

Aviation Safety Award

- 1997 **Jim Hall** former Chair, National Transportation Safety Board
- 1998 **Mary Schiavo** former Inspector General, U.S. Department of Transportation
- 1999 **Edward Block** Aircraft Wiring Expert
- 2000 **Tom O'Mara** Recognition for O'Mara's work in organizing air crash family member groups in 1992 through the present
- 2001 **John Goglia** National Transportation Safety Board, Board Member
- 2002 **Gerald Dillingham** General Accounting Office and **Ken Mead** Inspector General, U.S. Department of Transportation



Beth Marchak, a 2002 Journalism Award recipient with Amanda Myers, Cynthia Hamilton and Carmen Roberts-Thompson, ValuJet



Lynda Carter, winner of the 2002 Humanitarian Award with Chuck McNitt, from ValuJet

Humanitarian Award

- 2002 **Lynda Carter** Support for victims' families at the Pentagon Family Command Center

Broadcast Journalism Award for Aviation Safety

- 2001 **NBC "Dateline"** for "The Mechanic"

Journalism Award

- 2000 **Byron Acohido** formerly with "Seattle Times," now with "USA Today"
- 2001 **David Evans** Editor for "Air Safety Week"
- 2002 **Tim Gaffney & Wes Hils** & the **"Dayton Daily News," Steve Miletich** "Seattle Times," and **Beth Marchak** formerly with "The Plain Dealer" of Cleveland

The ASA 529 TRIUMPH Award

- 2001 **Captain Ed Gannaway** - Captain ASA 529
- 2002 **John Liotine** Professional Aircraft Mechanic



John Liotine, ASA TRIUMPH Award winner, and Steve Miletich, 2002 Journalism Award with Patty Sanchez, Earlene Shaw and Mary Hall. *Special thanks also to Patty, Earlene, Mary, and others for their hard work on behalf of all family members from Alaska 261!*

The 2002 Humanitarian Award

"I want to thank the Board of Directors and all the volunteers from the *NATIONAL AVIATION DISASTER ALLIANCE* for all their hard work. I have a tremendous amount of respect for this organization's mission and list of accomplishments.

What *NADA* has shown, and what the nation knows after September 11, is that the powerful voices of families cannot be ignored. There are no better advocates for meaningful change and action than those whose lives have been changed by a disaster.

NADA and their many active family volunteers worked to pass the Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act in 1996. And recently, *NADA* worked with others to demand an Independent Commission to study the events leading to 9/11.

In just seven years the Alliance has become one of the most respected and powerful grassroots advocacy organizations in the country because of commitment and tireless effort. Congratulations!

Nolan Law Group's early support of *NADA* was based on our mutual commitment to preventing the same disaster from happening twice and I am very pleased to be here tonight, counted among *NADA*'s long time supporters and friends.

Our firm endowed the Humanitarian Award for Support to Victims' Families because over the years we have seen what it means to families to have support and kindness in their darkest hours.

And while most of us are here tonight because of a personal or professional connection with the aviation industry, there is one person who is here because on a day when many people needed support in their darkest hour, she was there.

Her familiar face was at the Pentagon Family Command Center after September 11 and she talked to strangers about their loved ones, shared their grief and offered comfort. And, she was there the next day, and the next day after that to do the same.

We are honored that Lynda Carter is here tonight to accept the Humanitarian Award. She embodies the spirit of humanitarianism. Her selflessness on September 11 is just one example of how she has given of herself to help others.

Ms. Carter, in addition to a long career as an actress and entertainer, has a long career as a volunteer. Over the years she has served as the National Crusade Chairwoman for the American Cancer Society, the honorary chairwoman to the Exceptional Children's Foundation, and as a member of the board of governors for the United Service Organization, to name a few.

And while she may be known for being the personification of beauty and grace, we recognize her tonight with this award for being the personification of the human spirit of love and compassion.

I am proud to present the Humanitarian Award to Lynda Carter on behalf of *NADA* and to extend our thanks on behalf of the organization." **Don Nolan**



NADA/F's Family Support Team volunteers at the Pentagon Family Command Center were impressed with Lynda's kindness and patience with the families, and all wanted to say **Thank You** in a special way. Immense thanks also to the Nolan Law Group for Endowing the **Humanitarian Award**.



