

THE TECHNICIAN

January - February - March 2023 | *Keep the Faith*

Issue #1, Vol. 81

2023 RALLY FOLLOW UP

Honor Ride

Marc Johannes

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Rally Follow Up

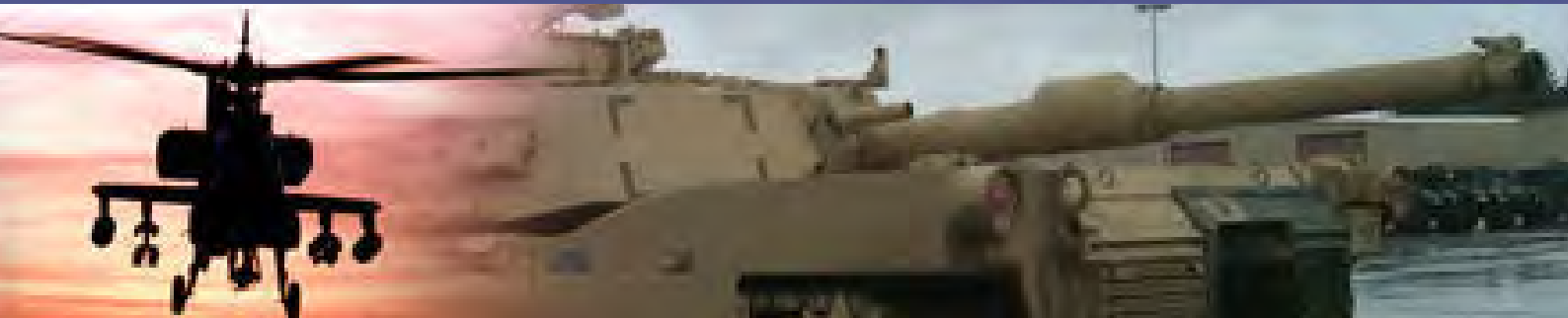
Les Hackett

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Duty • Dignity • Dedication





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03



990N'S DUE BY MAY 15TH

Get them completed ASAP and contact your national field representative if you need assistance.



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Honor Ride

Marc Johannes



2023 Rally

Follow Up & Awards



FLRA Regional Director Rejects IAFF Effort to Sever New Hampshire Guard Firefighters from ACT's Statewide Bargaining Unit

On November 16, 2022, a Regional Director of the Federal Labor Relations Authority dismissed a petition by the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) that seeks to sever New Hampshire National Guard firefighters from ACT's statewide Army and Air Guard bargaining unit.

IAFF's petition claims that the firefighters, converted from state to federal National Guard employment in November 2021, should be entitled—based solely on the conversion, and despite their automatic inclusion in ACT's statewide Army and Air Guard bargaining unit—to vote whether they desire to be represented by ACT. The IAFF petition also claims that ACT has not properly represented the firefighters and that for this reason they should be severed from the ACT bargaining unit and allowed to elect IAFF as their representative.

The Regional Director's decision rejected both arguments. The Director held that automatic inclusion of the firefighters in ACT's bargaining unit does not warrant a vote by the firefighters on whether they should have a separate unit, because FLRA precedents strongly disfavor unit fragmentation, which diminishes both union power and efficiency in labor-management relations.

ACT, moreover, has not failed properly to represent the firefighters, the Director said, because ACT has not failed to address any firefighter grievance of which ACT was aware; and ACT has taken proper steps to negotiate amendments to the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) to address the unique employment conditions of firefighters.

In the FLRA proceedings, ACT showed that it timely had demanded negotiation of a new CBA during the prescribed window period, which did not open until late summer 2022. ACT also showed that it had proposed a negotiation ground rules agreement that focuses on the unique employment conditions of firefighters. These steps by ACT proved that ACT has been properly representing the firefighters, refuting IAFF's contrary claim.

In addition, ACT presented evidence that it has pressed the agency for reconsideration of its overbroad exclusions of firefighters from the bargaining unit. Determining which firefighters are in the bargaining unit is the most important initial task because it identifies the employees whom ACT should consult in preparing firefighter CBA proposals. Under the unique statutory provision that applies only to firefighters and nurses, even employees who perform supervisory functions are eligible for bargaining unit membership if their performance of those duties does not require most of their time.

