



Photo courtesy of the FAA

It's been two years since 11,400 air traffic controllers committed occupational suicide, and looking back, the miscalculations of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization assume stupefying proportions. PATCO's three major demands were anything but modest: a \$10,000 across-the-board raise for all controllers, a 32-hour work week, and retirement after 20 years at 75 percent of one's top pay. The strike was unambiguously illegal. PATCO called the walkout in August, at a time of good weather (which makes controlling easier) and declining air traffic due to the recession. The public was in an unsympathetic mood when it came to labor disputes; among other things, it had just endured a long baseball strike.

Worst of all, the strike was a reckless gamble with the public's safety. Consider for a moment the likely public reaction if some 19-year-old controller on loan from the Air Force had accidentally run two 747s together over Lake Michigan. Would angry citizens have demanded that the government recall the striking controllers, as PATCO apparently thought? Far more likely, they would have formed vigilante squads to conduct a door-to-door search for PATCO President Robert Poli.

The controllers' bizarre behavior, not surprisingly, has given rise to some colorful theories. Responding to a question about Poli, one official

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of the Federal Aviation Administration broke into a bemused smile: "Ah, you mean the Reverend Jim Jones of the American labor movement." The "Guyana theory" seems very popular, and not just at the FAA, to judge by the number of times one hears references to "drinking the Kool-Aid."

The controllers' seemingly irrational behavior, however, is exactly why this story is worth a second look. Ponder it for a moment. Here were 11,400 men and women, most of them without college degrees, working for the only employer (outside of the military) who had any use for their skills. At the age of 35 they were making an average of almost \$40,000 a year. With overtime and differential pay for weekends and night shifts, some made almost \$60,000. They already had one of the best retirement systems in the country: half pay at age 50 with just 20 years' service, or at any age with 25 years' service. Of those who went on strike, 60 would have been eligible for retirement within the next five months. "At 31 I'd achieved everything I ever wanted—a four-bedroom house in the suburbs, two new cars, a beautiful wife and kids," recalls fired controller Greg Runge, now studying in North Dakota for a college degree. And he poses the question that still is hard to answer two years later. "Why did I want to throw it all away?"

It's a question that conversations with former controllers inevitably come around to. Bill Taylor is a 40-year-old former controller and one of the

leaders of the walk out; he carries the dubious distinction of being the first American convicted of a felony for striking against the federal government. Taylor recalls people and events from his 15 years as a controller—the colleagues who suffered nervous breakdowns and strokes, the tie-grabbing arguments with FAA supervisors, the weekly pilgrimages of a former controller he knows who journeys to La Guardia to hand out old PATCO circulars to startled pilots and watch the planes come and go. “You get right down to it,” says Taylor, wrestling with the inevitable question, “and the essence of it all is that these guys *loved their jobs*. They hated the system, but they loved their jobs.”

Risking one’s professional life in order to save it. It’s an explanation that doesn’t excuse the strike, but it does seem close to the truth. Nothing strikes an outsider more in conversations with former controllers than their deep affection for the task that their leaders insistently portrayed as dangerous and debilitating. “It was a great job,” recalls Paul Schaiger, a former controller who now raises hogs in the Midwest. “The most satisfying times were when it got busy as hell and you had a lot of nerdy pilots out there, and you brought them in anyway.” Sid Rhinehart, now a part-time restaurant manager in Minneapolis, says, “I loved it, especially when it got busy and you knew you had to resolve a problem or a lot of people were going to get killed. I loved the authority.”

But why the controllers struck is only half the mystery. The other half, which has been largely overlooked in the coverage since the walkout, is in many respects more important. Why did the controllers lose this fight, when on the things that really mattered—to them and the flying public—they were really right after all.

No, not right about the illegal strike, nor right about the across-the-board contract demands. What the controllers were right about was that the FAA was a terrible boss.