Joan Mestnik, Barbara McFann, Paul Knerr and Lynda



Lynda visited with all at the Saturday Dinner Gala, and graciously autographed our *Wonder Woman* souvenirs

The 2002 Aviation Safety Award

Art & Carole Rietz, and Susan & Paul Smith from ValuJet generously Endowed the Award in memory of their sons Howard Rietz, and Jay Smith. Established by **NADA/F** in 1997 this award honors people who have recognized and supported our founding goals: **To raise the standard of Safety, Security, Survivability, and to Support victims' families.**

Gerald Dillingham and Ken Mead spoke at our 2001 Annual Meeting shortly after 9/11/01. The more that we learned about them the more we realized that they worked above and beyond with integrity and diligence, for the highest standards of aviation safety and security, before and after 9/11. It was a pleasure to present the Aviation Safety Award for 2002 to Gerald Dillingham and Ken Mead!



Bonnie Beckett, Asst. Director of Safety and Security, GAO accepted the award in Gerald's behalf and shared considerable information with us about their work past and present. Bonnie is terrific!

"I am very pleased and honored to be the recipient of the 2002 Safety Award from NADA/F. I accept this award on behalf of my colleagues at the General Accounting Office, whose dedicated and untiring efforts have called attention to the very critical importance of improving aviation safety and security. This award is especially significant and meaningful because it comes from an organization whose membership represents those who have been directly affected by aviation disasters and who are committed to improving aviation safety and security. Thank you so very much." **Gerald Dillingham, Ph.D., Director Civil Aviation at the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO)**

We encourage our members, and Members of Congress, to review the GAO Reports and Testimonies on Aviation Safety and Security past and present, such as: **Aviation Security: Urgent Issues Need to Be Addressed. GAO/T-RCED/NSIAD-96-251. Washington DC, September 11, 1996.**

The www.gao.gov website is a wealth of information that we cannot afford to ignore. The GAO continues to report, investigate, and make recommendations on many issues of aviation safety and security that need immediate action. To receive Email alerts about GAO reports of interest to you go to their website www.gao.gov Scroll down to [Order GAO Products](#) and click on [Subscribe to e-mail alerts.](#)

**The Next Annual Meeting:
OCTOBER 18-19, 2003
Plan to join us!**

"I want to express my deep appreciation for the Alliance's Safety Award, which will be proudly displayed in the front office. I regret that I was not able to share the day with you, but I was glad that Betsy was able to join you and other members in my stead. It meant a great deal to she and I.

The Alliance is very special to Betsy and me – both because of the people who are members of the organization and for all that the Alliance represents and stands for. So, it's an honor and quite humbling, especially given what Alliance members have personally experienced.

Please always keep the faith and your eye on the cause of aviation safety. The Alliance is unique, and there are very few groups that have safety and only safety as their mantra or guiding light. The Office of Inspector General, Betsy, and I thank you again and wish all of you well."

Ken Mead, Inspector General (IG), Department of Transportation (DOT)



Betsy Mead accepted the Aviation Safety Award on behalf of Ken.

The Office of Inspector General (IG) works within the U.S. Dept. of Transportation (DOT) <http://www.oig.dog.gov> to promote effectiveness and head off, or stop, waste, fraud and abuse in departmental programs, through audits and investigations. Ken Mead, as IG, has oversight of all forms of transportation; however, our interest is the work he has done since his appointment in 1997, to promote the highest standards of aviation safety and security through Remarks, Reports, Speeches, Testimony, and Investigations. Ken Mead has not hesitated to report on the longstanding history of problems associated with the aviation security program, before and after 9/11, and he identified and reported on changes needed to airport security.

The investigations from Ken Mead's office have also revealed that there are those who compromise aviation safety by engaging in illegal activities and aviation safety-related crimes. From 1998 to Feb. 2003, these investigations have led to 139 Indictments, and 121 Convictions.

The 2001 & 2002 ASA 529 TRIUMPH Awards

In memory of Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight 529, to recognize an ordinary person who performed an extraordinary feat toward aviation safety.