IAFF has until January 15 to appeal the RD's decision to the full FLRA.

I'm thinking about.....



Felicia Neale
National President

2023 Rally is now in the history books. We are getting back to pre-COVID numbers in attendance and it was great to see all the members that participated this year. Pennsylvania had a great turnout with many first-time rally attendees. They conducted state level training in addition to participating in National training.

Les Hackett, our awesome Field Reps in addition to Mark Coldren and Charles Allenberg conducted some excellent training this year. I hope next year chapter will send more new faces to experience more of what our field reps have to offer.

This year we welcome two new members to our National Executive Board. Our new National Secretary is Mr. James Jones of Alaska Chapter 84 and our new Southeast VP is Jeffery Osborn of the Missouri Show-Me Army Chapter 92. I wish them much success during their tenure serving at the national level.

Each Chapter's LM Report is due by the end of March and also complete your the 990N Post Card for the IRS and send them both in at the same time.

2024 is an election year. Be sure to send your PRIVATE email address to the National Office (admin@actnat.com) to make sure you receive your election ballot next year. You will not receive a ballot if we do not have your email address. Participation is key if you really want to make a difference or effect change. I urge you all to volunteer for office positions both locally and nationally. I also urge everyone to VOTE when the time comes.

This year the board tried something new to show our appreciation to you, our members by having a banquet. It great to see everyone together enjoying a meal and having an amazing time. As you continue reading through magazine you will see all the awesome pictures that were taken at this years rally. Until next time....Keep the Faith!

Rally 2024: February 6-11, 2024

STAY TUNED

ACT Welcomes New Board Members



James Jones

Life long Alaskan, joined the Alaska Air National Guard after an initial enlistment in the United States Marine Corps. 24 years of service thus far and entered the technician program in 2006 and became a dues paying member of ACT. Around 2011 I became a steward working under the training of Bill Brown and Steve Olguin. Am the current Vice President of Alaska Chapter 84 and lead both Army and Air for the entire state of Alaska.



Jeffrey Osborn

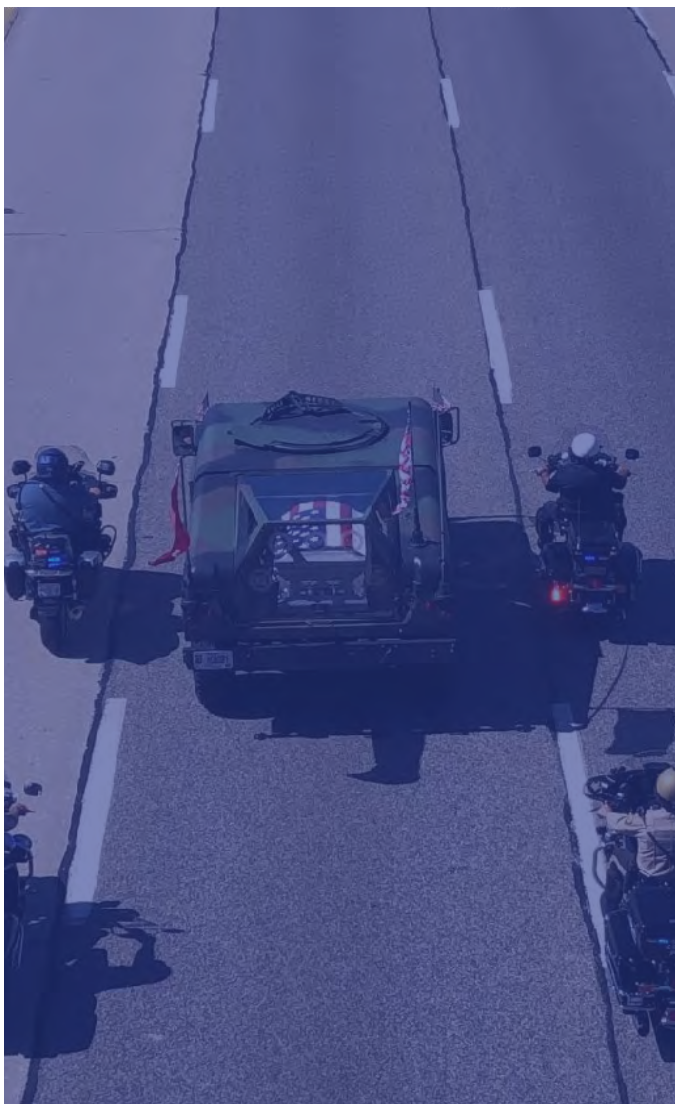
My name is Jeffery Osborn. I have been in the Army National Guard for 26 years. I serve in the Army National Guard here in Missouri. I currently hold the rank of MSG (E-8). I have been deployed once for a little over 12 months. I joined the technician force in 2008 have been a member of ACT for 11 years, I was a steward for 7 years, and I currently hold the office of President for the Missouri Show-Me Army Chapter 92. I have been a technician for 14 years, and I currently work at an FMS located in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