The FAA’s attitude towards its employees manifests itself in several ways—in the photographs, taken shortly after the strike, of

controllers being led away in handcuffs, as if they were violent criminals, and in the agency’s stubborn insistence to this day that no fired controllers should be rehired, even though the teaching of the lesson long ago became gratuitous. It’s an attitude characterized as “Kick ass and take names,” by David Bowers, head of the Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan. “The whole atmosphere was paramilitary, but of a kind that even the military these days knows doesn’t work,” he adds. “It was a caricature right out of the movies.”

Bowers speaks from an intimate acquaintance with the system. In October 1981, Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis asked him and two others—Lawrence Jones, president of the Coleman Company, and Bruce Fuller of the Harvard Business School—to determine what had gone wrong. The report of the Jones Commission, released six months after the strike, was a devastating indictment of how the FAA had managed both the controllers and the entire air traffic control system. Labor-management relations were “very, very poor,” the Commission concluded. Even more disturbing was its conclusion that dissatisfaction among the 5,000 controllers who stayed on the job was nearly as great as among those who struck. “Unless the FAA wants a simple repetition of the events of 1981,” the report bluntly warned, “it will have to drastically change its management style.”

The conclusion was all the more telling, given that the FAA had already been forewarned. In 1969, the government appointed another outside panel, this one headed by John J. Corson, to study the air traffic control system. “Members of this committee,” its report concluded, “have never previously observed a situation in which there is as much mutual resentment and antagonism between management and its employees.”

In the strike’s aftermath, there have, of course, been some changes. Lewis, to his credit, seemed sincerely interested in reforming the system and candid about its past problems; in an interview this spring with *The Wall Street Journal*, he talk-

Photo courtesy of the FAA





The air traffic controllers were right about FAA mismanagement. They blew their chance for public support by demanding \$10,000 raises and 32-hour weeks for everyone.

ed about the FAA's "very antiquated people practices" and the fact that his agency "had been a very bad boss." Lewis appointed nine "human relations specialists"—one for each of the FAA's regions—and told his successor, Elizabeth Dole, that solving the FAA's management problems was her most important task.

Unfortunately the lesson some officials in Washington say they've learned has yet to filter down to many of the system's 450 towers and 25 "en route centers" across the country. (Tower controllers guide traffic in and out of airports; those in en route centers ensure that planes stay properly separated as they travel between airports.) This March a confidential survey of 500 controllers and supervisors by the National Traffic Safety Board found that 44 percent rated FAA management as "poor" and 37 percent as only "fair"; almost 70 percent said morale had deteriorated noticeably in the previous six months. As Bowers observes, "Trying to change the system just by hiring a few human relations specialists is difficult, if not impossible. Frankly, I think the FAA has got to get rid of a lot of its managers." That isn't happening; indeed, last year the FAA convinced Congress to give a special 10 percent raise as a reward for those who didn't strike—a raise that went to all the supervisors as well.

Tower Power Plays

The union that succeeds PATCO—and even FAA officials concede another union is inevitable—needs to understand the mistakes of its predecessor. Those mistakes were far more than merely tactical; they arose from some fundamental misperceptions that PATCO entertained, not just about the job of the air traffic controller, but about itself.

PATCO's most obvious error was that it should have been honest with the public—and its members—about what the job of an air traffic controller is really like.

The occupational hazards of controlling airplanes first caught the public's eye in the sum-

mer of 1968. During the previous decade, commercial air traffic had tripled; so unprepared was the FAA that its air traffic control training academy in Oklahoma City had been closed since 1964. Meanwhile, controllers at the nation's major airports were typically working six-day weeks with mandatory overtime, glued to their World War II-vintage radar screens for eight or ten hours at a stretch. A memorable *Life* magazine article of the era described JFK controller George Kelley, who was so exhausted on his one day off that he wanted only to retreat to his backyard swimming pool, where he would lie on his back and "watch all those planes circling, circling, circling."

