

Interesting Interlining

Cold Not Your Thing? Plan A Trip for Spring

If you've been searching in vain for the first signs of spring we've found a warming idea of a trip sure to chase away your chills as you make your plans. New Orleans is a city that is interesting to visit any time of year but especially so during the Spring Fiesta there. For two weeks, from April 7th through April 25th this year, you may enter elegant town houses in the Vieux Carre, magnificent Garden District mansions and in the evenings roam through enchanting patios tucked behind brick walls, lighted by flickering candles and fragrant with nite-blooming jasmine, roses, hibiscus and camellias. On week-ends you can visit the ro-

mantic plantation homes along the mighty Mississippi and slumbering bayous. It is a grand city where the past is vibrantly alive in the midst of modern times. For a folder giving the details of the tours write to the New Orleans Spring Fiesta Association, 546 St. Peter Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70116.

Spend Spring in Germany

The Red Baron's airline, Lufthansa, has some weekend tours for you and your spouse. How about "Romantic Germany" March 23-26 for \$85; "Unforgettable Berlin," April 20-24 for \$80; "Swinging Hamburg" March 9-12 for \$85; or "Enchanting Rhine," March 16-19 or March 30-April 2 for \$90?

Then there's "Yugoslavia," a five-day trip starting March 2 or 23. It costs \$110. Try "Merry Vienna" for the same price. It leaves Feb. 23 or March 28. What could be nicer than "Easter in Bavaria"? It leaves April 6 or 13. The five-day trip costs \$110.

For more information, contact Interline Dept., Lufthansa, 1640 Hempstead Turnpike, East Meadow, L. I., N. Y. 11554.

Hilton Discounts

Did you know that you can get a 25 per cent discount off applicable room rates for yourself, spouse and children at all Hilton International Hotels? Make your reservations through a Hilton Reservation Service or by writing on AA letterhead stationary directly to the hotel. If occupancy is high, the offer is occasionally restricted, but you can find out through the service.

Quite a number of Hiltons offer 50 per cent at specific times of the year, generally off season. Even more offer 50 per cent year-round discounts. These include Hiltons in Addis Ababa, Curacao, Madagascar, Malta, Ma-

nila, Rotterdam, Singapore, Trinidad and the Caribbean island of St. Thomas.

Stockholm or Copenhagen?

How about a long weekend in Scandinavia? SAS makes it both possible and appealing with a four-day trip to Stockholm or a five-day junket to Copenhagen. Both cost \$115, and include positive space transportation, hotels, some meals and sightseeing. Departures are from any SAS gateway city in North America. The Copenhagen trip includes an excursion in the world-famous Castle of Kronborg of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" fame. Spouses and dependent children under 21 are eligible, and the tours are available through June 1, 1972. Contact your nearest SAS office for more information.

SAS also has a fine list of Scandinavian hotels which grant interline discounts ranging from 8 to 50 percent. Eligibility dates vary from country to country but are generally in the wintertime.

Like The Cold? Try Russia

Anyone hankering to see Russia? Interline International has an interline tour to Russia, which includes Moscow, Leningrad and Rome for employees and eligible family members. It's a ten-day tour for \$240, including air fare (positive space) from New York, all meals, first class hotels, portage and tips, and an English-speaking guide. The departure tax and visa charge are not included, but Interline International will obtain the visa for you. It takes 30 days and \$6, and you must be a U.S. or Canadian citizen. Dates are March 11, March 19, April 8, 15 and 22, so move fast. Contact Interline International, Atlanta International Center, 1005-D Virginia Ave., Suite 124-126, Atlanta, Ga. 30354.

CROZY CORNER

by Ann Umpstead

The Piedmont Central Reservations Office is comprised of many facets — all very necessary to the smooth operation of our system. Most all of the stations at one time had their own offices. But now that we're all under one roof there are advantages in having the stations know what information they can find in which area of the CRO.

One general sales area is more like the old field reservations offices in that they carry the brunt of the load of incoming calls and actual bookings made. In this large general sales group there is a smaller nucleus of agents comprising our "executive desk". They deal not only with high priority bookings of businessmen but also with travel agencies, large groups such as campers or military recruits and international travelers.

Because all reservations are not completed in the original transaction and since we seldom have reference cards to indicate passenger name records (PNR's) which need further action, there is a separate division of CRO known as "queues". Queues handles such things as passenger callback for list confirmations, further bookings on carriers unable to be reached at the time of the original call and callbacks for advising incorrect flights or improper connections.