HONOR RIDE

Marc Johannes

Short story here, when Paul Baue and I came up with an idea to be able to transport Veterans to Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

We were speaking that the motorcycle hearse was not really for everyone (someone that never rode ETC.)



We decided to start our look for something iconic, the JEEP! As an awesome idea to transport troops in all but the tiniest places, the jeep proved to be too small as a casket would go from the front to the back of the Jeep.

We found our truck!! We saw this old M1025 at a local exotic car dealer and the truck was the perfect plan to utilize. After making tons of measurements, plans, we found our fabricator Bud that makes racecars of all things. While prepping the truck and removing all the items inside I saw the sprayed over bumper numbers. Wow!, the bumper number was one of the Missouri National Guard trucks lastly in the system, it belonged to the 1-38 INF in Warrenton Mo. looking up the history it turned out that the HMMWV had belonged to the 3175th Chemical Company also. It is truly a small world as I work at the Field Maintenance Shop (FMS Bridgeton #10) We serviced that vehicle for years!





Our fabricator has put a lot of hours into the M1025. If you look closely, you will find a step under the back door, the un-issued bronze stars as the hatch release, the Casket ramp under the hatch, plus many more hidden gems that he did. We all know that when it rains outside it invariably rains inside, we fixed that by literally putting a small gutter system inside the back hatch.

This HMMWV was produced to do just this, transport Veterans to Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. I drive the Veterans and can actually have up to 3 loved ones travel with the deceased to the cemetery.



It is truly my Honor to be able to assist families in their time of need.

Marc Johannes
 Honor Ride Military Hearses
 marc@militaryhearses.com
 (636) 219-2473

SFC Missouri National Guard
 Surface Maintenance Technician



Senior Enlisted Advisor NGB

Jared Stone Delaware Chapter 24, VP

Les and I bumped into CMSgt Whitehead, the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the NGB Chief, Gen. Hokanson in passing at the Hart Senate Building during our visit to the Hill after meeting with Senator Carper (D-DE) and his staff. CMSgt recognized my lapel pin and quickly understood what our presence in the Senate building was for.

Jared Stone
Delaware Chapter 24, VP



What I know...



John Sappington
Northwest VP

This article is going to be personal in nature and as such, it is solely MY perspective; I wanted to talk about what it's like being on this current ACT board of directors. When I first started on the board, it was largely hands off, we'd have a quarterly conference call, or we'd have a conference call when an unforeseen expense needed to be discussed and voted on. We would meet a few days prior to the delegates arriving at the rally, to discuss and finalize the budget, and that was about as demanding as it got. Sometimes, I miss the simplicity of those early days. You see, we didn't know that coordination for the next rally began at this year's rally, we didn't know that AD&D insurance premiums were due on this date, workers comp was due a few weeks after that, taxes and LM reports had to be done, not for a chapter, but, for the entire Association. If we miss those milestones, the repercussions are significant and could spell disaster for ACT. No pressure.

I also had no idea how rewarding it would be to work with the other men and women that you, the membership, elected to help make these decisions and guide the future efforts of ACT. It is a different perspective when you are planning the rally, the single largest event that the Association hosts, and you are constantly jockeying to be sure that everyone is getting the rooms they need and the parking they asked for; you're checking with the hotel and with the event manager to make sure that lunches are set and that there is enough food. You wonder if you and your fellow board members made the right

call to include something new, or to drop something from the itinerary, will it be frowned upon? You anxiously await that feedback and if it comes, can you be objective about it and understand it's just business?