PATCO's first executive director, flamboyant criminal attorney and erstwhile pilot F. Lee Bailey, was adept at getting publicity for the union and the controllers' grievances. In one impassioned, rambling presentation before the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee in 1969 Bailey described controllers as "old men at 35" and noted that controlling traffic was a "unique job" that "only the top 10 percent of the male population is even capable of doing." (This latter presumption remains strong today; 94 percent of the controllers are men.) If things didn't improve, Bailey warned, "No one will be left to do the job." Congress took its time, but ultimately gave the controllers almost everything they asked for. Between 1969 and 1972 the FAA hired 10,000 new controllers and, at Congress's behest, instituted an early retirement plan that only the military could beat.

Controlling air traffic certainly was a difficult, and sometimes fatal, way to make a living. The long hours and pressure took a grim toll: men in their 30s suffered heart attacks, hypertension, and ulcers—all aggravated by the controller's tendency (still true today) to drink and smoke more than the average population. Controllers were extremely conscious of "burning out," being so overwhelmed by the accumulation of past errors and the inevitable slowing of reflexes that they suddenly found they could no longer cope with the demands of the job.

Still, to read the testimony of Bailey and other PATCO officials today, one is struck by the broad-brush picture that was painted of the controller's lot—and how readily it was accepted by the public and members of Congress. "Burn-out" was inevitable. The stress was unrelenting and inescapable. Even the FAA, perhaps because it sensed Congress's willingness to send some more money its way, preferred the generalized picture. When Senator Hiram Fong asked administrator John Shaffer in a 1972 hearing whether an early retirement plan should try to distinguish between controllers who were working at busy facilities like JFK and controllers at low-volume towers, Shaffer demurred: "I do not think we can try to make distinctions between towers or center duty, or one duty station or the next."

It was as if those differences didn't exist, though the FAA certainly knew better. The agency divides its 450 towers into five categories according to traffic volume. At a Level I tower, controllers primarily handle "general aviation," or small private planes. Controllers at these small, generally rural towers are paid at the GS-10 level (\$22,307 to \$29,003). The system's busiest towers, such as O'Hare and JFK, are ranked at Level V; there, controllers are paid at the GS-14 level (\$41,277 to \$53,661). Controllers at the system's 25 en route centers, which employed almost half the controllers before the strike, are classified at the GS-13 or GS-14 level. Reaching the top grade usually takes less than two years at a Level I tower and less than six years at a Level V tower. Even before the strike, the controllers' rapid rise through the ranks—they begin as GS-7s following a 14- to 17-week training course at the FAA's air traffic control academy—was nearly unprecedented in the federal civil service.

In general, the lower the GS level, the lighter the traffic—and the lighter the stress. "We used to fight over who'd get the next plane," recalls one controller who worked at a Level I tower. A few outsiders who became familiar with the system also understood this. James Mitchell, a member of the Corson Commission, recalls today his most striking memory as being "the dramatic difference in the atmosphere when we visited a tower like O'Hare compared to the one in Charlotte, North Carolina."

John Leyden, president of PATCO from 1972 until 1980, when he was ousted by Poli in a coup d'état, attributes some of the internal division in the union during his reign to a growing resentment among small-tower controllers who felt their pay should be much closer to that of their

large-tower counterparts. Leyden, who worked for more than a decade in the system's busiest en route center, didn't buy the argument. "I'd travel a lot and I'd tell guys, 'Look, if you think it's the same, then bid for Chicago. There are slots open and I'll see that you're there in two weeks.' Only a couple took me up on it, and they came back."

Even at the busiest facilities, the work was hardly the constant, grueling ordeal it was portrayed to be. In addition to adding new controllers in the early 1970s, the FAA instituted a policy—in the name of safety—of staffing facilities at 90 percent of their peak load, regardless of the actual amount of traffic. The result was a lot of controllers sitting around with little to do because traffic varies widely during the day at the nation's busiest airports. East Coast airports, for example, are busiest in the early morning and early evening hours; Denver, a major hub of transcontinental traffic, has its busiest periods in the early afternoon. In 1981 the GAO examined four of the nation's busiest facilities—the towers and en route centers in Chicago and Denver—and found that the typical controller spent only 40 to 50 percent of his time actually controlling aircraft. The rest of the time he waited for the peaks. Some controllers came to work and never plugged in their headsets. "These guys were called 'no-hitters,'" recalls an investigator for the National Traffic Safety Board, which conducted a comprehensive study of the system right after the 1981 strike. "They'd come in, go down to the cafeteria, and watch television."