The 2002 Award went to John Liotine, professional airline mechanic, formerly with Alaska Airlines, who risked his career and much more to encourage others to check the maintenance standards before the crash.



John Liotine, 2002 ASA 529 Triumph Award winner with Patty Sanchez and with Earlene Shaw and Mary Hall.

"I am so pleased to be here today, to thank you and shake your hand. Thank you for so much. Thank you for being an honorable human being. We admire your stand against such great odds. I asked others what they would say to you. . .if they were here today. Through a friend, I was given this passage. I think it is perfect. . .

'Ever since I heard of John Liotine something about his last name kept ringing bells. As I became more familiar with his work in aviation safety I finally realized that it wasn't that I'd ever known any Liotines - just that it seemed to remind me of "Le-o-nine"- the English word for Lion-like. The more we know about what he has done for aviation safety, despite what he's had to go through, because of it, all the more John Liotine's name has become synonymous with Integrity, Probity, and a Lion-hearted willingness to do what's right, no matter what the personal cost. We thank you and your family for standing tall."

from Patty Sanchez, mother of Colleen Rose Whorley

ASA 529 TRIUMPH Award - 2001 was presented to Jackie Gannaway, to honor her husband Captain Ed Gannaway, posthumously, as the first recipient of the ASA TRIUMPH Award Jackie was unable to attend the meeting in 2001 due to travel restrictions following 9/11, and it was great to welcome her in 2002. Seven years ago when ASA529 went down, due to Gannaway's veteran pilot's experience, 19 of the 29 passengers were able to survive the landing.

Crew member families joined Arlene Miasel in tribute to Gannaway. **Note: "Nine Minutes, Twenty Seconds,"** by Gary M. Pomerantz, is now also available in paperback, and tells the story of the tragedy and triumph of ASA flight 529.



Arlene Miasel, Mary Kahl and Jackie Gannaway above. Colleen Halpin accepting the Broadcast Journalism award from Gail Dunham, right. (And that snazzy hat Gail's wearing is NADA-wear, available for \$10.00.)



Broadcast Journalism Award 2001 NBC **"Dateline"** for **"The Mechanic,"** the story of John Liotine, Alaska Airlines mechanic. Presented to **Colleen Halpin**, "Dateline" Producer, who was unable to attend in 2001, following 9/11/01. Members enjoyed the opportunity to say thank you, share stories, and visit with Colleen at the most recent meeting.

The 2002 Journalism Awards

Tim Gaffney, Wes Hils, and the "Dayton Daily News" as well as **Steve Miletich**, with the "Seattle Times" have worked for years to raise awareness about the terribly low standards of air cargo safety and security. Their articles have also been published nationally, and we appreciate their long-term voice to hopefully save lives in the future.

Our thanks to the Chicago Law Firm of **Corboy & Demetrio** for Endowing the **Corboy & Demetrio Journalism Award for Contributions Toward Improved Aviation Safety.**



Don Land, Tim Gaffney and Fred Chesbro above.
Patty Sanchez, Earlene Shaw, John Leotine, Steve Miletich and Mary Hall, right



"Over the course of the past years, since the crash of Emery Worldwide Airline's DC-8 flight #17, February 16, 2002, countless newspapers ran stories on the crash and events at Emery. And, of course, as family members, we read each and every word of each and every article with intense interest.

Personal observation: Tim Gaffney clearly provided the most comprehensive and insightful coverage of them all. And even as the crash began to fade from public memory (which happened fast; as this was a cargo plane crash after all), Tim remained engaged, interested and tenacious. And he continued to expose inexcusable public safety breaches within the air cargo industry. And these are breaches that have implications for the entire airline industry.

Tim stayed engaged and the interest generated by his coverage clearly raised public and government awareness of the substandard air cargo maintenance, operational, and regulatory oversight responsible for catastrophes such as Fine Air 101 and Emery 17.

It's wonderful to see Tim receive this prestigious award in recognition of his meaningful and hard work. Congratulations Tim! Don't let up, and we look forward to your continued reports and, who knows, maybe even a forthcoming book examining the current state of air cargo." **Fred Chesbro**

"After I lost a son in Fine Air 101, an air cargo crash on August 7, 1997 in Miami, there were many articles written at the time, but it was only reporting the crash.

