

# APFA Prepares for National Elections: *Do You Have What It Takes?*

by Denise Pointer, APFA Secretary

***The next APFA National Officer term will begin April 1, 2012 and conclude March 31, 2016. For those who might be contemplating running for a National Officer position, now is the time to do the research and prepare.***

**L**ater this year, and in accordance with the procedures defined in both our APFA Constitution and Policy Manual, the National Ballot Committee will be issuing Notifications of Willingness-to-Serve for the positions of the four APFA National Officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

As members of a democratic organization, we should each rightly take pride in this fundamental exercise in our collective self-determination. At APFA, we choose our leaders on both a local (base) and national level, who in turn serve at the membership's will to steer our organization for the following four years. Accordingly, the next APFA National Officer term will begin April 1, 2012 and conclude March 31, 2016.

The process begins as always, with a direct appeal to the members at large who are interested in serving to put forward their names and qualifications for consideration. For those who might be contemplating tossing their proverbial hat (wings?) in the ring and run for a National Officer position, now is the time to do the research and prepare. The place to start is the APFA Constitution which is available for reading and download on the APFA website. Go to the "Members' Resources" menu from the APFA.org main page, then "Constitution".

Article I: "General" – Section 8: "Requirements" lists five major obligations of any elected or appointed office at APFA. To paraphrase, and in summation, they are\*:

- (subsections A and B) establish and maintain membership in good standing;
- (subsection C) enforce the APFA Constitution and Collective Bargaining Agreement ("CBA");
- (subsection D) carry out resolutions and policy decisions of the APFA Board of Directors ("Board"); and
- (subsection E) attend necessary training and continuing education.

\* See the complete and exact wording of the requirements in the Constitution online.

These general requirements are applicable to any office or position in APFA. But just what is the scope of each National Officer function? Again, the primary source is the Constitution. Article III defines the Government of APFA and Section 6 of that article lays out — in very general terms — the duties of each office.

Following are some of the major duties of each of the four National Officers. *This is intended as an introduction, not to be exhaustive.* See the complete and exact wording in the Constitution online.

### **APFA President** (subsection B):

- act as chief executive officer of APFA, conduct its affairs in accordance with the Constitution and the resolutions/policy decisions of the Board and/or the Executive Committee (“EC”);
- sign any agreements, supervise the activities of APFA, carry out duties the Board and/or the EC request;
- convene any convention or meeting of the Board and the EC;
- act as Chairperson for the Board, the EC and the Negotiating Committee;
- recommend changes in employment and staff requirements, fix compensation for all agents and employees of APFA, and be responsible for their employment, supervision and discharge;
- nominate National Coordinators and Appointed Negotiating Team members;
- hire, retain or employ general counsel and/or other legal counsel for APFA;
- direct and coordinate legislative and political initiatives and any lobbying efforts on behalf of the Association to further the objectives of APFA.

### **APFA Vice President** (subsection C):

- oversee the grievance and arbitration process provided for in the Railway Labor Act and CBA(s);
- serve as APFA’s permanent Chairperson of the Flight Attendant System Board of Adjustment (“SBA”) and coordinate its activities with other departments within APFA;
- nominate members to serve as Division Representatives (“DR”) and coordinate their activities;
- hire, retain and employ legal counsel to provide members with representation in the grievance and arbitration process;
- ensure the training and continuing education of all representatives involved in the grievance and arbitration process;
- coordinate and chair a Grievance Review Committee (“GRC”) to oversee the disposition of grievances;

### **APFA Secretary** (subsection D):

- be responsible for all administrative records of the Association and keep an administrative record of all officers, representatives and appointees;
- notify the Board and EC of any convention or meeting and keep a record of all proceedings at any such convention or meeting;
- oversee the National Balloting Committee;
- administer Article VII procedures (Hearings and Disciplinary Procedures);
- update and ensure distribution of the APFA Policy Manual;
- assist in establishing regular training and continuing education programs for representatives of APFA, maintain training records, training and reference materials and Association publications and manuals; be responsible for the library of the Association;
- establish and maintain lines of communication between members of the EC, Base Representatives and all administrative departments and committees;
- convene regular meetings of APFA’s administrative and committee personnel.

### **APFA Treasurer** (subsection E):

- be responsible for the care and custody of the funds and securities of APFA, receiving all dues, fees and special assessments;
- be responsible for all financial records;
- keep a record of APFA’s members (number, status or classification, addresses, bases, locations and related dates);
- keep an individual record of all dues and assessments for each member;

- oversee the APFA Budget Committee and assist in the preparation of the annual budget;
- advise the Board and EC of any significant change in APFA's financial standing;
- submit a monthly financial report and quarterly review to the Board and EC;
- submit with his/her signature all Federal and State Reports required by law;
- oversee and coordinate computerization of APFA headquarters files, records and systems;
- oversee the daily activities of APFA headquarters office staff and coordinate the headquarters office staff to ensure assistance is provided to administrative, committee and support personnel.

## ***A thorough reading and understanding of the APFA Constitution and the Policy Manual are vital for any candidate.***

In addition to the APFA Constitution, the APFA Policy Manual further delineates National Officer duties and responsibilities and covers, among other topics:

- APFA's Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality
- Training and Continuing Education
- Operation of the Board, EC and Negotiating Committee
- Conducting of conventions, meetings and conferences
- Trip removal and expense policies
- Hotels and relocation; salaries and benefits
- Budget and financial policies
- Headquarters, staff and general procedures
- Division, base and field policies
- APFA political and legislative activities
- Dispute resolution and grievances
- Communications policies
- National departments, coordinators, representatives
- Balloting and elections
- Strike policies
- Administrative policies and procedures
- Proposed CBAs

Each of these areas has extensive and defined National Officer involvement. For the APFA Policy Manual, go to the "Members' Resources" menu from the APFA.org main page, then "Policy Manual".

In all cases, a thorough reading and understanding of the APFA Constitution and the Policy Manual are vital for any candidate. Throughout these two documents, additional specific duties are assigned to National Officers, who also act individually and collectively in numerous functions of other APFA Departments and Committees, including overseeing, reporting and approving work or other output.

As daunting as they may seem at first reading, APFA has successfully operated under the structure of these guides — as they were originally drawn and as updated and modified — for over three decades. Each successive team of National Officers works with our member-elected Board and the EC to provide continuity and quality in representing the membership.

Whether you are considering becoming a National Officer candidate, or just want to learn more about how your Union operates, set aside some time to review the APFA Constitution and the Policy Manual. If you have questions, contact your Chair, Vice Chair, Division Representative or one of the Officers for clarification. 