

Travel agents predict crowded holiday skies

By ALISSA GRICE
Staff Writer

Students planning to fly the friendly skies this Christmas had better hurry up and get their tickets. "I would suggest students make their flight arrangements as soon as possible," said Ron Waterhouse, station manager of Piedmont Airlines at Raleigh-Durham Airport (RDU). "The sooner they can make the reservation, the better break they are going to get on their fares."

Waterhouse said that Christmas is usually the busiest time of the year for the commercial airlines.

"The Christmas holiday bookings are very good this year," Waterhouse said. "We expect to have a lot of crowds."

He also said that Piedmont tried to make it advantageous for customers to fly rather than to drive.

"Some fares you can get up to 70 percent off, (depending on) whether or not you meet restrictions," Waterhouse said.

Ted Padgett, station manager of TWA at RDU, said TWA's holiday traffic would be very heavy and most flights were already booked to capacity.

Padgett suggested that if people weren't familiar with where they were going, they should consult a travel agent.

"You're able to sit down and ask (travel agents) as many questions as you wish," Padgett said.

Travel agents in the Chapel Hill area are helping students plan their Christmas traveling itinerary.

Marie Katlett, an agent at Small World Travel Agency of Chapel Hill Inc. on East Franklin Street, said the Christmas season is not as bad as Thanksgiving because students have more days to work with when making their plans.

For those students who haven't booked flights yet, there is hope, but they will probably have to pay higher fares.

"All airlines raise their Super Saver rates from \$20 to \$50 over Christmas, except we've noticed that Piedmont has kept to their regular prices," Katlett said.

"Also, a lot of students think that travel agents charge a fee, but that's not true," she said. "It's free. We get

a commission from the airlines, and they're the same fares that the airlines would offer."

Katlett said that making travel arrangements is easier this holiday. In the past, customers made reservations 30 days in advance but paid for the tickets a couple of days before the flight.

"But with the Super Saver tickets you have to buy them within 24 hours, so that has helped us," she said. "Before, people would change reservations, but they can't do that with the non-refundable Super Saver tickets now."

Louanne Keichline, certified travel counselor at Viking Travel Service at Kroger Plaza, said that Dec. 17 through Jan. 4 will be the period of heaviest air travel.

"The New York-Boston market is heavy," Keichline said. "I've done a lot of bookings to L.A. and San Francisco. Miami is also another heavily booked destination."

She said that most people benefited from early planning.

"Also, people waste a lot of time calling each individual airline when they could come to us and get information on all airlines and all availability and the lowest fares available with no service charge," Keichline said.

Barbara Kiser, office manager of Continental Travel agency on East Franklin Street, said that prices of flights vary from day to day.

"What airlines try to do is make prices lower on days that people don't usually travel to get more people to fly on those less-traveled days," Kiser said.

The cheapest round trip ticket on Eastern Airlines from RDU to LaGuardia International Airport is \$118 if the traveler leaves Dec. 18 and returns Jan. 10.

Kiser also gave some helpful tips for travelers.



Travel agents say students should make early flight reservations to go home for Christmas

"Make sure, when possible, that you get your seating assignment and boarding passes," she said. "Get to the airport early; give them (personnel) at least an hour in advance. Recheck your schedule with the agent or airline about two weeks before you leave, to check for schedule changes."

Travelers are also advised to pack light and to get a ride to the airport because parking will be difficult. Students should have flexibility with departure and return dates if they do not already have reservations.

Out-of-state students going home for the holidays often opt for air travel.

Eric Barton, a sophomore from Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., said he usually gets his plane tickets from a travel agent in Dobbs Ferry.

"He gets you good deals," he said. "You get something like 30 percent off if you get them a month in advance."

Beth Clipka, a senior industrial relations major from Schererville, Ind., said her mother made her reservations with their travel agent at home.

"I think it's a good idea to go to a travel agent," said Clipka, who usually flies into Chicago's O'Hare Airport. "I usually end up flying Piedmont. You can usually get their cheapest price."

Sting to play Smith Center in January

Former Police frontman Sting will perform at the Smith Center Thursday, Jan. 28. Tickets are \$17.50 and will go on sale this Friday, Dec. 4, at the Smith Center box office and at all Ticketron locations.

The usual Smith Center restrictions will apply. There will be an eight-ticket limit, and no one may camp out or form lines before 6:30 a.m. Friday morning. Tickets will be distributed at 10 a.m.

Sting is on his *Nothing Like the Sun* tour, promoting the album of the same name. His only other solo album was the successful *Dream of the Blue Turtles* in 1985. Before that, he was a member of the Police with Andy Summers and Stewart Copeland.

No opening band has been scheduled. The concert will begin at 8 p.m.

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5 Ehringhaus	3 Parker
3 Everett	3 Spencer
8 Granville East	2 Stacy
8 Granville South	4 Winston
7 Granville West	

Winning pictures will be posted in the Carolina Union display cases December 5 through December 11. Thanks to our judges Robert Tempie, co-president of Carolina Fever, the executive branch of the Student Body Government, and Anne Fulcher, general manager of the Daily Tar Heel, for picking the winners. Our special appreciation to all of the students who helped make the first annual UNC Residence Hall Picture Contest a success.

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