

We are family members from over 100 aviation disasters working to raise the standard of safety, security and survivability for aviation passengers and to support victims' families. We are . . .

. . . Looking for answers because of our "need to know". . .

At our 10th Annual Meeting we learned more about how the 9/11 Commission Report addressed aviation security from Brian Alexander, our Keynote Speaker, with Kreindler & Kreindler, and a Lead Attorney representing 9/11 survivors and family members. Key points of his excellent presentation are included in this newsletter. 9/11 was the worst aviation disaster in history, and people should be shocked at the history of poor aviation security. NADA/F members will continue to press our government for the Truth about 9/11, and support survivors and family members.



Gail Dunham, Brian Alexander and Ellen DiVerniero, our Annual Meeting Facilitator.

. . . Linking with family members and aviation professionals in the U.S. and worldwide to promote our common goals. . .

NADA/F recently met with members of FIVAA - Federation International of Victims of Airline Accidents, representing air crash groups in Europe. We share their Action Plan to Research for the Truth, adopt Higher Standards of Aviation Safety, and to Promote Victims' Rights.



NADA/F with FIVAA Leadership - May 21, 2005 - Paris, France

. . . Learning from the Past - We Will Always Remember. . .

American Airlines flight 191, May 25, 1979

The 25th memorial of AA 191 was the first time that the family group met each other, and first group visit to the crash site at O'Hare Airport in Chicago. Melody Smith, her sister Kim Borchers Jockl, Gary Schwartz and others decided to meet with family members who shared the same loss and to hold a memorial long overdue. NADA/F helped the AA191 family members connect with others and we continue to work with those impacted by aviation disasters recently and long ago.



We are survivors, family members, aviation professionals and more, who remember loved ones with memorials plus a commitment to work with government and industry to prevent these disasters in the future. Working together we have made a difference, but there is much more work to do!

The 9/11 Commission Report – Aviation Security
Brian J. Alexander, with Kreindler & Kreindler

The article below consists of excerpts from the PowerPoint presentation given to NADA/F in Washington DC at the annual meeting last year. The information is “spin-free” and represents only that evidence which is available in the public domain.

1. Who Is Really Responsible? The Airlines and Aviation Security Companies

As a threshold matter, we start with the law. Federal law states that the airlines have a duty “to provide for the safety of persons and property **against acts of criminal violence and air piracy**” and “**to prevent or deter the carriage of any explosive, incendiary, or deadly or dangerous weapon** on or about each individual’s person or accessible property before boarding an aircraft or entering the sterile area.” [CFR 108.103 and 108.201]

2. Indeed, in addressing airlines’ responsibility for aviation security, the Hon. Judge Alvin K. Hellerstein, who is presiding over the 9/11 tort litigation in NY, stated:

“The airlines, airport authorities and security companies controlled who came onto the planes and what was carried aboard. They had an obligation to take reasonable care in screening precisely because of the risk of terrorist hijackings, and the dangerous consequences that would inevitably follow.” In Re September 11 Litigation, 280 F.Supp.2d 279,296 (SDNY 2003)

3. The government accounting office, the investigatory arm of the government, describes the scope of the airlines duty and its critical importance to the aviation security system as follows:

“The air carriers are responsible for screening all passengers and baggage, hiring and training their employees or contracting for screening services, and procuring equipment to screen passengers and baggage. The screening of passengers and baggage is a critical element in the FAA’s strategy against terrorism.” [GAO Report, Aviation Security, February 1999]

4. The airlines acknowledge their duty. According to the CEO of American Airlines, Gerard Arpey, “...**the airlines are responsible** for implementing the security procedures... Airlines and Airports were required to implement the aviation security rules.” [9/11 Commission Report, p.83]

5. Heightened Security? Remarkably, the terrorist did not just beat our system they beat it at airports that were known targets with heightened security status.

