valdez, Harry Bartels, is a maintenance mechanic. Harry may have company in the future. The city is trying to purchase an LDA approach aid for the airport. Plans are for the city to install the approach and the FAA to maintain it. Rumors are that the FAA would then station another technician at Valdez to maintain the LDA approach.

Valdez controllers feel that although their traffic count isn't that impressive, they more than justify their existence because of the other services they provide. Because of the terrain and the proximity to the Valdez Narrows and Prince William Sound, weather is constantly changing, and normally different than other area stations.

VALDEZ CS/T CONT.

Because there is no practical way to station a weather observer in the Valdez Narrows, a remote TV camera has been placed at Potato Point, ten miles down channel, to allow weather in the southern end of the channel to be observed. Valdez controllers use a television monitor to advise pilots making a VFR approach up the channel of any weather they may encounter.

I found during my visit to Valdez, that there is more to do in a CS/T than meets the eye. When controllers weren't busy working traffic at the tower position, they were giving pilot briefings, taking weather observations, sending or taking flight plans or any of a dozen other things that need doing. When only one man is on duty at one of these level I facilities, he can't holler for help when he's in trouble. He just keeps going till he's out of trouble.

I had a kool-aid at Gary's government quarters mobile home that evening, before returning to Anchorage. I sat looking out the window at still snow covered mountains and the small town of Valdez, with little vehicle traffic and not an overabundance of people, I heard Gary's kids talking about the teen club and some other activities provided for children by the city. I asked again, "You mean you get paid for working here?"



Valdez CS/T is located atop the Valdez airport's terminal building. Chief Gary Near and his two controllers have a tremendous view of the Valdez Harbor, as well as, "The only 3,500 foot mountain in a control zone."



Tom Meismer briefs a pilot on the weather in the Valdez Narrows by using the monitor from the FAA's closed circuit TV system in the Narrows. The fact that both Valdez controllers are pilots helps in giving briefings.



Valdez controller Gene Wehe and his converted Cessna were instrumental last year in locating a downed pilot. Gene decided to search in an area that hadn't been in the search area and heard the lost pilot's ELT.

PUBLIC COMMENTS HEADED

The 43,000 public comments on FAA's proposed rule to expand the positive control area and establish additional terminal control areas have not fallen on deaf ears. In a letter to the Chairman of the House Public Works and Transportation Committee, Administrator Bond noted that the proposal has sparked a "thoughtful and useful discussion of positive control airspace" with innumerable good suggestions from all segments of the aviation community. Regarding the current status of the proposal, Bond said: "We are analyzing all of the comments, and it is my impression that we will most likely change our proposals, particularly as they relate to the concept of positive control and controlled visual flight. As to terminal control areas...we are likewise not locked in. We are honestly evaluating through the public participatory process the need for a terminal control area at any particular site. If the need is established, we are encouraging the utmost user participation in defining the shape of the terminal control area with a view towards minimizing disruptions within the aviation community." The Bond letter was prompted by the committee's action in approving a rider to pending noise legislation that would prohibit FAA from implementing its proposed rule.

NEW AIR TRAFFIC STAFFING STANDARDS

The agency has adopted new standards for determining air traffic control staffing requirements. The standards are based on a year-long study by an agencywide task force that surveyed representative centers and towers and collected extensive data on ATC activity at operating positions. The new standards replace those developed in the early 1970s and reflect the cumulative effects of automation and other system improvements that have increased controller productivity. Also new workload measurement techniques show that there has been an overall reduction in the amount of time an aircraft spends in an air traffic sector. One result of these changes in controller productivity and workload is to eliminate the need for four controller sectors in the enroute centers. Another result is a reduction in the requirements for assistant flight data controllers. Instead of one for every two sectors, the new staffing level would be one for three. The agency believes this staffing level will be sufficient until full automation of the flight data function is achieved. Also affected by the new standards is the method of determining shift staffing for radar sectors in both the centers and towers with the present peakhour procedure replaced by a more flexible system. Implementation of the new standards at the Washington headquarters level will begin with the FY 1981 budget request and be followed by nationwide implementation in FY 1982. Even though the agency has included estimated adjustments for productivity savings in previous budget submissions, the FY 1980 staffing envisioned by the new standards is still greater than the current on-board ATC workforce.

