

# THE GRAPEVINE

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AIRCRAFT MECHANICS FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION

JAN. 2017

## AMFA Represents at Wright Memorial Dinner

By Jay Johnson,  
National Secretary / Treasurer

**O**n December 16, 2016, National Director Bret Oestreich, National Secretary/Treasurer Jay Johnson, Former National Secretary/Treasurer Justin Madden, and our lobbyists from Commonwealth Strategic Partners, George McElwee and Keith Pemrick, attended the Annual Wright Memorial Dinner in Washington, DC.



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George McElwee Commonwealth Strategic Partners, Former National Secretary/Treasurer Justin Madden, Keith Pemrick Commonwealth Strategic Partners, National Secretary/Treasurer Jay Johnson, and National Director Bret Oestreich.

## Understanding the Collective Bargaining Process Under the Railway Labor Act

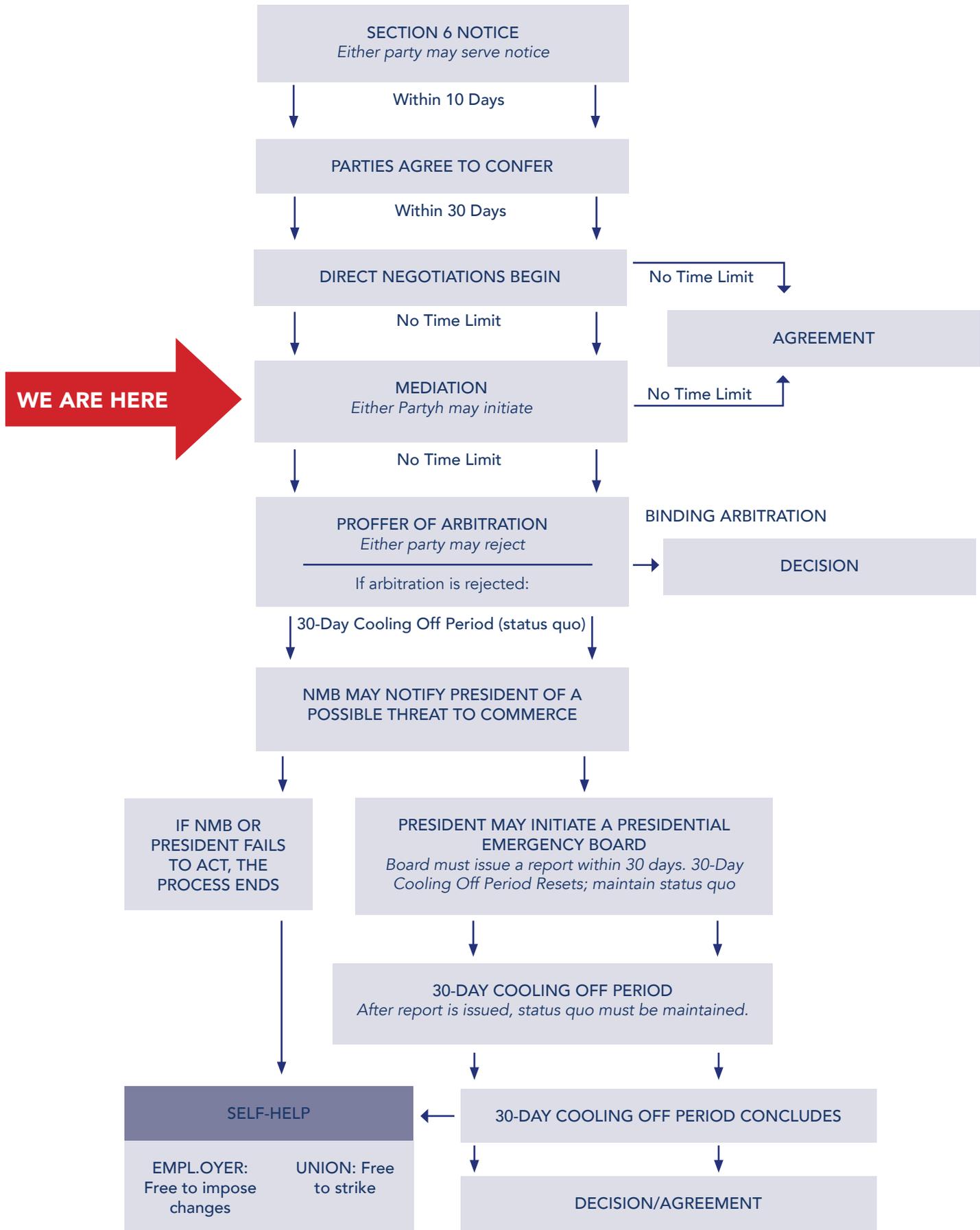
**A**ircraft Maintenance Technicians and related craft, like all union employees in the airline industry, are subject to the rules of the Railway Labor Act (RLA).