“All three airports used by the 9/11 hijackers (Newark Liberty International Airport, Washington Dulles International Airport and Boston Logan International Airport) were “Category X” airports, i.e. among the largest facilities liable to the highest threat, and generally **subject to greater security requirements.**” [FAA Report, “Civil Aviation Security Reference Handbook: May 1999 pp. 117-118; 9/11 Commission Report p.451,n.1]

6. A Dysfunctional System While the airlines share the responsibility for intelligence with the government, they had exclusive control over passenger screening, checkpoint screening, and onboard security. Evaluating the **Aviation Security System** as a whole the 9/11 Commission concluded: “Each layer relevant to hijacking – **Intelligence, Passenger Prescreening, Checkpoint Screening, and Onboard Security** – was **seriously flawed** prior to 9/11.” [9/11 Commission Report p. 83]

7. The Red Herring Regarding the 9/11 tragedy, you have no doubt heard this statement uttered from any senior government bureaucrat or airline official you ask: “*We never considered or expected that terrorist would use planes as missiles.*” This is a myth!

The only relevant question is what was being done to protect and deter against hijackings in the first place? **The uncertain use to which the plane would be put after the hijacking becomes irrelevant if the hijacking is prevented in the first instance.**

8. The Airlines Knew the Danger and the Risk of Hijacking

Despite the political spin since 9/11, the evidence demonstrates that the airlines knew: There was an **increasing terrorist threat** to civil aviation from hijackings and bombings; and the aviation security system they were charged with implementing was completely “**vulnerable**” and in “**urgent**” need of repair.

9. The Airlines Knew the Danger and the Risk of Hijacking

In **1999**, the FAA published its annual report on **Criminal Acts Against Civil Aviation (CAACA)**. The report specifically identifies Bin Laden as a threat: “**Another threat to civil aviation is from Saudi terrorist financier Osama Bin Laden**, who has been indicted for the August 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies... A[n] Islamic leader in the United Kingdom proclaimed in August 1998 that Bin Laden would ‘**bring down an airliner, or hijack an airliner to humiliate the U.S.**’”

10. The **1999 CAACA Report** also reminded the airlines of another recent example “which suggests that the threat to civil aviation” is still real – the infamous Manila Air or **Bojinka plot** which contemplated the simultaneous destruction of as many as twelve U.S. airliners flying out of the Far East.

The report concluded by noting that, “**there is every reason to believe that civil aviation will continue to be an attractive target for terrorist groups.**”

11. In **1996** the GAO warned that, “The threat of terrorism has increased and aviation is an attractive target well into the **foreseeable future**. The World Trade Center bombing [and other plots to bomb landmarks] ... **revealed that the international terrorist threat in the U.S. is more serious and more extensive than previously believed.**”

The report warned of increased attacks by “radical fundamentalist groups” inside the U.S. and that the **terrorists “were aware of airport vulnerabilities and how existing security measures could be defeated.”**

12. In **March 2000**, the GAO warned that “events over the past decade have shown that the threat of terrorism against the U.S. **is an ever-present danger.**”

In a tragic prophetic statement the GAO noted: “A single lapse in aviation security can result in hundreds of deaths, destruction ... and have immeasurable negative impacts on the economy.”

13. In **April 2000**, the GAO cautioned the airlines: “The fact that there have been no major security incidents in recent years could breed an attitude of complacency. However, **serious vulnerabilities in our aviation system exist and must be adequately addressed.**”

The report also again warned that the threat to aviation was increasing, “**including threats from hostile and criminal acts which could be potentially catastrophic if dangerous objects, such as weapons, were to be involved.**”

14. In **June 2000**, the GAO again reminded the airlines that the Bojinka plot demonstrates that the “potential for the destruction of aircraft and great loss of life has increased” and that “concerns are growing about the potential for attacks within the U.S.”

15. According to Press Reports: In 1998 the FAA warned airline officials about possible hijackings at a metropolitan airport in the Eastern U.S. by OBL (Osama Bin Laden).

16. The FAA issued 15 warnings to the airlines in the months leading up to 9/11. Beginning in January 2001 the FAA warned the airlines that terrorists might attack U.S. interests and mentioned OBL in the alerts. Interestingly, United Airlines confirmed they received “alerts and cautions” regarding possible terrorist attacks.

17. 1/01 – Alerts U.S. carriers to the continuing possibility of violence against Americans.

4/01 – Advising “some of the current active [terrorist] groups are known to plan and train for hijackings... The FAA encourages U.S. carriers to demonstrate a high degree of alertness.”