Of course, along with the moments of boredom came many moments of "going down the tubes," the expression controllers give for having more aircraft on the radar screen than they feel can be handled safely. But gone were the six-day weeks and the eight-hour stretches. Gone, too, was the relatively unsophisticated equipment that had once made the controller's job doubly difficult.

In the late 1960s, controllers at even the busiest facilities still relied on sweep radar screens, where planes appeared as indistinct blobs of light. Information about a plane's speed and altitude were recorded periodically on cardboard markers called "shrimp boats," which were tracked by hand across the screen. Controllers frequently had to memorize the positions of a dozen planes at a time and make instantaneous calculations to keep them properly separated.

Sweep radar has now been replaced by radar screens that show each plane distinctly and con-

tinuously. Computers instantaneously display a plane's identifying number, altitude, and airspeed on the screens. Flashing lights usually alert the controller before a possible "violation of minimum separation," which occurs whenever planes come within five miles and 1,000 vertical feet of each other.

"The technology changed the job dramatically," Leyden now says, adding, "In private conversations, controllers might acknowledge this. But they wouldn't in public. In part, you had such a young work force that the norm became what they had been exposed to. But it was also a little dishonest."

PATCO was also a little dishonest about what the job was really doing to its members. For all the anecdotal evidence about the effects of stress—and every former controller seems to have first-hand stories of colleagues who suffered nervous breakdowns, ulcers, and even strokes—the medical proof of the job's hazards is conspicuously elusive. The most comprehensive study of the occupation, conducted by Dr. Robert Rose of Boston University in 1978, found that controllers are more prone to hypertension but the study could find no direct link to the job. Rose also found that controllers, who are required to pass yearly physical examinations, are generally healthier than people of the same age in the rest of the population.

PATCO's argument that 89 percent of controllers never survived until normal retirement was also misleading. What the union didn't mention were the tremendous incentives for controllers to leave as "disabled." For example, if a controller could demonstrate a job-related disability, under the government's worker compensation program he was eligible for 75 percent of his former salary—*tax free and indexed to inflation*. After 1974, controllers making disability claims could select their own doctors; at one point the Department of Labor was approving 80 percent of all claims and controllers were leaving the system at the rate of 500 a year. Most claims were for "psychiatric/psychological" ailments. Widespread abuse by controllers and other federal employees finally prompted Congress to reform the program; this year the FAA estimates only 23 controllers will retire with a job-related disability.

So an accurate picture of the controllers' predicament would contain all the elements PATCO described—but in much different proportions. The job did cause nervous breakdowns, nightmares, hypertension, and burn out in some

controllers. "But the truth is," says Dave Hurdle, executive director of the Air Traffic Controllers Association and a strong supporter of early retirement legislation a decade ago, "we oversold the profession. Now it's coming back to haunt us."

Going with the Flow

The public was justifiably skeptical of PATCO's major demands. The \$10,000 raise was for everyone, whether they worked in a busy tower or not; besides, how would more money do anything to relieve stress? The shorter week and earlier retirement likewise made no distinctions between the ambitious, driven controller who plunged into O'Hare right out of the academy and the one who settled for a much quieter career at the Level I tower in Alton, Illinois.

Leyden, who believes the strike was folly, observes, "Among labor circles, the contract demands were a standing joke. I told one controller, an old friend who already had two houses and a nice boat, 'You realize you're going to go to Congress and ask them to give you more than they're making?' He said, 'That's right. We'll force them to.' I said, 'I just can't reason with you any more.'"

