

NAAE 2014 Election Candidate Biographies

Sarah Rehberg- National President

Sarah started working for PPQ in 1997 in Laredo, Texas. After three years on the southern border, she transferred to her home state of Michigan to work at the International Airport and the Detroit Land Border. In early 2001 she was appointed National Secretary to fill in for a vacancy on the Executive Committee and remained Secretary through 2008. In 2008 Sarah became and continues to serve as National President. Sarah has long been involved with the local executive committee. At the transition with CBP, Sarah remained with PPQ and now does domestic work. Sarah has been a Safety Coordinator for Michigan for the past 13 years and was a member of the Uniform Committee for five years. Sarah is an avid reader and likes to spend time with her husband, dog, family and friends.

Mike Randall- National Vice President

Mike was raised in Phoenix and received a degree in Entomology at the University of Arizona in 1983. After working through college as a TV repairman, Orkin man, and a Kosher meat cutter, Mike discovered PPQ in 1984 with an 8 year stint at the Los Angeles Airport and the L.A. Harbor. Mike moved on to Honolulu in 1992 and has vowed never to return to work on the Mainland. Mike initially refused to join NAAE, and then, once he joined, he never could stop. Mike's Union activities started in 1986 as a local branch officer and as NAAE Western Region V.P. from 1988-2000. Mike served as NAAE President from 2000 to 2008 (during the contentious CBP PPQ split) and currently serves as the National V.P. and Chief Negotiator. He lives with his wife Naomi (who is also a PHSS) on windward Oahu. His daughter is currently in college on the Mainland at Boston University. Mike enjoys flying, fishing, amateur radio, cooking, gardening, and raising tropical fish.

Roger Yamane, Jr. - National Vice President

Born and raised in Hawaii, I am a second generation PPQ Plant Health Safeguarding Specialist (PHSS) who grew up around the job. After graduating from the University of Hawaii, I began my PPQ career in 2002 at the port of Long Beach/Los Angeles. I participated in domestic TDYs and gained experience in a wide variety of work areas before returning to Hawaii where I live with my wife and two young sons.

I have been a NAAE member since day one on the job and served two years as the local NAAE branch Vice President. I was involved in key negotiations with local management and a Labor Relations Specialist regarding port policies and SOPs.

Much of my career with this agency has been in an era of pay and hiring freezes, budget cuts, and worker furloughs, and I sense that more difficult times still lay ahead. I believe that a strong union, one that represents the interests of all its members, will be critical to getting us through the challenges to come. As an employee who has the bulk of my career still ahead of me, I am fully committed to a strong and effective NAAE over the long-term. I want the chance to tap the experiences and insights of those who have come before me, while perhaps lending a new perspective and outlook to the process.

Patricia Claves- National Secretary

Patricia A. (Trish) Claves, PHSS Nogales, AZ became a PPQ Officer in 2001 at the Nogales, AZ Port of Entry. In 2003, after the “split” and nine months as a CBP Agriculture Specialist, she returned to the fold and worked in Shafter, CA and Raleigh NC before returning to the Nogales Work Unit. The Green Book was signed and hot off the press when she fired up some bargaining unit employees to rejoin NAAE so they could hammer out the local overtime agreement that had languished on the shelf since before 2003. Trish has served as the current National NAAE Secretary since she was elected in 2012.

Trish is busy when she is not at work keeping two horses, a burro, and various poultry. The three dogs begged mention also.

Victor Zeno- National Secretary

My name is Victor Zeno and I want to be America’s next Top Chef. Oh wait, that is the wrong bio. My name is Victor Zeno and I want to be your next NAAE Secretary! I have been with USDA for 25 years, 10 ½ with Agricultural Research Service at the Horticultural Research Laboratory in Orlando, FL and the rest with APHIS, PPQ, Fruit Fly Detection Program in Sanford, FL. I have been involved in the Civil Rights arena, first as Hispanic Employment Program Coordinator at ARS and then at the FL PPQ Civil Rights committee where I was Secretary for 6 years and currently am the Chairperson. Regarding my involvement with NAAE, I have been Convention Coordinator for the last 3 very successful conventions, represented NAAE on the PPQ Technicians Training Needs Analysis Committee and am the Eastern Region NAAE representative for the PPQ Uniform Committee. I have great organizational skills, am very thorough with my work, am friendly, easy going and I will do my very best to do a great job as your secretary.