6/01 – warning that the “potential for terrorist operations, such as an airline hijacking ... remains a concern.”

7/01 – encouraging airlines to be on high alert and warning that the terrorists are known to be planning and training for a hijacking.

8/01 – FAA warns about disguised weapons based on reports that terrorists might use key chains, pens and cell phones as weapons.

18. The Airlines Knew Suicide Hijackings Were Possible

According to the 9/11 Commission: Prior to 9/11, the FAA presented a CD-ROM to air carriers describing the increased threat to civil aviation. “The presentation mentioned the possibility of suicide hijackings...”

Buried in a footnote, the Commission adds: “The presentation did indicate that if a hijacker was intending to commit suicide in a spectacular explosion, the terrorist would be likely to prefer a domestic hijacking.” [9/11 Commission Report p. 264, 535 n.47]

19. The 9/11 Commission belies the myth that suicide hijackings were not foreseeable stating: “THE POSSIBILITY WAS IMAGINABLE AND IMAGINED. “In early **August 1999**, the FAA Civil Aviation Security intelligence office summarized the Bin Laden hijacking threat. After a solid recitation of all information available on this topic, the paper identified a few principal scenarios, one of which was a “suicide hijacking operation.” [9/11 Commission Report p.345]

One former FAA official has stated that there was an FAA Report issued in the late 1990’s which evaluated nearly ten years of hijacking incidents and concluded that small knives were the most frequently used weapons to hijack aircraft.

Conclusion: The means by which hijackers would take over an aircraft were neither predictable nor unexpected.

20. The Airlines Knew The Danger and The Risk of Hijacking

In the three decades prior to 9/11 there were at least 800 reported hijacking incidents with nearly 175 involving U.S. carriers. To attack iconic targets was not a new idea.

9/11/94 – Cessna crashes into the White House

12/24/94 – Algerian terrorists hijack a Boeing 767, loaded with fuel and explosive, planned to crash into the Eiffel Tower

7/96 – Planes banned from vicinity of Olympic events

21. A System Designed to Fail

- Since the early 1990’s the GAO published numerous reports critical of aviation security focusing on screener performance problems, low pay, inadequate training and high turnover rates.
- Two Presidential Commissions detailed dangerous flaws in airport security.
- FAA audits, red team inspections and years of documented security violations demonstrated the system was vulnerable and getting worse.

A Pre-9/11 study of reported aviation security violations at the nation’s top 25 airports from 1991-2000 revealed more than 50,000 violations.

22. Passenger Prescreening:

The 9/11 Commission focused on the Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System (CAPPS) which was “designed to identify passengers whose profile suggested they might pose more than a minimal risk to aircraft.”

Significantly, the Commission notes that before 1997 “selectees” were subject to extraordinary screening of their carry-on baggage. These measures were curtailed because non-suicide sabotage was the perceived threat. This raises the question: **Why didn’t the industry change back when “suicide hijackings” were again a threat?**

23. Checkpoint Screening:

As noted by the GAO and 9/11 Commission, the screening checkpoints and screeners who operate them are “the most important line of defense against the introduction of dangerous objects into the aviation system.”

“All passengers and their baggage must be checked for weapons, explosives, or other dangerous articles that could pose a threat to the safety of an aircraft and those aboard it.”

Despite its importance, the poor performance of the checkpoint screening was well known and well documented for years leading up to 9/11. After several years and numerous reports on the long-standing problems, a GAO official testified in May 2000, that the airline industry “had made little progress in improving the effectiveness of airport checkpoint screeners.” He added, “Screeners are not adequately detecting dangerous objects and long-standing problems affecting screeners’ performance [low wages, inadequate training and rapid turnover] remain.”

Prior to 9/11 the GAO unambiguously identified the scope and magnitude of the checkpoint vulnerabilities in a series of reports.

Relying on FAA tests the GAO noted that in 1978, screeners failed to detect 13% of the FAA tests. By 1987 the failure rate had grown to 20%. Test data for the period between 1991-1999 is designated sensitive secure information (SSI), but the GAO noted that the declining trend in detection rates continues.