Perhaps even more important, the union ignored some basic reforms in the air traffic control system that truly would have benefited its members while helping win the public to their side. The most obvious involved the variability of traffic in the system. The Jones Commission had discovered that the FAA's policy of tolerating dramatic "peaks and valleys" in daily operations at the nation's large airports was grossly inefficient. After the strike forced the FAA to spread out this traffic, it was able to handle 83 percent of the former volume with less than half the controllers. Such "flow control" also reduced the number of errors by 30 percent.

Before the strike, PATCO was on record as favoring "flow control," a suggestion the FAA never considered seriously because of the airlines' animosity to any plan aimed at restricting their ability to fly whenever they wanted to. But in contract negotiations, PATCO failed to make flow control a major bargaining issue despite its obvious potential in enlisting public support. Here was a problem that aggravated the stress controllers felt; as any assembly line worker knows, moments of frantic activity followed by long lulls may make the job more interesting, but they also make it much more stressful than a steady, moderate flow. By reducing the need for con-



NEOLIBERAL CONFERENCE

For almost 15 years *The Washington Monthly* has been challenging the doctrines of both the right and the left, putting together a view of the world that we find fresher, more pragmatic, but also more idealistic. During that same period, others have been gravitating toward a similar view, which has come to be called "neoliberalism."

We think it's time to assemble the faithful as well as the skeptical to share ideas, to argue, and to get to know one another. Toward that end, *The Washington Monthly* will hold a conference the weekend of October 22 to discuss the nature of neoliberalism and its future. The subjects covered will include economic growth, entitlement programs, national security, education, and a number of matters conventional liberals tend to avoid—patriotism, entrepreneurship, religion, credentialism, patronage and democratic accountability, and how to pull the plug on the politics of selfishness.

Participants include Mancur Olson, Ken Auletta, Robert Reich, William Greider, Senator Gary Hart, Michael Kinsley, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, James Fallows, Dr. Robert N. Butler, Senator Ernest Hollings, Nicholas Lemann, Alice Rivlin, Morton Kondracke, Robert M. Kaus, Taylor Branch, Justice Richard Neely, and Senator Bill Bradley. Charles Peters, editor of *The Washington Monthly*, will chair the conference. Everyone—Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, or just plain undecided—who is interested in neoliberalism and its possibilities is welcome.

The conference will be held at the Sheraton International Conference Center in Reston, Virginia, near Dulles Airport and a short drive from Washington, D.C. It will begin with a reception and dinner on Friday, October 21, followed by a full day of meetings on Saturday the 22nd, and a final breakfast on Sunday the 23rd. The cost for both nights is \$250; for one night, \$150; for Saturday only, \$50.

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Photo courtesy of the FAA

Like air traffic controllers, many teachers today see ensuring their own comfort as more important than solving the schools' real problems.

trollers, flow control could have saved money. Finally, it could have made the system even safer for the flying public.

PATCO missed its opportunity, though the FAA intends to give its successor a second chance. Overruling the strong recommendation of the Jones Commission, the FAA has announced that by mid-1984 it intends to return to the old system that allowed airlines to fly almost any time they desired. "It's not the FAA's air space, it's the user's air space," J. Lynn Helms, the FAA's administrator, has proclaimed. The declaration probably comes as a bit of a surprise to the flying public, which may think that it should have the final say about an air traffic control system that it pays more than \$1 billion a year to operate.

But PATCO's biggest mistake in its effort to win the support of Congress and the public lay in its failure to take full advantage of its best argument: the FAA's terrible record in managing its employees.

Given the obvious importance good morale plays in operating a system that strives for zero defects, the FAA presumably would have paid close attention to the managerial talents of its supervisors who were responsible for the system's daily operations. It actually paid almost no attention. One management expert who's closely observed the FAA says, "The agency has traditionally tended to see the position of supervisor as a reward for being a good controller—the guy who can handle 36 planes in a thunderstorm and not lose his cool—or a place to put burned-out controllers." He adds, "Unfortunately, good controllers often make terrible managers."