Unlike other reporters, Tim Gaffney not only reported Emery 17, and tied it in with other air cargo crashes, but exposed the deficiencies in the whole air cargo system--the substandard maintenance of cargo planes, the lackadaisical oversight of the whole air cargo industry by the FAA, and the double standard in safety requirements, with much lower standards for air cargo safety and security.

Tim went beyond other reporters and through his reporting and diligence made the country more aware of the air cargo industry. Thanks Tim and keep investigating!"

Audrey Ulozas, mother of Steve Petrosky

"Steve Miletich, Investigative Reporter for the "Seattle Times." To the families of Alaska Flight 261 the mention of his name elicits feelings of HOPE and GRATITUDE.

HOPE that we may learn more facts surrounding events that led up to the crash of flight 261 off the coast of California January 31, 2000. HOPE that he has once again shed light on the political machinations of the FAA, that continues to fail so miserably to oversee airline safety. HOPE that somehow, someday, someone in power will be as outraged as we are about this failure and move to enact much needed change.

We are GRATEFUL to Steve for his dogged determination to find the facts, the truth, and to present them in a straight forward fashion. GRATEFUL that despite opposition (it's hard to remain popular when you are reporting about two hometown giants...Alaska Air and Boeing) he continues to keep the story alive and the public informed. We learn more from Steve's articles than we do from the NTSB. We also express GRATITUDE to Steve's editors as they recognize the importance of the story to the general public and allow Steve the freedom to pursue it. Steve, please accept this award for journalism excellence with our thanks!"

Mary Hall, mother of Meghann Hall

NADA/F Membership & Mailing Lists

If this is your first mailing from us and you would like to be on our mailing list, please let us hear from you!

Call toll free 888-444-NADA or email us at info@PlaneSafe.org

If you have not sent your 2003 dues of \$20 or more, we would love to hear from you. All donations to the *National Air Disaster Foundation* are tax-deductible. New Memberships include NADA/F pins and bumper sticker: SAFETY DELAYED IS SAFETY DENIED.

The 2002 Journalism Awards ...continued

Cynthia Hamilton, Amanda Myers, and Lee Sawyer generously endowed a Broadcast Journalism award in memory of their parents, Conway and Anna Laurie Hamilton, on ValuJet. Members have wanted to recognize Beth Marchak's work for years; however, through a series of events we were not able to give this public recognition until recently. So it was decided to give a special **Journalism Award this year for Beth Marchak's years of investigative reporting** in lieu of a broadcasting journalism award.

Beth Marchak, formerly with the "The Plain Dealer," of Cleveland is well known for her reporting about aviation safety, and for reporting about problems at ValuJet before and after the crash on May 11, 1996. Best of luck to Beth with her new career as a Senior Aviation Analyst at the U.S. General Accounting Office, (GAO) Civil Aviation Division!



ValuJet family members give tributes and thanks. Carol Rietz summed it up by saying thank you to **"a woman with a conscience!"** Beth acknowledged their thanks and said, "I'm pleased that I reported your quotations correctly. My news clips will live on." Beth also said the award crystal will look great in her new office at the GAO, and will be a source of inspiration every day.

NADA/F Annual Meetings

This newsletter is to share with you just a few of the highlights from the 2002 Annual Meeting and to say a special **Thank You to ALL** who have helped make a difference since 1995!



Brenda Yager, NTSB Director of the Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance, provided excellent updates on family assistance, and **Michael Spinello**, worldwide expert on Aviation Disaster Response.



"This annual gathering is an excellent opportunity to meet those who truly understand the meaning of aviation safety. The voices of plane crash survivors and the victims' next of kin are essential to the improvement of emergency systems and survivability."
Gunnar Kuepper, Chief of Operations, Emergency & Disaster Management, Los Angeles CA



Mary Schiavo, accepted a **Sponsor Recognition Award** on behalf of the law firm of Baum, Hedlund, Aristei, Guilford & Schiavo. We appreciate their continued support! Mary also received the Aviation Safety Award in 1998. She is always a favorite guest and speaker at the meetings of the **National Air Disaster Alliance**.