Several years prior to 9/11, an FAA requirement for screeners to conduct “continuous” and “random” hand searches of carry-on luggage at checkpoints had ... simply become ignored by the air carriers. Therefore, secondary screening of individuals and their carry-on bags to identify weapons was non-existent, except for passengers who triggered the metal detectors. [9/11 Commission Report, p.84]

24. According to their own guidelines, box cutters, mace, tear gas and menacing knives of a size were strictly prohibited items which were not allowed into the sterile area or on aircraft. Yet each of these deadly items were smuggled through security. In the words of 9/11 Commissioner John Lehman the checkpoint screening on 9/11 represents “gross negligence.”

(See the next page)

25. On Board Security:

The Commission appears to have accepted the convenient excuses proffered by the airline industry: a need for emergency egress and common strategy of cooperation.

Again the airlines had ample warnings of the dangers of unlocked, penetrable doors as evidenced by the hundreds of cockpit intrusions in recent years. As noted by the Commission, the doors should have been locked as was required by rules established in the 1960's. [9/11 Commission Report, p.85]

Hardened cockpit doors were known to be a critical last line of defense and were technologically feasible for a relatively minor cost – unfortunately it was a cost the airlines were not willing to bear.

26. A Glimpse at Why the System Failed

The air carriers played a major role in pre-9/11 security and were therefore able to exert "great pressures to control security costs and to limit the impact of security requirements on aviation operations so that the industry could concentrate on its primary mission of moving passengers and aircraft ... [T]hose counterpressures in turn manifested themselves as significant weaknesses in security." [9/11 Commission Report, p.85] Translation: Once again, the airlines put profits ahead of safety and security of their passengers.

One long time FAA security official described the airlines approach to security as "decry, deny and delay."

What is clear is that the terrorists recognized the weaknesses the airlines now say they could not see. Tragically their denials and delays cost many brave Americans their lives.

Government Accountability Office www.GAO.gov

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To access copies of GAO reports enter the report number at the top right of the Homepage www.GAO.gov. The following GAO reports, from prior to 9/11, were mentioned in Brian Alexander's presentation. For a longer list of Aviation Security Reports check the GAO website.

Aviation Security: Long-Standing Problems Impair Airport Screeners' Performance. RCED-00-75 June 28, 2000

Aviation Security: Vulnerabilities Still Exist in the Aviation Security System. T-RCED/AIMD-00-142 April 6, 2000

Aviation Security: Slow Progress in Addressing Long-Standing Screener Performance Problems. T-RCED-00-125 Mar. 16, 2000

Aviation Security: FAA's Actions to Study Responsibilities and Funding for Airport Security and to Certify Screening Companies. RCED-99-53 February 25, 1999

Aviation Security: Urgent Issues Need to Be Addressed. T-RCED/NSIAD-96-251 September 11, 1996

Aviation Security: Immediate Action Needed to Improve Security. T-RCED/NSIAD-96-237 August 1, 1996

Aviation Security: Additional Actions Needed to Meet Domestic and International Challenges. RCED-94-38 January 27, 1994

"The 9/11 Commission Report," the Official Government Edition of the Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the U.S. is available in most book stores for \$10. Or, copies may be ordered for \$13.25 including postage from: the U.S. Printing Office, (866) 512-1800, or Mail Stop SSOP, Washington DC 20402-0001.

UPDATE on NADA/F Meetings

NEW! Washington DC, early March 2006: Plan to attend our special program on safety and security. **Regional Meetings are also being planned in Seattle WA, Phoenix AZ and New Jersey.** We will let you know the dates as soon as the programs are confirmed.

Regional Meetings and the March 2006 Washington DC meeting could be in lieu of a fall annual meeting. NADA/F board members have recommended a mailing to all voting members to directly elect 2006 Board Members and a direct vote on all NADA/F annual business, with no proxies this year. To be a voting member for 2005-2006 remember to make your donation of \$20 or more per person.