Although complaints about low pay and long hours are conspicuously rare when controllers are asked to name their biggest frustration with the system, complaints about bad managers are

almost universal. Schaiger recalls one supervisor: "A real burn-out case. He'd sometimes freeze when he had to work airplanes, and just forgot about them. I was watching him one day when he had a near miss." Runge's supervisor at Bismarck insisted that his controllers stand while talking to pilots because it showed "more professionalism."

Some supervisors not only were exceptional controllers but skilled managers. Far too many, however, tended "to vector people like airplanes," as the Jones Commission put it. Managers tried to enforce a myriad of petty rules, and they demanded obedience rather than trying to seek cooperation. In towers and centers across the country, it was a triumph of what's worst about bureaucracy. "I was a controller in the military," says Runge, "and I never had the kind of petty, authoritarian bosses I had in the FAA."

The Jones Commission tried to discover how deeply the authoritarian streak ran among FAA managers. It asked team supervisors, the first level above controllers, how strongly they identified with something called Theory X—a management style that emphasizes authority, rigid hierarchy, and strict adherence to rules. Theory X stands in stark contrast to the management style that Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman describe in *In Search of Excellence* as characteristic of the nation's most successful companies. More than half the system's supervisors embraced the theory with such enthusiasm that their average score was 87 of 100.

As labor-management relations deteriorated, fewer and fewer controllers decided to bid for management jobs. A system that draws most of its managerial talent from outside the organization can usually tolerate such self-selection. But

the FAA drew almost all its managers from the ranks of the controllers, so supervisors could step in during emergencies to help control traffic. In an atmosphere where many of the best potential managers remained controllers, or became active in union politics, it was inevitable that the entire system would suffer.

PATCO's active effort to discourage controllers from becoming managers—it expelled supervisors from its ranks in the mid-70s—is all the more striking given that they occasionally lapse into moments of sounding just like managers. Here's Taylor: "I can tell you a week after being in a facility who can control and who can't. But it's very tough to get a bad controller off the boards. You have to work around him." Taylor describes several occasions when he was forced to take a controller aside to tell him that he should never control another airplane. Leyden has similar, un-union-like complaints. "The system rewards mediocrity for both controllers and supervisors," he says. "It doesn't make sense to pay the same when we know there's a great deal of difference in the motivation and abilities of individuals." Press both men, however, on the implications of what they're saying—the need for meaningful performance evaluation, which the Jones Commission found almost absent in the system, and a compensation system that considers more than just traffic volume and a controller's seniority—and they both demur. "It's so difficult to come up with a fair system," says Leyden.

Taylor looks back and says that he now understands how the union's emphasis on money was a fundamental mistake. "I remember, in October 1979, sitting down with Bob Poli and talking about the money question," he recalls. "Poli argued that to bring about the changes we wanted—to deal with stress, career progression, bad management—we had to use money as a shortcut. My point was that controllers would go to the mattresses for the human concerns, if they were led the right way. And I felt that if they wouldn't risk their jobs for these right reasons, then we shouldn't ask them to risk their jobs for the money."

But that's exactly what PATCO did, and Taylor was one of the strike's leaders. He spends his time now working for the United States Air Traffic Control Organization, which arose after PATCO's declaration of bankruptcy and counts 2,100 former controllers (and a handful of working ones) as members. Taylor puts out a monthly newsletter that details the plight of former con-

trollers around the country, chronicling the suicides (four so far), the divorces, and the occasional jail sentences arising from the government's prosecution of 77 strike leaders. (Just this summer, controllers Ron May and Gary Greene served 90-day sentences in Texas for their role in the walk out). "These are good, hard-working people who deserved a lot better," he says, and as he talks about them, it's with an evident mixture of sympathy and guilt. And he's right. It just so happens that neither the FAA, nor their union, was able to give it to them.