Jim Triebwasser - National Treasurer

Jim started with the federal government as an aquatic biologist with the USEPA in 1990 and after 3 years took a position as a biologist for the US Forest Service in the Chippewa National Forest and after a couple of years

ending up working for PPQ in 1996 in Laredo, Texas. After two years on the southern border, he transferred to Madison, WI, as a domestic officer. During this time became active in the union as representative to various labor/management committees. After, various ODS stops in PPQ (MN, NY, ND) and five years with SITC, he finally made it back to his home town of Duluth, MN, as a PPQ officer. Jim was elected National treasurer in 2000 and except for 2 years (2002-2004) has been the NAAE national treasurer since.

Arlo Wiltenburg- Eastern Region Vice President

Arlo started working for PPQ in 1998 at the airport and land border in Michigan. For several years prior to the split with DHS, Arlo was the Local 20 president. Since the local represented two land border ports plus the airport, he received his unofficial union training by regularly negotiating changes in shifts and overtime. Seeing the writing on the wall with DHS, Arlo became a SITC officer in 2003 and currently works out of the Michigan SPHD's office. Arlo has been serving as the Eastern Region VP since the summer of 2009. Arlo attended Michigan State University where he met his wife, 29 years ago. His 21 year old daughter is attending Michigan Technological University in the upper peninsula of Michigan. Arlo enjoys reading, barbequing, and the outdoors, especially camping. Arlo is also an avid bowler with a 195 average. "Strike" means something different to Arlo than to many union reps!

Athena Pappas- Eastern Region Vice President

My name is Athena Pappas, but some of you may know me as Maura from way back when I first got involved in NAAE and I would very much like to return to service as your next Eastern Region Vice President.

I first became a local president in 2003 and thereafter was elected to the National committee as ER VP in 2006. During my time with the committee, I had a very successful hands-on approach to all issues any employee brought to my attention. No issue was too small and I made myself available even after work hours. During my time with the National, I was able to work on many major issues and help put in place future steps to help all employees. Unfortunately, in May of 2009 I was forced to step down when my father became gravely ill with lung cancer and I needed to devote my time to care for him in his final months. However, in the last five years I have stayed involved in the union on the local level or by just giving advice and/or guidance if anyone should call me. I have worked in various programs throughout APHIS and I believe my experiences in all of these programs have given me a personal working knowledge and understanding of the needs of employees who work in these areas each day.

I currently am a NAAE representative for the newly formed Employee Spotlight Forum and I am looking forward to helping my fellow employees shine. Additionally, I have been involved in APHIS Civil Rights Committees as a special emphasis committee member, contributor to different newsletters as well as a representative for those facing civil rights issues in their workplace.

I have made it a point to keep myself abreast of issues going on within the workforce and changes in our union contract as well as agency policies. I have also attended labor relations trainings at every NAAE Convention since 2004 in an effort to learn the most efficient ways to represent those regarding their needs. If given the opportunity, I will use my experience, knowledge and skills to work with you to represent your needs and be the best ER VP I can be.

Willis Gentry- Western Region Vice President

Willis graduated from Texas A & M (College Station) in 1974 with a degree in Landscape Architecture and Horticulture. He worked for his family business, a Garden Center, Florist and Pet shop until 1990 when he realized there were too many chiefs and not enough Indians. He started his government career in Laredo, Texas on May 5, 1991 as a GS-5 PPQ Officer. In the summer of 1992 he became and still today remains the Local #5 NAAE President. In 1997 he became a GS-11 Operation Officer (Scheduling, Exports, Overtime Assignments, etc.) and also became the Central Region NAAE VP. He has been on the Executive Committee ever since. In 1999 he became the backup identifier and in 2006 became the identifier-Botany/Plant Pathology. He has a wife, two children, 4 dogs (Pinga, Athena, Lucy and Spanky), birds and tropical fish.