The RLA dictates the process by which AMFA negotiates its collective bargaining agreements with our carriers. The processes and procedures under the RLA can be confusing and AMFA is dedicated to making sure our members understand how it works.

The RLA is the federal law that governs labor relations in the airline industry and is enforced by the National Mediation Board (NMB). The purpose of the RLA is to avoid any interruption of commerce by providing for the prompt resolution of disputes between carriers and their employees and to protect the rights of employees to organize and take part in collective bargaining.

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# Collective Bargaining Process Under the Railway Labor Act (RLA)



# Know Your Rights Under the RLA

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The RLA settlement process starts with a determination of the type of dispute that exists. A major dispute involves the formation of a new bargaining agreement or substantial alteration of an existing one, usually involving new rights. A minor dispute simply involves the interpretation of an existing agreement and is directed at rights already in place.

When either party wishes to open negotiations, they initiate what is called “Section 6 Notice,” and the other party must respond within 10-days to this filing, at which time the parties agree to confer within 30 days. The two parties then begin direct negotiations.

Under the RLA, negotiation sessions go on until either party thinks there is not enough progress. At this point, a request under the RLA to the NMB for mediation follows. Mediation is the discussion process that attempts to bring the parties together. There is no time limit on how long mediation lasts.

The RLA dictates the process depending on the two types of disputes. The most important procedural difference is that a major dispute imposes on the parties a legally enforceable obligation from altering the status quo while negotiations continue. A minor dispute is silent on this point and is generally held that the parties need to maintain a status quo pending the resolution of a minor dispute.

During the mediation process, the NMB can decide that there is no basis for settlement and order binding arbitration. Either side can reject the binding arbitration, at which time the Board declares a state of impasse exists. A 30-day cooling off period follows. After that time period ends, the parties are forced back to the bargaining table to make decisions. The original contract is still in place under the status quo rule. It remains in effect until a settlement is reached.

If both sides voluntarily agree to binding arbitration, an Arbitration Board of up to six members is established. Each side selects an equal number of arbitrators, who then select the additional member or members.

If either labor or management decline voluntary arbitration and if the NMB decides that the continuance of the controversy threatens to interrupt interstate commerce in any section of the nation, the NMB is required to notify the President, who may, at his discretion, create a fact-finding Presidential Emergency Board (PEB). If the board is appointed, they must make their recommendations within 30 days. The board may, however, ask either party for additional time to investigate. The President may also allow an additional 30-day extension for the board to complete its investigation. During this time the parties must maintain the status quo.

If the President chooses not to appoint an emergency board, af-

ter the 30-day cooling off period either party may initiate self-help in the form of strikes or lockouts.

## Quick Reference Guide

**Section 6 Notice:** When either party wishes to open negotiations.

**NMB:** National Mediation Board

**RLA:** Railway Labor Act

**Mediation:** Intervention in a dispute in order to resolve it.

**Arbitration:** A form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR), is a technique for the resolution of disputes outside the courts.

**Proffer of Arbitration:** A mandatory step in the RLA bargaining process. If either party to the negotiations declines to accept the proffer, the NMB will then notify the parties that its mediatory efforts have failed and will release them from mediation.

**Emergency Board:** Emergency boards are comprised of neutral members whose job is to investigate and submit to the President, within 30 days of its creation, a fact-finding report with non-binding recommendations for terms on which a dispute might be settled. During this period, the parties must maintain the status quo.

# Aircraft Mechanic's Creed

By Jay Johnson, National Secretary/Treasurer



Jay Johnson,  
National Secretary/  
Treasurer

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) membership

that the safety of our coworkers, the flying public, and the aircraft

are dependent on us. Our skills, craft, training, and experience are not to be taken lightly. The AMT works one of the most complicated mechanical systems and on the aircraft itself. The AMT cannot overlook anything that we may identify wrong and/or un-airworthy. It is our responsibility to document and fix anything we find on the aircraft. The AMT's signature goes with the aircraft and its parts for life –

there is no other craft that maintains this kind of liability.