The entire time you're juggling the ins and outs of an event like that, you're also working to make certain that your employees, the people that work so hard for the members, the backbone of the Association, are being taken care of. I didn't know that there's a right and wrong way to ensure that our employees have medical coverage, a right and a wrong way for them to have an investment plan with us. I never knew that being a part of administrating a geospatially separated workforce would be as uniquely challenging as it is. The things I didn't know that I didn't know....

"Gosh John, did you know anything?" I knew that the board had a passion for the future of ACT. I knew that we shared a goal of ensuring the success of the Association through appropriately handling the business of ACT. I knew that we brought multiple, and sometimes differing, perspectives to the table and that is the best resource for meeting a challenge. I knew that we had a membership that not only expected us to have the stewardship of their money in mind, but, they encouraged us to handle the business of the Association and not be timid. I knew that we had a delegate body that spoke for the members and that that is where ACT's power derives from. I knew that no other federal labor organization was built on our model, and that no

other federal labor organization cared for their members the way we do. These were the things I knew.

Your current Board of Directors is made up of people like you, IT professionals, surface mechanics, aircraft mechanics, machinists, welders, finance office professionals; none of us were running an organization this impactful. We talk, as a board, weekly, many of us daily; we meet almost monthly via virtual means, to stay on track and try to keep on top of the important issues facing the members and employees. There's a constant text thread related to the business of the association, a thread that spurs discussion and innovation where ACT interests are concerned. We spend our free time ensuring that the Association runs as smoothly as possible so that you, the members, don't have to handle the inevitable crisis, the unforeseen hurdle, the unpleasant decision.

I know that, together, this board works in a mindful and responsible manner and that it can be time consuming and even frustrating for some. I know that even though we don't always agree, we will work through that disagreement to the betterment of ACT. I know that the business of our Association of Civilian Technicians is looking after the rights and interests of the technician workforce and that you have the best team to continue that mission.

Finally, I know that I'm proud as hell to be a member of ACT, and thankful to you for allowing me to learn what I didn't know.

2023 Rally Follow Up



Les Hackett
ACT legislative Director

As we move further into the first months of the 118th Congress I wanted to follow up after our National Rally in Feb with our continuing legislative efforts. Unlike the past few years - with COVID restrictions in place - rally delegations were able to move freely around the Congressional office to conduct their business and meet with office staff. With many new members especially on House side I noticed some offices didn't have a Legislative Assistant (LA) assigned to DoD/ NDAA issues but most our folks were able to either meet with someone in the office or at least drop the legislative packets. Now come the time for follow up. So our priority moving forward will be to try and get members in the House and Senate to introduce our legislation and get their colleagues to sign on as co-sponsors. That way we can hopefully garner enough support to get our legislation into the must pass annual National Defense Authorization ACT (NDAA). I still feel that is our best option is the NDAA rather than a stand-alone bill that has to go through the torturous legislative process on its own. What we need now is some constituent pressure on members to either introduce our legislation or to place our bill language of the NDAA. House and Senate Armed Services Committee members (HASC & SASC) and their staff build and ride herd over the NDAA each year and they seem to want to see more of their fellow Congressional members support for our legislation before they will consider placing the language into the bill. So what's the best way to apply some pressure and communicate with your legislator concerning ACTs legislative goals?? In my experience individual letter written by constituents and sent by e-mail to Congressional offices in D.C.

Since the 2001 anthrax attacks on some members of Congress traditional snail mail is not really a good option since it is screened before being forwarded to

actual offices. The second best option is group letters signed by as many constituents as you can get at work and forwarding them - once again - by email. Since the rally I have been working with the Field Reps to provide letters to their chapters interested in using these letters to communicate their support for our legislation with their member of Congress. If you are interested in communicating your support for any or all of ACTs legislation to your legislators either individually or as a group please let your field Rep or Regional Vice President know. They can then work with me to get letter composed for you to then sign and email. I can tailor your letter to individual legislators or provide a word document which you can edit to your liking before you sign and email it. If you are having difficulty identifying the email address of the office staff member you need to send your letter to we can also assist you or forward your letter for you which would give us visibility of who I can follow up with.