To be kept informed send your Email address to: info@PlaneSafe.org or check the website: www.PlaneSafe.org for meeting updates. Gail Dunham GADunham@aol.com

NADA/F Board Members – Nominating Committee

If you would like to serve on the NADA/F Board for 2006 please let us know. **Mary Kahl**, MKahlcul8@aol.com and **Rosemary Dillard** Dillard1@aol.com have volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Membership Donations

Please consider a donation of \$20 per person per year for membership, or as much as you can afford, tax deductible, to the *NATIONAL AIR DISASTER FOUNDATION*. We rely on donations, and over 80% of our donations are used for communication expenses. We are true to our founding goals of **Safety, Security, Survivability** for aviation passengers and to **Support victims' families**. We need your help and support to continue our work.

BOOKS – NADA/F welcomes book donations.

If you are able to make a tax-deductible donation of BOOKS about aviation safety, security, including homeland security, terrorism, survivability, or support for victims' families, please contact Mary Kahl, 724-864-0026 MKahlcul8@aol.com **We will publish a list of donated BOOKS in our next newsletter.**



To order books from Amazon.com please go to NADA/F's website first, www.PlaneSafe.org Go to Books and click on the Amazon.com LINK. We receive a small

commission from Amazon.com when linked from our website, at no additional cost to you. This is another way to help us grow. Amazon.com often offers Free Shipping. Thank you!

NADA/F Endorses Grounding MU-2 Airplanes

The NADA/F Board has unanimously recommended to ground all MU-2, an aircraft that is used for air cargo and general aviation. Of the 700+ manufactured, 212 have crashed – a crash rate of over 25% is outrageous. There have been 10 MU-2 crashes in the last 14 months.

NADA/F knows that grounding an aircraft has serious consequences to business; however, we cannot afford to ignore the failure rate of the MU-2. NADA/F has only made a grounding recommendation once before and we were successful. The FAA kept their word to us and grounded 264 commercial aircraft on Mar. 19, 2001, until they were equipped with smoke detectors and fire suppression equipment. No extensions or exemptions were issued, and 65 aging jets that were not converted were retired.

For additional information, or if you would like to help, contact NADA/F Board Member **Lara Lennon**, latela@verizon.net who lost her husband Tom on May 14 '04, in an MU-2 crash.

May 21, 2005 – Paris France

**Meeting with FLASH Airlines family members
Flash 604, January 3, 2004, 737-300, in Egypt**

The meeting with Flash Airlines 604 family members was held in a meeting room in the Crypt of the Parish of Saint Christophe de Javel. With translation help from Marc Chernet, the Chair of the group, we were able to share our universal concerns that family members have a “need to know” and encourage them to stay active and push for the truth about the disaster. Their grief is compounded as family members learn about maintenance negligence and more.

Flash 604, an 11-year old 737-300, left Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt during the night on January 3, 2004, and was en route to Paris. The aircraft disappeared off radar at 4:44 am, three minutes after takeoff, and from the time the airplane was at 5390’ it plunged into the sea in 17 seconds.

“The aircraft took off and climbed normally and began a left hand turn as scheduled. But at 2,000 feet the turn slowly inverted to the right and the aircraft progressively rolled until it was banked 90 degrees at 5,600 feet. It then rapidly lost height and dived into the sea. No mayday call was made.” (Source: “Air Safety Week,” Jan. 24 2004).

The Egyptian Ministry of Civil Aviation released a preliminary 431-page report www.civilaviation.gov.eg/conf/files/flash.pdf. The NTSB and French government have assisted with the investigation. The two recorders were recovered and the report has a full account of the brief flight.

There were 148 passengers and crew on board, including 133 French tourists returning home after a holiday vacation. They were families, friends, many children, and one family with 11 members. The crew members were Egyptian.

Flash, a charter flight operator, had a history of shabby maintenance (understatement) and a crash October 2002. Records show that the 604 aircraft had instruments in the flight deck unserviceable, crew oxygen masks missing, seatbelts and life jackets missing, problems with landing gear, and much more. When its maintenance record had not improved it was barred from landing in Switzerland October 2002. After complaints, Norwegian Tour operators did not contract with Flash. During this time there were also records of emergency landings, engine failure, crew fatigue, and more.

The Swiss airworthiness inspectors work with JAA in Europe (Joint Aviation Authorities’), and they were aware of all these problems, yet the airline continued to fly until 2004. Following flight 604 on Jan. 3, 2004 Flash returned its remaining aircraft to its lessor March 2004. It is possible that this airline has resumed flying as Cairo Aviation; however that has not been verified.