For some of us, it has been a long time since we have brought our attention to the Aircraft Mechanic's Creed. Working safely and compliant is what is required from our craft. In addition, we must also remember AMFA's motto "safety in the air begins with quality maintenance on the ground."



*Upon my honor I swear that I shall hold in sacred trust the rights and privileges conferred upon me as a certified mechanic. Knowing full well that the safety and lives of others are dependent upon my skill and judgment, I shall never knowingly subject others to risks which I would not be willing to assume for myself, or for those dear to me.*

*In discharging this trust, I pledge myself never to undertake work or approve work which I feel to be beyond the limits of my knowledge, nor shall I allow any non-certified superior to persuade me to approve aircraft or equipment as airworthy against my better judgment, nor shall I permit my judgment to be influenced by money or other personal gain, nor shall I pass as airworthy aircraft or equipment about which I am in doubt, either as a result of direct inspection or uncertainty regarding the ability of others who have worked on it to accomplish their work satisfactorily.*

*I realize the grave responsibility which is mine as a certified airman, to exercise my judgment on the airworthiness of aircraft and equipment. I therefore, pledge unyielding adherence to these precepts for the advancement of aviation and for the dignity of my vocation.*

*Flight Safety Foundation  
Written by Jerome Lederer, Director, Safety Bureau  
U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board, 1941*

# Union Solidarity

By Gene Painter, Assistant National Director



Gene Painter,  
Assistant National  
Director

I looked up the definition of the word solidarity on the internet: *solidarity is unity (as of a group or class) which produces or is based on unities of interests, objectives, standards, and sympathies. It refers to the ties in a society that bind people together as one.*

For the working class, the word **solidarity** is the strongest. Unity of the members of a union is what makes it strong; everyone working as one voice. The same message and the same goals are important values that make a union strong. When individual members talk directly to the company, it hurts the membership as a whole. We have all heard the statement, “we are only as strong as the member.” This statement is really important for members to fully understand. We all need to work together on the consistent message and values of what the union stands for.

As members we all have friends on the company side, but you need to think about what you’re saying to them that could interfere with the objectives and goals of your Union. Don’t take this the wrong way, we can all have friends that are the company side; however, what you say to them still goes up the ladder to the supervisors and beyond. Just think about what you are doing before you say anything. The Association has representatives that speak for the members; therefore, members should talk to their respective representatives regarding concerns about what is happening. Let them do their job and be the voice of the membership. With negotiations ongoing we need to stay unified in our goal.

Members have the right to organize, to strike, to bargain collectively, and to earn decent pay, and it is this Association’s goal to promote and protect what is in the best interest of our membership. We should all want the same thing: saving jobs at stations, better pay, job security, and better working conditions. So let’s all remember that we are part of a team, working toward the same goals to improve the quality of life for ourselves and our families. We need the fortitude to stand as one.

## 2016 Local Officer/Representative of the Year

By Jay Johnson, National Secretary/Treasurer

The National Executive Council (NEC) awarded Jarod Mills the 2016 Local Officer/Representative of the Year, and presented the award at our September 2016 Joint Advisory Council (JAC) meeting in Nashville, TN.

Jarod has been involved with AMFA in many positions since AMFA was brought on at Alaska Airlines. Over the years he has served as Shop Representative, Local Hearing Committee Member, National Convention Delegate, Local President, and most recently, Local 14 Airline Contract Committee and Rules Committee for the 2016 National Convention.

Jarod was an essential part of the 2016 AMFA National Convention, serving on the Rules Committee and working hard to ensure its success. The project lasted almost the entire year, culminating in the printing of the AMFA Constitution in October 2016.

The Convention Delegates were obviously as impressed in him as the NEC was, and asked Jarod to continue in his same Rules Committee role in 2020.

This is the third year of the award, and as was the case last year, the competition was intense. The NEC believes that it is important to recognize those who have helped the Association achieve success. Locals submit the name of an individual who has gone above and beyond while representing the membership.

Congratulations Jarod!



Jarod Mills



# Barrett Honored at Wright Memorial Dinner



AMFA National Director Bret Oestreich, Colleen Barrett and National Secretary/Treasurer Jay Johnson pose for picture at the dinner.



[The trophy is presented] "to a living American who has contributed significant public service of enduring value to aviation in the United States."

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Former Southwest Airlines President and COO Colleen Barrett was awarded the Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy, established and administered by the National Aeronautic Association, to honor the memory of Orville and Wilbur Wright and to commemorate the anniversary of the first powered flight. The trophy is presented "to a living American who has contributed significant public service of enduring value to aviation in the United States."