Just to review what our legislative goals are this year are:

1. Additional military leave from your civil service job when on military duty (120 HRS to 240 HRS)
2. Make FEHB eligible Guard and Reserve members also eligible for TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) immediately rather than the current date in law (1 Jan. 2030)

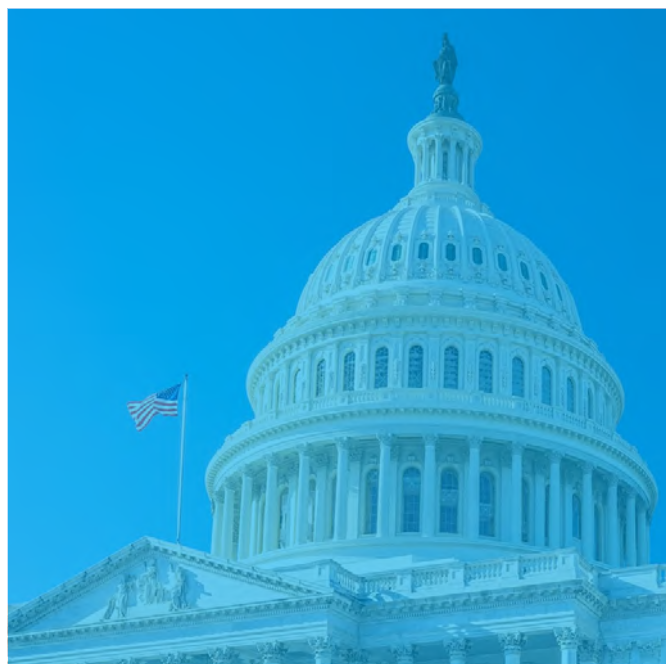
So if you are interested in using these letters to communicate your support for any of our legislation individually or as a group let us know. I am convinced that constituent support is our best tool to realize our legislative goals. My email is lhackett@actnat.com and you can send me requests for assistance. I would ask that you include your field rep in any communication so they visibility.



3. Technician job security concerning the dual-status requirement:

Amend the law so technicians will be relieved of the dual- status requirement for Guard or Reserve membership after qualifying for the 20 year non-regular military service retirement. This legislation would amend 32 USC §709 to require that the Agency on request to convert technicians positions to Title 5 non-technician positions until they can qualify for an unreduced FERS annuity under 5 USC §8412.

4. Fighting further reductions in ANG technician end strength to convert the positons to AGR.



(?????) 2023

The Honorable (Full name of Senator)
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator (last name of Senator)

We write this letter to bring your attention to an issue that has the potential to affect us personally but also feel the issue is negatively affecting WI National Guard readiness. The issue is the career long requirement for certain federal employees (known as military technicians) to hold concurrent membership in the Guard or Reserve in order to maintain their federal employment. Currently, in order to qualify for a voluntary unreduced annuity under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) technicians must maintain Guard membership until their Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) which is 55 to 57.

The Guard, like the active service, is an up or out military organization. Once you reach 20 years of Guard service the leadership utilizes Qualitative Retention Boards to analyze your promotion potential. Once identified for administrative separation through non-retention there is no meaningful appeal. With the limited promotion potential in the each states Guard ranks, getting to the FERS MRA is a crap shoot. Most of our fellow technicians eventually lose their career prematurely through non-retention in the Guard. We are concerned the same fate awaits us.

The career long dual-status requirement doesn't make sense for the Guard either. Separating experienced surface and aviation mechanics after the organization have invested tens of thousands of tax dollars in training them simply because they are no longer Guard members. It not only creates personal hardship for the individual but hurts unit readiness also. It's common knowledge in the WIARNG that it is getting more and more difficult to recruit and retain technicians. Potential applicants realize the futility of trying to maintain Guard membership until their late 50s and don't even apply.

The organization that represents the largest block of NG employees, The Association of Civilian Technicians (ACT), has developed a legislative fix for this situation that we believe updates the technician program to ensure that technician employment is really a career program and also allows the Guard to retain experienced employees after their Guard career is over. We urge you to support this legislation as best you can.

Respectfully Submitted

The undersigned technicians.

Name

Home address and contact information

(????) 2023

The Honorable (Full name of Rep.)
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear (Mr./ Ms.) (Congressional members last name)

We write this letter to ask for your support to increase the amount of military leave utilized by federal employees when absent from work to accomplish our Guard or Reserve service.

