

Interesting Interlining

Connecting or Carousing -- Choose A 'Copter

New York Airways to anywhere is a treat of a trip. No matter how frequently you fly, there is still something special about whirling over New York in a helicopter. The City, some say it is more for visiting than for living, is seen best and at its best from the square windows of the Sikorsky copters of New York Airways.

Licensed by the government to operate within a 50-mile radius of Times Square, NYA gives the same type of service as any airline but with the added attraction of consistently spectacular sightseeing. From Newark to LaGuardia to Kennedy to Manhattan, via the Wall Street heliport, and Morristown, it is the best way we know to make a connection for another flight or just to see "The City".

NYA's "30-30 Service" means there are 30 seats available every 30 minutes from each of the three airports, and at such bargain prices. Piedmont employees pay only a \$1.00 service charge each way, space available of course. Requests should be made through the Pass Department, INT-ZZ.

Several packages have been put together for airline employees planning to visit Disney World. Located in central Florida it is accessible from Orlando and Tampa via commuter carriers Executive and Shawnee. The OAG (Official Airline Guide) has schedules. If you're planning to stay in Tampa or Orlando it is 20 minutes drive from the former and 75

minutes from the latter. Horton and Company, Post Office Box 22192, Tampa, Florida 33622 has full details on special hotel rates and park admissions for Piedmont employees. Reservation requests should be made at least three months in advance of travel and deposits are required. For complete information write Horton at address given above.

The Interline Tour Guide has changed its name. Its now the ASU Travel Guide and will be published quarterly. The listing of discounts and special tours for airline employees is available by subscription from Airline Services Unlimited, 1335 Columbus Avenue, San Francisco, California 94133. Cost is \$4.50 a year or \$8.50 for two years. The guide contains worldwide discount information on airline travel programs, steamship cruises, hotels, motels, condominiums, agency and hotel tours as well as interline events, sporting events, auto and camper rentals. If you are planning to take several trips this year or even to go to several different places in one trip this booklet seems like a good investment.

The 13th Annual International Airlines Ski Race at Mt. Alyeska, Alaska has been set for March 9-12. Rules, schedule and entry forms are available from the Airlines Ski Race Committee, Box 40, Anchorage, Alaska 99510. If Alaska sounds like somewhere you'd like to go but skiing is not your thing you might be interested in Alaska Airlines two-day Artic

Adventure Tour from Anchorage. You can pan for gold near Nome, cross the Artic Circle and visit the King Island Eskimos. The ground arrangement cost is only \$19.50 per person. The non-rev space available service charge round trip from Seattle to the Arctic is \$15.00 tourist and \$30 first class. For more information you can write to any Alaska Airlines Office.

CROZY CORNER

By Ann Umpstead

Do those of you in the field ever feel as if you have now lost touch with initial passenger contact due to a centralized reservation operation? Rest assured that the calls keep coming in and that there are certain ones which continue to be just as crazy as ever. But what fun it is to have a break from those passengers who are old hands at flying and know just what they want.

The standard request which still falls into the category of shopping around is "I want to go to the West Coast"—no city, no date. And when we ask the potential passenger where he wants to go he remains indefinite and usually will accept wherever we suggest on any date we might pick. Of course, the fare quote may be slightly questionable as the least expensive if just the right date is not utilized. Chances are, however, that after a considerable time lapse and great effort from the agent, a mere thank you will result in no booking after all.

The other day there was the inquiry of a very polite, but somewhat confused, school teacher who called shortly after a television special on the supersonic planes and requested the opportunity to take her class for a short trip on just such equipment of Piedmont. How does an agent treat this potential passenger as the educated person she must be and yet make it clear that no airline has yet acquired any of the requested planes? In addition, she must find at just that moment the suggestion of a trip possibility on an aircraft Piedmont does have in service to a destination which might also offer an educational experience. The agent certainly must be allowed at least a small chuckle on such a call.

Passengers are not the only ones who sometimes seem a little crazy. We reservation agents can at times make just as many amusing errors which may not be taken lightly by the one on the other end. How many times has a passenger, assured that his reservation is complete, arrived at a ticket counter to learn that he is on his way to London, Kentucky instead of London, England, never having been able to comprehend completely how inexpensive travel abroad had become. Or the little old lady who had saved all year to visit her grandchildren in Columbus, Georgia only to find to her utter dismay upon arrival in Columbus, Ohio that no one had even come to meet her.

