



Several Piedmont people flew in the Dash 7 when it was in Winston earlier this summer. Made by De Havilland Aircraft of Canada, the new plane is built for short-haul operations. It is a four-engine, 2,000-foot STOL (short take-off and landing) aircraft.

**Time to make party plans**

Despite the fact that the calendar says it's August and the thermometer is acting like a firecracker, the central reservations office is thinking Christmas! Actually, they've already thought, and planned, and are hereby announcing the program for the 8th annual CRO Christmas party. Though they do all the work and have a lot of fun, they generously share their party-giving talents with all Piedmont employees.

This year's gala will be December 9, from 8:00 p.m. til 1:00 a.m. at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem. Tickets will be available starting November 1 in the Credit Union office or from Betty Butner, INT-CRO K100. The tickets will be \$15 per couple, \$8 single admission or \$3 to put your name in the door prize hat. All full-time employee ticket holders will be eligible for the enormous assortment of exotic door prizes.

The Younger Brothers band will help usher in the 1978 holiday season. In the picture, page five, from last year's affair, Snoopy, alias agent Tony Wright, is escorting Santa Spencer Rice around the dance floor. Santa Spence is American Airlines' traditional participant in Christmas, central res style.

These dog days will end. For temporary relief right now, circle December 9. It is less than four months away.

**RDU's millionth**

On June 28, 1978, the half-way point in the airline's 30th anniversary year, Raleigh-Durham boarded its one-millionth passenger. Piedmont's Raleigh City Sales Manager Frank Paschal and Station Manager Allen Perry were on hand to note the occasion as Robert G. Wilder of Cary, North Carolina checked in for Flight 19 to Memphis, Tennessee. A regular Piedmont traveler, Wilder is program manager at the Air Pollution Training Institute in the Environmental Sciences Group of Northrup Services, Inc. at the Research Triangle Park.

**Thompson is kids' buddy**

A recent story in the Roanoke Times & World News was about a Piedmont pilot and a second-string sandlot football team that came from behind to become champions. A collection of trophies tells of wins on the field, but underlying philosophy reveals the deeper championships.



Jack Brandon says good-bye to Fergy.

Some months back, the Piedmonitor noted how Captain Howard Thompson wore a coach's sweat shirt almost as often as his regulation pilots' uniform and that he was selected coach of the year for his work with the Roanoke city champion Lions.

The Lions are why Thompson has become Roanoke's father of the year in the youth leadership category. But Thompson is shy of such awards. He does it for the boys, he said.

His team learned a lot of lessons on their way to becoming champions. And, "you're actually a winner if you learn a lesson," Thompson says. They had seasons when they lost every game, but the lesson his boys learned was perseverance, "and holding your head up even though you lost."



Thompson's football trophies are displayed right beside his aircraft models.

Among the things he has tried to teach his team, the Lions, is never, never to get high and mighty once you win. Thompson made it a rule never to play a game without praying first; that nobody will get hurt, that whatever you do, God will be proud of you, and that you won't do anything to shame Him, yourself or your family.

That last part is also Thompson's philosophy for his two sons, John, 21, a student at Mary Washington College, and Bill, 16, a ninth grader. Another conviction is "in society, what you do must not only be good, but look good. That's kind of deep. But a lot of times what you do looks good to you, but not to society, and society is where you've got to live.

"You can win all these trophies, but they don't mean anything. You pass that kid on the street five or six years later, though, and he still calls you sir and mister, then you know you've helped."

A Roanoke citizens committee chose Thompson as father of the year in youth leadership.

**Fergy is gone**

It is as difficult to remember the days when Piedmont had no female flight attendants as it is to recall a time when Fergy was not at Smith Reynolds Airport.

Fergy, in fact, came with the first of his "girls." That was about 1962.

There are probably a lot of people who are surprised to know that Joseph Leon Ferguson's name never appeared on Piedmont's payroll.

Technically, he was an employee of the Blue Bird Cab Company; actually, Fergy was a vital part of Piedmont's family. He blended, but in no way faded, into life around the airport.

A confirmed prankster, one of Fergy's favorite targets was George Stack. Their joking relationship worked both ways. George says his favorite memory is of the time Fergy hid behind one of the support columns in the terminal lobby in an effort to suddenly surprise George. Walking toward the post, George saw just Fergy's stomach. Back then there was more of Fergy than could hide behind even an ample-size post.

The real Fergy never changed, but he did alter his appearance drastically some six years ago. The perfect picture of the jolly, fat man, Fergy went on a diet, under his doctor's orders. And in what didn't seem like too many months, Fergy was the happy, thin man. When he first started the diet, Captain Art Auman bet Fergy a new suit that he would not lose all those pounds. We heard the suit from Captain Auman was Fergy's favorite!

Over the years there were rumors of an on-going, after-hours poker game. Details about this activity are a little sketchy, but Stack, Milton Moss and a couple of pilots confirmed that Fergy was a member in good standing of the occasional group.

This summer, Fergy turned 65. After 27 years with Blue Bird, 16 of those being Piedmont years, Leon Ferguson retired.

Airport Station Manager Jack Brandon, the generations of girls Fergy drove between the old Robert E. Lee Hotel or the newer Holiday Inn, passengers, freight shippers and countless others already miss the world's best limo driver/friend/dependable co-worker.



Passenger Wilder is honored by Raleigh-Durham Station Manager Allen Perry and City Sales Manager Frank Paschal.



Snoopy and Santa are saying it's not that long 'til Christmas! The CRO starts planning early for their annual party. Details above.