More Annual Meeting Highlights



Saturday Panel: **Gary Winston**, (Asst. State Attorney, **State of Florida vs. SabreTech, Inc.** related to the ValuJet crash -- state & federal criminal prosecution), **Bonnie Beckett** (GAO), **Lou Dixon** (Program Director, Aviation Group, Office of the IG DOT), and Bob Monetti, *NADA/F* Board Member, from PA103.



Ellen DiVerniero, *NADA* Board Member, and **John Goglia**, NTSB Board Member, Aviation Safety Award 2001



Special thanks to **Rosemary & Jim Shellberg**, founding Members, and to **Aron Spencer**, Economist and Speaker, for joining us to present his research: **Sept. 11, 2001 – Assessing the Costs of Terrorism**. Aron's work is available at www.MilkenInstitute.org (go to The Milken Review, Dec. 2001).

Mental Health Matters

M. Regina Asaro, M.S., R.N



As I listened to the participants introduce themselves and describe their reasons for attending the recent annual *NADA* meeting, I was quite humbled to be in the presence of so many people who were not only surviving catastrophic situations but who were reaching out to make things better for others. Peer support has proved helpful to many people coping with all kinds of trauma and loss.

Even the most competent individuals may find themselves emotionally thrown by the sheer weight of reactions, feelings, circumstances and secondary victimizations that may arise in the aftermath of an air disaster. These may include but are not limited to disbelief, guilt, horror, inadequacy, frustration, rage, feelings of betrayal and loss of privacy, individuality, isolation, helplessness, and loss of confidence and/or self-esteem.

When people are able to connect with others coping with similar experiences, they may find that their reactions are not only *not* unusual but “a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.” They may learn from others more of the specifics about what actually happened, identify ways of coping with and resolving secondary problems and issues that arise in the aftermath, and find that they have been of help to others.

Peer support can be formal (through participation in ongoing support groups) or informal (where individuals stay connected with each other through phone contact). People may find that support groups specific to the type of situation or loss they have experienced are more helpful than generic groups. For example, people who have survived a plane crash may have very different issues than people who have lost a loved one in a crash. Indeed, it is not uncommon for those who have survived a crash to discount their own feelings in a group where others may be dealing with a loss, saying, “Well at least I’m still alive.” However peer support is accomplished, many have found it helpful to stay connected with others who share their unique issues.

Sometimes, however, grief and/or posttraumatic stress symptoms may be persistent and interfere with an individual’s daily functioning. If so, it would be important to seek professional help from a counselor trained in traumatic loss, especially if suicidal or homicidal thoughts or impulses are present.

It is not unusual for individuals to feel at a complete loss in dealing with the trauma and loss associated with an air disaster. Peer support can be a very useful tool for those coping with this psychological fallout so that they may not only survive the trauma but also go on in spite of it. **Regina Asaro**, Newport News VA (757) 833-8093, RASaro68@pinn.net

Special thanks to **June Marsh**, one of our Founding Members, for sponsoring this newsletter. We remember June's son and daughter-in-law, **Craig Allen Hale, and Kim DeSantis Hale**, on Northwest 255, August 16, 1987.

June lost her mother Donna Mae Rabideaux last year, and graciously requested donations to the *NATIONAL AIR DISASTER FOUNDATION*, in lieu of flowers. The family is committed to aviation safety, so that others do not walk our path.

"June is so honest and caring, she makes everyone feel as if we are part of her family. Our thanks to June, whose kindness and support for others has helped so many!!!" **Joan Pontante**



June Marsh with Lynda Carter



Joan Pontante and Audrey Ulozas

Hearty thanks to our Annual Meeting Co-Chairs! Questions or suggestions about the next meeting? Contact: Joan Pontante (315) 593-3279 (Japontante@juno.com) or Audrey Ulozas (570) 857-857-9293 (JUAUD@ptd.net).

"We had a wonderful weekend -- everyone told me the speakers were terrific, and it was fun to meet so many people with similar interests. Everyone is welcome at the 9th Annual Meeting, October 18-19, 2003! See you then!" **Joan**

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