PILOT ASSIST AT KCI

Kansas City International Airport controllers Phillip Withrow and Lawrence J. Sasatzki did their best to stay in contact with the lost and disoriented pilot. But for an hour and forty-six minutes, communications were hampered by distance, altitude and the anxiety of the pilot. The noninstrument-rated pilot told the KCI controllers that he "could not see a thing," because ceilings at the time were 300 to 600 feet and visibility was less than a mile with light snow and fog. First, the controllers tried unsuccessfully to home an Air Force plane in on the lost plane. In the marginal visibility, the Air Force pilot was unable to make contact. At this point, the pilot lost control of his aircraft. Controllers told him to level his wings and let go of the controls. In this way, the controllers coaxed the plane toward an airport even while the pilot radioed that he was "scared to death." Finally, with apparent relief in his voice, the pilot reported that he had the ground in sight. After controllers headed him in the right direction, he landed safely. During the month of April, 213 flight assists were reported--64 by flight service stations, 104 by towers, and 45 by centers. Some 413 people were reported on board the aircraft involved.

BUG KILLERS ARE POISON

So get the right product for the job to be done. A pesticide too strong may damage the very plants you are trying to save. If you are unsure, ask your garden store dealer to make the proper match-up.

Read the label--twice. Carefully follow the directions and heed the warnings.

Wait for a windless day to work with pesticides. Avoid inhaling any of the substance or getting any of it on your skin. Wear gloves, slacks, shoes, a long-sleeved shirt or blouse, and a face mask if necessary. Remember you are dealing with poison. Keep children, pets, toys, and food out of the area.

Always wash at least your hands and face after using pesticides. Better yet, take a bath or shower. Launder contaminated clothing.

Store pesticides far from children's reach. Keep poisons in their original containers so they will not be mistaken for anything other than what they are.

Dispose of empty containers by wrapping them in several layers of newspaper and placing them in the trash can. Never re-use pesticide containers.

If you feel sick while using the pesticide or shortly afterwards, or if anyone accidentally swallows, inhales, or absorbs the substance, call your family doctor or Poison Control Center immediately. Be sure you have in hand the container and any labels.

BOND SPEAKS OUT IN FAA WORLD

Administrator Bond fields some tough questions in the May issue of FAA World, and you'll want to read what he has to say about the impact of retirements on FAA management, reorganization of Washington headquarters and the regions, the capability of the ATC system to accommodate growth, his own personal career plans and his priorities for the agency in the years ahead. Also in the May issue are articles about frangible approach light towers, ARTS II at Toledo, and a career orientation program for young Native Alaskans. Other features include a map of AF Sector offices, Direct Line, Faces and Places, and Small World.

AVIATION FATALITIES DOWN

The number of people killed in air accidents dropped 16 percent last year, but total transportation deaths climbed to 55,083, up almost 2,000 from the 1977 figure. Highway deaths accounted for most of the increase. Air carrier fatalities dropped from 654 in 1977 to 161 in 1978, with most occurring in the San Diego midair collision. General aviation fatalities rose slightly from 1,395 to 1,548. Highway deaths topped 50,000 for the first time in 5 years. The 50,145 total was up nearly 5 percent over 1977. Deaths in pipeline transportation dropped from 43 to 33 and railroad accidents from 644 to 632. Marine transportation accounted for 1,500 fatalities--down 2 percent, with 1,321 occurring in recreational boating.

UNION-MANAGEMENT MEET

Administrator Bond and other top FAA officials held the first of series of planned meetings with representatives of the Federal Aviation Science and Technological Association (FASTA) on May 11. The union is the exclusive representative of some 8,000 Airway Facility employees. Subjects discussed at the Washington meeting included training, flexitime, system modernization, classification, general working conditions, and communications between supervisors and manager on one hand and employees and union representatives on the other. Regional officials attending the meeting were: William Gjika, ANE; Hans Willemse, AWE; Don Messer, AWE; Tom Tomchik, AEA; Dony Donato, AEA; Dewey Redmond, ASO; Ed McDonald, ANW; Jack Hall, AGL; Leroy Miracle, AGL; Robert Bobocki, ACE; and Leon Jablonski, ASW.