In order to keep the quality of our calls at the highest possible level there is a division known as "quality control". Q. C. monitors agents and aids in improvement of telephone techniques as well as best-possible routings and fares. This is most important aspect of feedback and a means of increasing our efficiency.

Of direct aid to the sales agent is the rate desk which not only handles fares and all possible combinations to enable the passenger to travel for the least amount of money, but also tickets by mail to almost forty of the cities Piedmont serves, plus all outlying areas which utilize our service. There are also prepaid ticket advisories which are relayed through CRO for all travel agency bookings, as well as for certain stations such as Baltimore and LaGuardia.

One of our newest areas is the flight coordination desk. All flight information for delays, cancellations, and weather is compiled and stored in the computer for agent use through the DRS and FLI-FO. Agents can also call flight coordination about flights possibly late in progress for answers to last-minute questions from passengers who haven't left for their flight departures. Flight coordinators and queue agents together help to notify passengers of cancelled or late flights and to re-book or protect these passengers in the best way possible.

Central Reservations Control, a separate facet of CRO, involves no direct passenger contact but constant interplay of flight status, pre and post departure, messages rejected from our computer as sent in by off-line carriers, DMC trouble-shooting, military cam groups, manual recording of individual TD's and all aspects of schedule modification and input in reference to the programming of the machines.

And to keep us all alert and up to date there is the constant training and retraining process. Although a lot of the information to which we have access is used daily there are always a few items which tend to be neglected and with which we get a bit rusty; besides — you all know the airline business — there are always changes.

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 third 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. Are airline operating costs growing faster than the over-all rate of inflation?

A. Yes, especially wage and salary costs. These have been rising faster in the airline industry than in most others; the recent annual rate of increase exceeds 13 per cent. Other costs have also been rising faster than the national inflation rate. Jet fuel, for example, increased nearly 15 per cent in 1969-70 and is rising in 1971. Average airport landing fees have gone up at a 10 per cent annual clip since 1964.

Q. Haven't air fares been increasing at about the same rate as everything else?

A. Far from it. While the price of most consumer goods and services sky-rocketed during the 1960s, the average air fare went down although fares on certain routes increased somewhat. Since 1962, the Consumer Price Index has increased 30 per cent. Yet it was only in May 1971 that the average airline fare rose to equal the 1962 level. Obviously, the airline ticket remains a rare bargain.

Q. How important are airlines to a local economy?

A. They contribute much to all the cities they serve and are among the top employers at busy terminals. Pittsburgh is a fairly typical example. Of the entire work force at Pittsburgh, roughly one of every 20 workers is employed in air transportation or a related business. Greater Pittsburgh Airport is conservatively estimated as contributing a quarter-billion dollars annually to the local economy.

In addition, good air service attracts investment and new business to a community, not only in the developments that grow up around an airport nucleus, but elsewhere as well. Air-

lines bring business travelers, tourists and convention-goers to an area.

Q. What are the airlines doing to eliminate noise near airports?

A. It may never be possible to eliminate noise, but airline and aircraft engineers have made steady progress toward reducing it. The public will become far more aware of this in the near future with the more common operation of "wide-bodied" jets—the Boeing 747, McDonnell-Douglas DC-10 and Lockheed L-1011. The quieter engines in these new airplanes are an impressive improvement over the older jets.

At many airports, takeoff and landing patterns have been revised to avoid flying over congested areas and thus reduce annoyance on the ground. Unfortunately, noise seems to be a characteristic of highly developed societies. Air carriers, aircraft and engine manufacturers have been making big strides toward abating it in air transportation.

Q. Have the scheduled airlines reduced air pollution?

A. More than a decade ago they cut engine emissions by half, in converting from piston-powered aircraft to jets. In 1970, airline planes accounted for only 1.2 per cent of all emissions, and that percentage is decreasing because of improved engine technology. At the end of 1969 less than 1 per cent of the airline fleet had engines that were virtually smoke-free. By the end of 1972, 64 per cent of the fleet will be equipped with such engines.

This is being achieved in two ways. The most difficult and expensive is a program to modify the most commonly used airline jet engine—the JT8-D—which powers the Boeing 727, Boeing 737 and McDonnell-Douglas DC-9. The modification greatly improves the combustion of jet fuel and does away with heavy smoke emission. These are the planes most used on short- and medium-haul routes where there are frequent takeoffs and landings. Secondly, engines powering new-technology aircraft are designed to be virtually smoke-free. Thus the Boeing 747, the Lockheed L-1011, and the McDonnell-Douglas DC-10 represent distinct advances in pollution control as well as in noise abatement.