Colleen is only the third woman to receive this prestigious honor. Other award winners include Charles A. Lindberg, Lt. Gen. James Doolittle USAF, Senator John Glen, Herb D. Kelleher, Neil A. Armstrong, and Harrison Ford, just to name a few.

Colleen was selected for the award for dedicating nearly 50



Colleen Barrett

years to aviation, and is the only woman to serve as president of a major US airline. Colleen devoted herself to creating a unique, service-oriented corporate culture which made her one of the most successful leaders in US airline history.

Herb Kelleher delivered a comical and respectful tribute, as only Herb can do, and Colleen accepted the Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy with grace and pride reminding us, "It's the employees and customer service that made Southwest Airlines what is today."

We were privileged to attend this momentous event and honored to represent the Aircraft Mechanic Fraternal Association.

# Distractions



Scott King

By Scott King, National Safety and Standards Director

Distraction is the process of diverting the attention of an individual or group from the desired area of focus and thereby potentially blocking or diminishing the reception of desired information. Distraction is one of the most

common causes that contributing to Human Factors Errors within aviation maintenance.

With constant pressures that are placed on the modern day Aircraft Maintenance Technician (AMT), distractions are hazards that can be unnoticed until it is too late. One example is, while performing a walk-around inspection you receive a radio call to assist another AMT on the next gate. An hour later you return and continue your walk-around. Are you certain what areas you have already inspected? If you made a note of where you stopped, this action is a written reminder and can help mitigate the distraction. As a precaution, back up three steps before you continue on to the next item.

Another form of distraction can be everyday pressures of life. Contract negotiations, family issues, financial concerns, health issues, phone calls, text messages, and social media messages are just a few examples. As challenging as it may be, as a professional AMT these forms of distraction must be mentally set aside while performing maintenance tasks.

With all the different forms that a distraction can take, it is important to take every precaution so that it does not create an unsafe situation. The best measure of prevention is in written form. Utilize a checklist, make an extra copy of your manual reference or task card and mark off items as they are completed. Prioritize all of your tasks at the beginning of your shift, then review at break/lunch time and re-evaluate if necessary.

In the end, AMT's must not allow their attention to be diverted away from the job at hand. Stay focused on the task in front of you. If you see that any of your fellow AMFA members may be at risk of allowing a distraction to affect them, offer a "helping hand."

## AMFA: There's an App for That

The Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) has a mobile device app for its members. Available for both Android and Apple tablets and phones, the app is a quick link to the latest news and information from your Union. With built in GrievTrac access, the app also gives our contract representatives private access to file grievances on behalf of our members.

In addition to being a great tool to get Association news, the AMFA app is a quick and easy way for members to access their **AMFA Number**. The AMFA app is only available for download from the AMFA National Website; it is not found on iTunes.

Download your copy today at:  
<http://apps.unionactive.com/clients/amfa/amfa.html>

If you encounter problems registering with the site or downloading the app, contact the AMFA National Office for assistance.





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## Dues Objector Notification

Federal law requires that the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) notify all AMFA represented employees annually of its dues objector procedures. These procedures require that you notify AMFA between February 1 and March 15, 2017, if you intend to be a dues objector for that year. Dues objector notices received either before or after these dates will not be accepted and you will not have dues objector status for that year.

Dues objectors are required to pay only the portion of dues that is germane to collective bargaining, including but not limited to grievance adjustment

and contract administration. The non-germane percentage of dues is set annually by June 1 and is based on an independent CPA's verification of germane/non-germane expenses for the prior year. A compilation of 2015 expenses was conducted and the fees paid by dues objectors in 2016 were 94.42% of full membership dues.

If a dues objector disagrees with the calculation of the percentage of the reduction, our policy allows for an appeal before an independent arbitrator. Costs of the arbitrator are paid by the Association. Objectors bear the costs of presenting their appeal.

It is important that if you elect to become a dues objector you will no longer be entitled to the rights and privileges of membership, including but not limited to, the right to hold a National or Local office, vote in National or Local elections, attend union meetings, participate in contract negotiations, or vote on a contract ratification. We suggest you consider these restrictions before deciding whether or not you wish to become a dues objector. To receive more information on filing for dues objector status, please call the AMFA National Office at (303) 752-2632 or write to AMFA National, 14001 E. Iliff Ave, Suite 217, Aurora, CO 80014.