

The Journal of Gay & Lesbian Air Travel


Issue #1

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SKYJACK

m a g a z i n e

PREMIERE ISSUE

- 
- How do Airlines Treat Gay Employees?*
 - Diary of a Regional Flight Attendant*
 - Guide to Tacky Airplane Movies*
 - Confessions of Gay Airline Enthusiasts*
 - Candid Inflight Advice*

**EASTERN'S
LAST SUPPER**

Arrival and Departure Information

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Taking Off With a New Idea

Dear Readers:

"Is it a sex magazine?"

That's what 50% of the people I've told about *Skyjack Magazine* have asked. They figure with a title like that, it must be some sleazy rag for the "Mile High Club."

Actually, the title is loosely inspired by the 1972 movie "Skyjacked," part of a genre of film that symbolizes the often-ignored connection between airlines and pop culture; an influence that we airline enthusiasts see every day of our lives (you'll find more about these glorious movies in this issue). With the recent release of "Skyjacked" on laserdisc, the timing is perfect for a fresh look at airline camp.

Skyjack is also another word for hijack, which means to force an airline to fly to an unscheduled destination. To a certain extent, that's what we hope to do with *Skyjack Magazine*. Gays, lesbians, and other minorities have left indelible marks on the airline industry, yet you can't find much written about it (except here of course, where in this issue alone, you can read about the experiences of two openly gay flight attendants). With *Skyjack*, we'll "hijack" airline culture and make it our own.

It really is time for airlines to start paying attention to us, anyway: They recognize other minorities with non-discrimination clauses and advertising dollars. But with a few exceptions (see the article "Gaining Altitude" in this issue), we don't receive that sort of respect.

It's also time for a publication for gay airline enthusiasts. We've all seen countless articles and museum exhibits dealing with the airline industry. Well, friends, with *Skyjack*, we finally have a source of airline entertainment that recognizes who we are. Every issue will feature articles dealing with different aspects of the airline world, including:

- Airline nostalgia and remembrances
- Insider reports from people in the industry
- Articles by people who collect airline memorabilia
- Strange and funny airline experiences
- Airlines and pop culture: Spotting the airline influence in books, movies, TV, and current events

People often say that baseball writing is a form of literature that transcends the sport. For some reason, airline literature has yet to take off. Perhaps *Skyjack* can help give it a push. Like most "zines," *Skyjack* is starting out small, and it's a sure money loser at this point. We need all the help we can get, so I encourage you to send in the form on page 12 to receive the next issue. Write with your opinion about what *Skyjack* should be. And if you have any stories to contribute, send them too. Happy Landings!

— Mark Chesnut

Editor & Publisher: Mark Chesnut

Contributors: Aaron Bocknek, Graham Leith, Ed Parsons, Para Sue Seguridad

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A few weeks ago, Skyjack Magazine gave me the task of writing an article about some of the goofy things passengers do when on board an airplane. I feel that I am in a particularly good position to share with my fellow readers because I have a unique perspective. You see, I'm a flight attendant with USAir Express (Allegheny Airlines) and being the one and only F/A aboard a deHavilland Dash 8, I get it all!

At first, I thought that I would share some "tricks of the trade" — like warming up the cabin in the afternoon so that when all you well-dressed businessmen settle into your seats, you naturally fall asleep and ... well, we all know what happens when we are warm and thinking naughty thoughts. Remember, we flight attendants don't just check for seatbelts!

Or I thought I would tell about the time when I was leaving Utica, New York at 6:40 am and a very well-dressed gentleman (he smelled good too) looked at the plane, then at me, and said, "Sure is small." Not wanting him to have the last word and insult my 9.5 million dollar airplane, I looked him in the eyes and said, "It's bigger than yours."

At first, he didn't know what hit him. After all, it was 6:40 am. After a few seconds, he smiled and said "High five on that one at this hour." We've been good friends ever since.

But no, I've decided to write about a little experiment I tried last week on a two-day trip, each day consisting

of five legs. I boarded my plane, N817EX, on a hot summer day and promptly put my latest copy of *Ten Percent* magazine in the seat pocket of a window seat, exit row. There is a method to my madness: Most businessmen (or tall people) request exit rows because of the added legroom. Also, at a window, the reader is trapped.

Well, over the course of this two-day trip, that magazine was always removed and read — cover to cover. I couldn't believe how fascinated these men and women were with gay-oriented magazine. In a way, it

with Aaron Bocknek

was great to see people take such interest, even if most of it was curiosity to see how "the other people live." As a matter of fact, two young marines shared the magazine before returning it to its seat-pocket home — take notice, Sam Nunn.

That magazine lasted for nine landings. On the final leg, a businessman read every page without any anxiety whatsoever. Just before landing at BWI (Baltimore), he took the magazine and ripped it in half twice. Yes, he didn't want anyone else to gain that hidden knowledge about gays and lesbians (me thinks he doth protest too much).

My next task will be passenger reaction to *Out* and perhaps, *The Washington Blade*. Don't worry, I'll keep you posted.

Until next time, brothers and sisters, keep your tails to the wind.