This sounds so familiar and so negligent to many of us! Where was the JAA? Where were the European Aviation Authorities? Could this airline resurrect itself with a new name? Fly-by-night airlines should not be licensed to operate in Europe, the U.S., or anywhere, without meeting safety and security standards. No one should be licensed to just make money at any cost—no when the cost is family members losing their loved ones.

NADA/F shared important information with the group, documents acquired through the years, and we will continue to do everything possible for a true and accurate report of the failures of Flash 604. The family members from the FLASH crash at Sharm el Sheikh, are devastated with the loss of so many family and friends. The recent terrorist attacks in Sharm el Sheikh also brought back more sad memories. NADA/F stands ready to help for as long as we are needed. *Gail Dunham, President*

FIVAA (in French)

Federation Internationale des Victimes d’Accidents Aeriens

IF VAA (in English)

International Federation of Victims of Airline Accidents



The second meeting of the day was cross-town at the Maison des Associations, a beautiful building to facilitate meetings of public interest groups. FIVAA is an established organization representing six air crash associations; and we talked about ways that we could work together in the future.

The members are organized, intelligent, serious, and wanting to do many things, and especially to pass a Family Assistance Act. They will take our legislation, translated into French, to the French aviation authorities, and to the European Union.

The survivors of Air France 358 in Toronto, August 2, 2005, also want to pass a Family Assistance Act in Canada, so NADA/F is working with both organizations, and introducing them to each other. NADA/F wrote promoted and passed the Family Assistance Act, a federal law, 1995-1996.

Proposals of FIVAA for Improvement of Air Safety

IN the Field of the RESEARCH OF THE TRUTH

- ✓ Installation of a single legal treatment of the plane crashes using only one jurisdiction made up of judges, specialized in the field of plane crashes at the Paris Court of Appeal.
- ✓ Constitution of a pool of experts, widened at the European level, to increase the number and quality in order to give the examining magistrates all the resources of expertise necessary for the quality and the reduction of investigation time.

IN the Field of AIR SAFETY

- ✓ A strict application of the standards of air transport in French territory. Working in subcontracting for a French client by the reinforcement of control by the ICAO.
- ✓ Creation of a rating scale that evaluates airline incidents at the international level.
- ✓ Creation of a national agency for dialogue on air safety, gathering the airline companies, the manufacturers, crashes, the federations of consumers and the press.

IN the Field of the RIGHT OF THE VICTIMS

- ✓ Installation of an authority of dialogue on the rights and duties of the families of victims of plane crashes, gathering all the actors of the various ministries, the FIVAA, the FENVAC and the University of Colmar, to respect and adapt the evolution of a “Charter of the Rights of the Victims.” (i.e. Family Assistance Act)

FIVAA is an Association of Airline Accident Victims and any person or entity are welcomed as FIVAA members. Janice Watson and I felt so welcome with the group, and we all quickly recognized our common interests. It was a meeting full of energy, sharing of ideas, common goals, and trusted friendships—working together for safety and security for the future.
Gail Dunham

**The 25th Memorial of American Airlines flight 191
May 25, 1979 – at Chicago's O'Hare Airport**



"We had waited 25 years for that day, and the memorial service was everything that I wanted it to be with the atmosphere that we wanted. The Memorial Service was at 12:30 pm at the O'Hare Airport Chapel, and those who wanted to linger and talk were able to in the Fellowship Room next to the Chapel. At 2:00 pm those of us who wanted to visit the crash site were taken there by O'Hare personnel. The memorial day was about the 273 people who died and their families.

We knew the crash site was near the tollway, and close to a trailer park and petroleum storage tanks, however, we always wanted to know more. I was never exactly sure where my parents died. The site is part of the O'Hare expansion, so it was even more important to visit while it was still a crash site. When we walked the vacant area where the DC-10 crashed seconds after take-off, it all came full circle for me. At the memorial we also learned more from crew and airport employees, and we appreciate that the City of Chicago O'Hare Airport helped to make the area available to us.

There was no policy in place 25 years ago for family members to meet each other and we just did not know how to do it. We hope to continue to hear from other family members from AA191 as we establish a website, and hopefully a memorial marker. I want something where victims' families can go and have some quiet reflection. A memorial helps as we move forward together."