EARTS SHIPPED TO SAN JUAN

The last of three Enroute Automated Radar Terminal Systems (EARTS) designed for use in enroute centers outside the 48 States was shipped from the Texas Instruments plant in Fort Worth on May 9 to the San Juan Center. The equipment was trucked to Chicago and then loaded on an aircraft for the trip to Puerto Rico. EARTS, which provides controllers with direct radar readout of aircraft identity and altitude, is scheduled to go through a system site test at the San Juan Center this August and go operation about September 1980. The first two EARTS have been installed at the Anchorage and Honolulu Centers. The Anchorage system is scheduled to go operational early in 1980 and the Honolulu system by June 1980.

ICAO JOB OPEN

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is seeking applicants for a 2-year assignment in Montreal. The job is identified as PC-11/79, Chief, Projects Implementation Section - Europe and Middle East, P-5. The gross pay is \$38,190 and the net (free of tax) is \$24,298 without dependents and \$26,299 with dependents. Applications are due in API-19 by May 31.

PATCO APPEAL REJECTED

The Supreme Court last week refused to hear an appeal by PATCO on an issue stemming from work slowdowns by controllers at some east coast facilities last year. Shortly after the May 25-26 and June 6-7 slowdowns, the Air Transport Association took PATCO to court alleging that the controllers' actions violated a 1970 injunction against slowdowns or other job actions that would disrupt air traffic. The judge agreed and slapped PATCO with a \$100,000 fine. In its appeal to the Supreme Court, PATCO argued that the 1970 injunction was no longer in effect.

NOMINATIONS FOR EEO AWARDS DUE

The Office of Civil Rights is looking for nominations for the annual Administrator's Equal Employment Opportunity awards. This year's program is emphasizing the Federal Women's Program. In fact, the awards will be presented in Washington on Monday, August 27, the day after Women's Equality Day. Names and justifications for all nominees should be sent to ACR -3 in Washington by June 30.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE REGION



Vern "Swede" Enberg, Chief of Quality Control at the Aircraft Maintenance Base, is presented a 25 year pin by Flight Standards Chief, Bob Judd (right).



Terry Dorris (right) Fairbanks TRACON ATCS was given a 3 year pin by Chief, Gary Christiansen.



Denny Naylor, Deadhorse ET was awarded a Letter of Appreciation by Frand Kirnig for technical expertise applied during trouble shooting of the Deadhorse DF.



Robert Bullock (left) Fairbanks TRACON ATCS was given a 3 year pin by Chief, Gary Christiansen.



At his retirement luncheon, Don Hall (right) received a plaque from Big Delta SET Manny Hernandez.



For extra efforts during the Fairbanks Tower move, controllers (left to right) Terry Dorris, James Stanton and far right, Kelly McMullen were presented Letters of Commendation by Wallace Tharp, 2nd from right.

The Little Red Hen: A Productivity Fable

Reprinted from the Central Region Intercom



Once upon a time there was a little red hen who scratched about the barnyard until she uncovered some grains of wheat. She turned to the other workers on the farm and said: "If we plant this wheat, we'll have bread to eat. Who will help me plant it?"

"We never did that before," said the horse, who was the supervisor

"I'm too busy," said the duck.

"I'd need complete training," said the pig.

"It's not in my job description," said the goose.

"Well, I'll do it myself," said the little red hen. And she did. The wheat grew tall and ripened into grain. "Who will help me reap the wheat?" asked the little red hen

"Let's check the regulations first," said the horse.

"I'd lose my seniority," said the duck.

"I'm on my lunch break," said the goose.

"Out of my classification," said the pig.

"Then I will," said the little red hen, and she did.

At last it came time to bake the bread.

"Who will help me bake the bread?" asked the little red hen.

"That would be overtime for me," said the horse.

"I've got to run some errands," said the duck.

"I've never learned how," said the pig.

"If I'm to be the only helper, that's unfair," said the goose.

"Then I will," said the little red hen.

She baked five loaves and was ready to turn them in to the farmer when the other workers stepped up. They wanted to be sure the farmer knew it was a group project.

"It needs to be cleared by someone else," said the horse.

"I'm calling the shop steward," said the duck.

"I demand equal rights," yelled the goose.

"We'd better file a copy," said the pig.

But the little red hen turned in the loaves by herself. When it came time for the farmer to reward the effort, he gave one loaf to each worker.

"But I earned all the bread myself!"
said the little red hen

"I know," said the farmer, "but it takes too much paperwork to justify giving you all the bread. It's much easier to distribute it equally, and that way the others won't complain."

So the little red hen shared the bread, but her co-workers and the farmer wondered why she never baked any more.