Currently we get credited with 15 days (120 Hours) of military leave at the beginning of the fiscal year on Oct. 1. The limit of 15 days has been on the books since 1966 and probably was sufficient back in the day. But we can attest the Guard and Reserve training tempo has dramatically changed since the mid-1960s. The once standard 2 day weekend drill has morphed into 4 day events several times a year and the traditional 2 week annual training (summer camp) can now often run 3 and sometimes 4 weeks. Add all the state active duty for COVID and other state emergencies and it doesn't take long to burn through 120 hours.

Once out of military leave for the year we either have to use our personal leave or go on leave without pay (LWOP) which can compromise benefits like health insurance. During the year Guard units will often be looking for volunteers to accomplish unit business but it's hard to justify doing extra duty if it means using your vacation days or going on LWOP.

The organization that represents the bulk of NG employees, The Association of Civilian Technicians (ACT), has developed a legislative fix for this situation that we believe updates the military leave statute to address the additional duty time required by the Guard and Reserve. We urge you to support this legislation as best you can.

Respectfully Submitted

The undersigned technicians/ work location

(Name)

(Home address and contact information)

(????) 2023

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United States House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

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The undersigned technicians/ work location

(Name)

(Home address and contact information)

(?????) 2023

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Washington DC 20510

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Respectfully Submitted

The undersigned technicians

Name Home address and contact information

(?????) 2023

The Honorable (Full name of Rep)
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear (Mr./ Ms.) (last name of rep)

We write this letter to bring your attention to an issue that is patently unfair and also very costly to those affected. Currently, federal employees and retirees who are eligible for health insurance coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits program (FEHBP) are ineligible for TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) until 1 January 2030. The question is why we remain the only members of the Selected Reserve that are not eligible for health benefits under TRS. It seems particularly unfair that we are excluded from participation in TRS while our counterparts working for state and local governments, and the private sector are fully eligible for these benefits.

Jan. of 2030 is still over seven years away. Though a good healthcare system, comparable FEHBP plans are substantially more costly than TRS which drives up our annual healthcare expenses by thousands of dollars.

Federal employees provide the same dedicated military service as our fellow Guard and Reserve members not employed by the federal government. All we are asking for are the same benefits all other Guardsman and Reservists receive for their service. Now, not in seven years!

Respectfully Submitted

The undersigned (state & branch) technicians.

Name

Home address and contact information

(????) 2023

The Honorable (full name of Senator)
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator (last name of Senator)

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Respectfully Submitted

The undersigned (state & branch) technicians.

Name

Home address and contact information

RALLY AWARDS



Job
well
Done!

PA STATE COUNCIL ANNUAL STEWARD TRAINING/DC RALLY

PA State council Chairman, Pat Straka brought 20 stewards and Officers down to the DC rally to do state level training, as well as to receive the training from National.



**Thank you
for your
support!**

FRIDAY NIGHT BANQUET

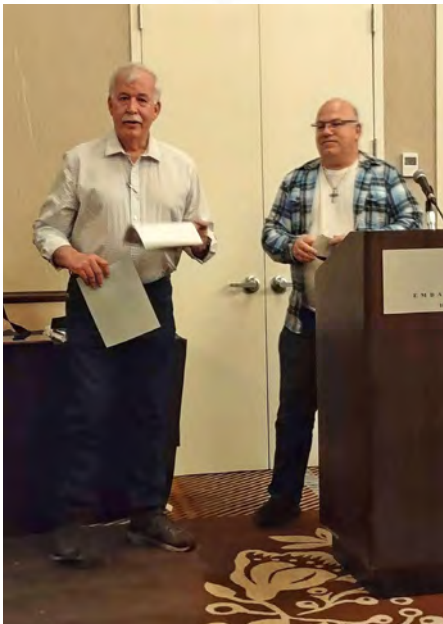


RAFFLE GIVEAWAYS



Showing our appreciation!

TERRY GARNETT OUR PAST PRESIDENT AWARDED WITH THE PATERNO AWARD



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS VISIT THE HILL



Marcia Mills (Chapter #85 Treasurer) and Kevin Henley (Chapter #85 Shop Steward) met with Legislative Assistant Bob Evans from the Office of Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett (VI)