With the addition of calls around the clock has come another instance of agent confusion upon receipt of a request for certain off-line space requiring numerous calls for confirmation. The passenger emphatically insisted that he be notified as soon as the space was confirmed regardless of the hour as he had to know at once. When the agent, doing as instructed, returned the call at 3:30 AM, she heard after many rings a very drowsy voice on the other end of the phone. She proceeded to advise the passenger of his space and completed reservation, hoping that he was indeed awake and aware of the information. With all of the enthusiasm of a dutiful agent, the conversation ended with a cheerful "Thank you for calling Piedmont". One might appropriately ask if that passenger returned to bed in great confusion wondering how he had managed to call Piedmont Airlines in the middle of the night.

More Questions People Ask About Airlines

(Editor's Note: How profitable are airlines? Why is there excess capacity on some routes? Those and other questions are answered in an informative booklet called "Questions People Ask About Airlines" produced by the Air Transport Association. Excerpts from the booklet are presented here in the second of a series. Copies of the booklet are available to Piedmont employees from Public Relations Dept., Air Transport Association of America, 1000 Connecticut Avenue, N. W., Washington D. C. 20036.)

Q. Under present circumstances, why have airlines invested so much in new planes and facilities?

A. Airplanes and ground facilities must be planned and ordered years in advance. The larger planes coming into service now represent orders placed in the mid-1960s, when the economy was expected to continue a rapid rate of growth. Given the recession, some new plane orders have been canceled and delivery of others postponed. For the long run, the new jets hold promise of greater efficiency and thus will offset to some degree the spiraling costs of inflation.

Q. Why do airlines sometimes operate planes that are only half-filled?

A. All transportation systems have to plan their passenger capacity to handle peak loads as well as slack periods. Office elevators, like subways, may be jammed to capacity four times a day for 45 minutes and full of unused space the balance of the time. Similarly, flights popular with business travelers during the week may languish on the weekends. Flights to and from warm climates tend to peak in the winter and fall off in the spring. Nevertheless, some people want to travel on Saturday, or depart during business hours rather than afterward, or fly south when the mass movement is north. And the airlines are required and committed to maintaining adequate service to meet periods of thin traffic as well as the peaks. The plane that is partially full is evidence that the airline is meeting at least this minimum demand but has the capacity also to fulfill demand when it is heavy.

Q. But isn't part of this matter of overcapacity related to competition between airlines on heavily traveled routes?

A. That competition is certainly one element which works to the advantage of the

traveler, for it gives him a greater selection of schedules and services. However, it can also be a cost burden on the carriers involved. In 1970 and early 1971, some of the airlines unilaterally reduced flights on competitive routes in the interest of economy. But any airline facing direct competition is reluctant to reduce flight frequency much, for fear of losing competitive and advantageous service patterns. Thus, under the aegis of the Civil Aeronautics Board, there have been discussions among airlines and agreement to curtail flight schedules on some high-volume routes late in 1971.

Q. Why is there less traffic congestion today than a year or two ago?

A. There are several important reasons. The use of larger wide-bodied planes on many routes has permitted airlines to reduce the number of flight operations without decreasing the number of seats. At busy terminals the airlines themselves have adjusted schedules to avoid congestion. And in the interest of economy, there has been some reduction in schedule frequency. In addition, there has been a welcome improvement in relationships between the federal government and the air traffic controllers.

Q. Are any airlines subsidized?

A. Public Service Revenue (subsidy) is received by regional airlines, as distinct from long-haul trunk airlines, for service to communities that do not generate sufficient traffic to cover the costs of providing such service. Essentially, subsidy is paid the regional airlines to maintain needed air services at communities which otherwise represent loss operations and would be without air transportation in the absence of such support.

Q. Do airlines pay a fair share of airport operating costs?

A. Airlines contribute heavily to airports in the form of landing fees, rentals, and other charges. At major airports, the airlines and other users are paying the cost of constructing, maintaining and operating the airports, including amortization of principal and payment of interest. At O'Hare Airport in Chicago, for example, airline agreements guarantee the city payment of enough to cover all net costs; thus, the city can never be burdened with any expense for the airport.