Melody Smith, in memory of her parents,
Bill & Corrinne Borchers

*"My parents died as a result of the AA191 crash in 1979. The pain never leaves, ever. I still want to know more, and want to see the **"Eastman Report"** that was so wrongly destroyed during the investigation.*

*Through NADA/F I was fortunate to make contact with Melody Smith and Kim Jockl who organized a memorial for the tragedy after 25 years. These two tenacious women deserve accolades for their extraordinary work. In 25 years there never was any effort made to extend to family member the opportunity to visit the crash site. For me the experience was strange, eerie, and painful; however, the curiosity and longing that I have lived with to see the site is now fulfilled. I have now had an experience which somewhat serves to validate the reality of the accident. Legislation** which now allows survivors of victims to visit the site of an airline crash has been in place for some years now, and how necessary that right is.*

For many of us the damage done by an aviation disaster is permanent, and we continue to cope with scars and pain. Those emotional scars need to be dealt with, and I have found knowing others that share the experience is somewhat comforting.

I feel there is a bigger purpose to all of this, and that is, the continuing fight for airline safety. We would not have as many airline disasters and the ensuing problems if the airline industry were not allowed to place corporate greed above public safety. I believe that dealing with the emotional and psychological aspects of having lost family in a disaster, and the crusade to insure safety, are one. Simply focusing on the individual aspect of a loss does not cure the greater problem. Support groups are necessary, but it is also necessary to fight for a cure.

I believe that NADA/F and your members understand this and the purpose of NADA/F is all encompassing. Thank you for all you have done, and I encourage others to put their wonderful efforts and tenacity toward both ends of the spectrum."

Gary Schwartz, in memory of his parents,
Bernard and Beatrice Schwartz Email: gh.s@sbcglobal.net



****** One of the provisions of The Family Assistance Act, passed in 1996 by NADA/F Founding Members, is for family members to have access to visit the crash site.

NADA/F was able to connect some of the AA191 family members with each other, and we hope to hear from more. It took a long time, but friendships are now forged for the future.



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Feeling "Stuck" in Grief

M. Regina Asaro, MS, RN, CT

Grief is hard for most people to get through. It does take time and "grief work" but there is no timetable to provide guidance for the process. Often, the only way mourners can mark their progress is to look back and see whether they are feeling and coping differently than when their grief was new. This column will look at some of the issues and concerns which might cause the mourner to feel "stuck" and need help to move forward.

Grief specialist, Dr. Therese Rando (1993) described a number of issues which might place the mourner at risk for complications: whether the death is sudden and traumatic; a relationship with the deceased which was marked by anger or dependence; what she termed as "mourner liabilities," including prior losses or stresses that were not resolved and/or prior mental health problems; and, lastly, the mourner's perceived lack of social support (p. 453). There are, additionally, many variations and individual factors which may also promote or interfere with the grief process.

Good friends may serve as a sounding board for dealing with loss-related issues; however, when one is feeling "stuck," it can be more useful to talk with a counselor trained in traumatic loss issues, someone who can help you to understand the convergence and/or overlapping of all the feelings, emotions and issues that often surround a traumatic loss. Following are some of the ways in which counseling can be helpful:

- To assist one to find acceptable ways of expressing anger or frustration with those who are perceived to have caused the death.
- To help one resolve unfinished business, anger and/or guilt over some aspect of the relationship with the deceased, themselves. There are "ups and downs" as part of the normal course of any relationship; however, when a loved one dies before it is possible to resolve conflict or to give or receive forgiveness for angry words or disagreements, it can be hard afterwards.

- To explore the differing levels of dependence and interdependence that one shared with deceased loved ones. People often feel abandoned by loved ones, especially when they die suddenly. After the death, survivors must make adjustments so that they can meet needs previously taken care of by the deceased; they may either take them on themselves or have them met by other sources. This is not an uncommon issue but one which must be resolved.

- To deal with the "resurrection" of other past losses, which may need to be "re-grieved." Counseling can be very helpful in teasing these losses apart so that one can determine which issues and feelings belong to the old loss and which to the new. The bereaved can then express the feelings and mourn the losses as needed.