The self-deceptions, the ambitious leader, the runaway union, "drinking the Kool-Aid"—it is tempting to dismiss the controllers' folly as the result of some exotic form of madness that suddenly possessed otherwise reasonable people. But the mistakes and delusions the controllers succumbed to, rather than being unique, are all too common elsewhere in American society.

Some work is truly miserable, and the hazards of the workplace for too long were cavalierly dismissed. But in recent years, the legitimate expressions of concern about work and the oft-expressed desire for "meaningful employment" often betrayed a dark underside. The job became something of an enemy; many of us nodded in knowing agreement when Studs Terkel opened his 1974 book *Working* by explaining that the volume "being about work, is, by its very nature, about violence—to the spirit as well as the body." The

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**THE PLOT TO
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last decade has also witnessed the increasing balkanization of American life as interest groups proliferated and many people lost their allegiance to the larger communities of which they were a part. It showed in the autoworker who let the defective car pass by on the assembly line, in the corporate executive who insisted on a seven-digit salary regardless of his company's performance.

Above all, it was a decade in which people became increasingly preoccupied (even more so as inflation hit double-digits) with their own comfort and security. As the controllers' case so graphically illustrates, the result too often was a strong self-pity. What was good and satisfying about the job was overlooked as the discontents loomed large. Grossly exaggerated grievances overwhelmed the legitimate ones. The lines of people eager for a chance to do the same job—225,000 applied for 7,000 controller positions after the strike—were forgotten.

A good analogy to the controllers exists today with America's school teachers. Unlike controllers, some teachers have a reasonable case for higher salaries. But in other respects, the similarities between the two professions are striking. Teachers' complaints sound the same: the daily stresses, the large responsibility, the fear of burn out, the bureaucratic rules of authoritarian and petty administrators. The satisfactions of the job are equally as intense: the feeling one gets when students rise in their chairs in rapt attention, the satisfaction one feels when a former student drops by in the late afternoon to describe how you helped change his life. Good teachers speak of their best moments with the same near-reverence that controllers show when they describe guiding a half-dozen planes safely through a thunderstorm.

As the current debate about education makes painfully clear, the labor organizations that represent teachers are making the same mistake of confusing the comfort of their members with the welfare of the entire system. Education will only achieve excellence, they say, when teachers get better pay and shorter hours. Until then, it's unreasonable to make distinctions between good teachers and bad ones when it comes to pay or performance. So rather than leading the effort to come up with a better plan to reward good teachers and rid the system of bad ones, teachers unions protest that it can't be done fairly, so it shouldn't be done at all. The public isn't buying the argument, just as it couldn't accept the controllers' demands for greater pay and benefits. As a result, the teachers threaten to lose the ability

to lead the effort for better schools.

So it is with the controllers. They threw away the standing they could have had with the public when they tried to suggest that safer skies weren't possible without greater rewards for themselves. The argument might have been valid in 1969; it wasn't in 1981. Instead, the controllers should have seized on the issue of reducing the system's peaks and valleys. The FAA was clearly vulnerable: its refusal to consider flow control exemplified the agency's lack of concern for controllers as well as its history of catering to the airline industry. Most important, it was an issue that would have struck a responsive chord, not just in editorial writers but among the average worker to whom PATCO's demands were not only unreasonable, but downright offensive. Had PATCO decided to mobilize public opinion on behalf of this issue, demanding congressional hearings, picketing airports, and taking its story to the public, it might have made the public an ally in its struggle with FAA management. The union could have won long before it had to take a strike vote.

Instead, the controllers made the public their most potent enemy, sacrificing their energies—and ultimately their jobs—on behalf of things that now don't seem to have mattered very much. The lesson they learned was a particularly harsh one, and it's one that Walter Hendrick, a former controller, sums up well in a recent letter to USATCO's newsletter:

"The biggest mistake we made was letting ourselves believe our own p.r. Of course our job is critical; of course it is fatiguing, both mentally and physically; and of course the demands seemed, and probably did, increase on what we felt to be a daily basis. But most of that was really taken in stride when you consider how most controllers actually felt about their jobs.

"Speaking for myself, I had not before, nor have I since, experienced a sense of achievement, of real worth, that even comes close to the self-satisfaction and pride I felt during the years that I was employed as an air traffic controller. Now I punch a clock for less than one-third of what I was earning. Granted, I am thankful I have a job, but compared to what I was earning at an occupation I truly enjoyed, I can only conclude that I was a fool to participate in that ill-fated venture."

"Who jerked us around more?" Hendrick asked at the letter's close. "The FAA, Bob Poli, and his choirboys? Or did we all just kick the stool out from under ourselves?" ■

WHO'S WHO in the Administration

As things now stand, Reagan plans to run again. His campaign managers will be Nevada Senator **Paul Laxalt**, who served in a similar capacity in 1980, and former Secretary of Transportation **Drew Lewis**. Lewis left just this spring to become chief executive of Warner Amex Cable Communications, a joint venture between Warner Communications and American Express. His interest in returning to political life was reportedly rekindled by the realization that he couldn't escape being in bed with **Steve Ross** and the other clowns who have halved the value of Warner stock in the past year.

As for the White House's interest in Lewis, absence seems to have made the heart grow fonder. Members of the White House staff traditionally keep a hostile eye out for outstanding cabinet secretaries who are potential threats to their own jobs. Cutting a rising secretary down a few notches can be accomplished by telling the president that the member "is stealing your limelight!" Lewis's short sabbatical has apparently made

White House staffers now more appreciative of his talents and less fearful of what they once saw as his threatening ambition.

The campaign's press secretary has also been chosen. He will be **Jim Lake**, who was last seen going over the side after the New Hampshire presidential primary in February 1980, along with Reagan's then-campaign manager, **John Sears**. One factor in Lake's rehabilitation is **Nancy Reagan**, who loathed Sears but has genuine affection for Lake. It is said that her face lights up when his name is mentioned. . . .

When 1,200 piqued women were turned away at the White House door last month after their tour was canceled without notice, where was the president? At that very moment he, **Ed Meese**, and **Craig Fuller** were being briefed by OMB Deputy Director **Joe Wright Jr.** Among Wright's responsibilities at the OMB are women's issues. . . .

In

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Special Assistant to the Secretary—**Dale W. Stopper** has been assistant secretary for management and budget.

INTERIOR

Assistant Secretary for Energy and Minerals—**William P. Pendley** has been deputy assistant secretary.

STATE

Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs—**Richard Murphy** has been ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Ambassador to Egypt—**Nicholas A. Veliotis** has been assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs.

Ambassador to Mozambique—**Peter Jon de Vos** has been ambassador to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde.

AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Chairman, National Bipartisan Commission on Central America—**Henry Kissinger** was secretary of state and national security adviser to former Presidents Nixon and Ford.

Chairman, Federal Reserve Board—**Paul A. Volcker** has been nominated for a second four-year term.

Chairman, Commodity Futures Trading Commission—**Susan M. Phillips** has been acting chairman.

Member, Securities and Exchange Commission—**Charles C. Cox** has been chief economist for the SEC.

Out

WHITE HOUSE

Assistant to the President for Policy Development—**Edwin L. Harper** has resigned to become executive vice president of Overhead Door Company in Dallas.

DEFENSE

Joint Chief of Staff—Marine Commandant **Robert H. Barrow** has retired.

Joint Chief of Staff—Army General **E. C. Meyer** has retired.

HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research—**Emanuel S. Savas** has resigned.

JUSTICE

Assistant Attorney General for Land and Natural Resources—**Carol E. Dinkins** has resigned.

AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Member, Securities and Exchange Commission—**Barbara Thomas** is resigning before the end of the year.

Member, Commodity Futures Trading Commission—**James M. Stone** has resigned.

Member, Federal Home Loan Bank Board—**James L. Jackson** plans to return to the private sector.

Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration—Dr. **Arthur Hull Hayes Jr.** is leaving to be dean and provost of New York Medical College.