- To promote mental health and help lessen the impact that the stress of the death may have had on pre-existing psychiatric symptoms. Mental health is not just an absence of mental illness but includes one's ability to cope and solve problems, self-esteem issues and one's belief system. Just as the symptoms of many physical illnesses may be re-triggered by a high level of stress, the aftermath of a traumatic loss can also challenge one's ability to cope with symptoms of depression, anxiety, thought disorders and substance abuse. Additionally, the use of illegal drugs or alcohol to deal with anxiety, stress and depression following the death should also be addressed.

- To provide a sense of being supported emotionally through a difficult process. This may be especially needed in families where all are mourning the same loss and are either at different places in their grief or who are feeling so overwhelmed that they are unable to help each other or allow each other to express their feelings.

Conclusions

If you see yourself in the above, know that there is much you can do to help yourself. While it is true that we need to do the grief work described in the last column, sometimes extra help is needed to get "unstuck" or to express some of the most difficult feelings associated with a traumatic loss. If so, I urge you to consider making an appointment with a counselor who is trained in traumatic loss issues. While there are no miracle cures, reaching out for help to get you through the rough parts of grief is a positive coping strategy which will, hopefully, save you a great deal of pain and frustration.

Rando, T. A. (1993). Treatment of Complicated Mourning. Champagne, IL: Research Press.

M. Regina Asaro, MS, RN, CT of Newport News, VA, a consultant on traumatic loss issues, may be contacted at rasaro68@pinn.net

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**Thank you to Gordon and Kathy Haberman for sponsoring this newsletter
in memory of their daughter Andrea, and all of the 2,973 extraordinary people
who died on September 11, 2001 as a result of the worst aviation disaster in history.**



**Andrea Lyn Haberman
2/2/76 to 9/11/01**

On September 11, 2001 our beautiful daughter Andrea was murdered. Andrea, an employee of Carr Futures was in New York, on the first business trip of her career, having traveled from her home in Chicago. She had been in the North Tower on the 92nd Floor for a total of forty-five minutes before American flight 11, piloted with a deliberate and malicious purpose as an instrument of destruction, flew into the building. Andrea was trapped with her coworkers. My wife and I, like thousands of others watched in desperate agony and prayed that she somehow was able to escape to safety. It took only 102 minutes to destroy lives full of love and happiness.

We drove to New York from our home in Wisconsin to search for her. As I stood on the surreal site of her death with my wife, I promised Andrea and my family that I would find the answers. I have spent the months and years since then attempting to understand the events that led up to that day and those that have happened since. I attended 9/11 Commission Hearings, went to Congress and have asked questions of the FBI. We have listened to testimony and statements and have educated ourselves on the circumstances, both in the U.S. and abroad that contributed to Andrea's death. My wife and I are proud to be Board Members of the *NATIONAL AIR DISASTER ALLIANCE* and member of various 9/11 groups seeking the same answers as we.

I have a deep belief in the ideals of our country, however a wall has been placed between the truth and us. What we have learned, and what we believe, is that September 11, 2001 could have been prevented. We have learned that if intelligence; obtained by motivated and dedicated government servants, empowered to protect the public of this country, had been enacted upon; September 11 would not have happened. If the government and aviation industry had recognized their own history of security failures, and had responded to past failures and the raised threat level months prior, then September 11 would not have happened. I am concerned that the national security of this country has suffered by preventing honest and decent people, employees within our own government, sworn to protect us, from speaking freely, without fear of recrimination. Elected officials who publicly talk of honoring those who died on 9/11, should truly honor our loved ones and protect the American public by their actions. Release documents now that never should have been classified, and encourage at long last a full and truthful dialogue about past failures.

It is too late for Andrea. It is not too late for the truth. The dead are owed it, the living deserve it. Our government, rather than attempting to prevent the truth from being spoken and released should welcome it; learn from the truth and adjust its practices where necessary. Who will answer to the families the next time if we fail to enact all the safeguards that are possible?

Respectfully,
Gordon & Kathleen Haberman
Parents of Andrea Lyn Haberman, 92nd Floor WTC 1
www.AndysJourney.org

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