— Aaron

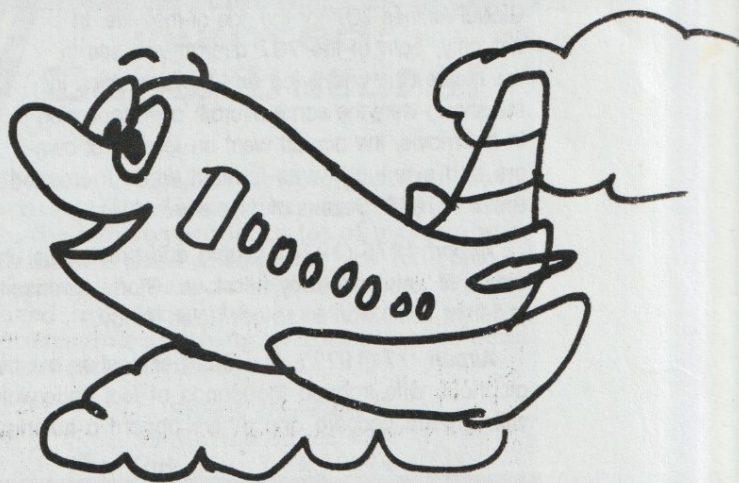
UP IN THE AIR



Great Moments in Airline History

"I think it's dumb as hell, for Christ's sake, all right, to sit here and pound the shit out of each other and neither one of us making a fucking dime."

American's Robert Crandall, speaking to Howard Putnam, president of Braniff, about their shared hub at Dallas during an infamous telephone conversation recorded on February 1, 1982



Let's face it, there's nothing quite like the vision of Karen Black struggling to read the altimeter on a Columbia Airlines 747 as a heroic yet Republican Charlton Heston struggles to swing into the cockpit on a bungee cord hanging from a high-speed helicopter. This is just one of those magic moments in cinema that most people would call needlessly stupid, yet for airline enthusiasts, it's a wonderful experience. Airlines and airports have been used as settings for countless movies, providing a dramatic backdrop for great films like *Casablanca*. But with all the glorious movies made about air travel, airline enthusiasts often seem to remember the bad ones best of all, if for nothing else than the camp appeal. In case you've forgotten some of the movies (good and bad), here's a brief round-up.

AT THE MOVIES: A Viewer's Guide to Airplane Movies

***Airplane!* (1980):** You already know how good this one is. The all-time great send-up of airplane disaster movies, it borrowed most heavily from *Zero Hour* and *Airport 75* for its laughs. Don't call me Shirley.

***Airplane II: The Sequel* (1982):** A bit disappointing after the first one, but it was a hard act to follow.

***Airport* (1970):** A landmark airline disaster/Grand Hotel-type movie results when a planeload of stars packs into a Trans Global Airlines 707 for the ride of their life. In actuality, both of the 707 aircraft you see in the movie (the one flying and the one stuck in the snow) were the same aircraft; after appearing in the movie, the aircraft went on to several owners and eventually was totalled when it crashed in Brazil in 1980. Dozens of people were killed.

***Airport 1975* (1974):** Stupid and predictable, this movie is unintentionally hilarious. Gloria Swanson's last film. You'll want to smack Helen Reddy.

***Airport '77* (1977):** Lee Grant shines as a bitter, alcoholic wife trapped thousands of feet underwater with Brenda Vaccaro and others aboard a luxurious

747. It sounds implausible, but it's actually not bad.

***Back from Eternity* (1956):** A so-so remake of "Five Came Back," this time with Robert Ryan and Anita Ekberg.

***Blazing Stewardesses* (1975; also known as *Texas Layover*):** The best part of this movie is being able to say you've seen a movie with a title like "Blazing Stewardesses" that wasn't pornographic. Yvonne DeCarlo of *Munsters* fame runs a boot camp for some young female flight attendants.

***Boeing Boeing* (1965):** Supreme sexism and multinational stewardesses in really cool uniforms are the key to this comedy starring Jerry Lewis and Tony Curtis. Thelma Ritter is the wise-cracking housekeeper (wasn't she always?).

***Coffee, Tea, or Me?* (1973):** Can Karen Valentine manage two husbands and a career as a flight attendant? Only John Davidson knows for sure.

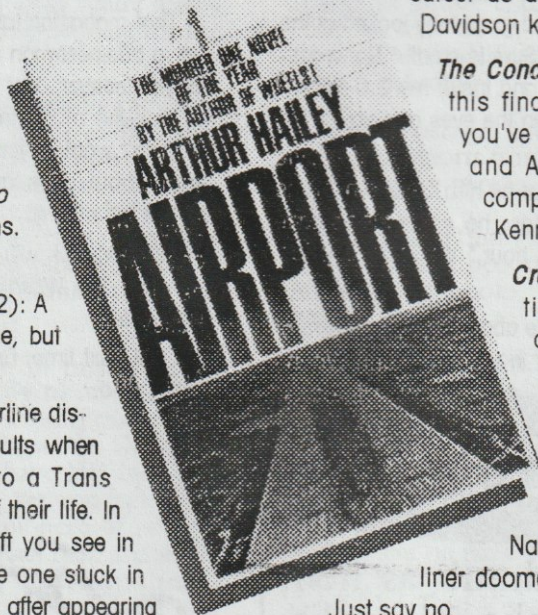
***The Concorde: Airport '79* (1979):** In this final (?) "Airport" installment, you've got Charo, Jimmie Walker, and Avery Shreiber to keep you company. And of course, George Kennedy.

***Crash* (1978):** TV dramatization of an Eastern L-1011 crash in the Florida everglades, with William Shatner and Adrienne Barbeau. See also "The Ghost of Flight 401."

***Crash Landing* (1958):** Nancy Davis (Reagan) in a airliner doomed to plunge into the ocean! Just say no.

***Die Hard 2: Die Harder* (1990):** I suppose this ushers in the era of airline disaster movies where raw action take the place of ridiculous soap opera dialogues. The disaster scenes are well-done, and the fake airlines are well-thought out.

***Fate Is the Hunter* (1964):** Glenn Ford plays an investigator out for answers in the crash of an airliner. Often engrossing; good chance to view Suzanne Pleshette's earlier hairdo.



Five Came Back (1939) Entertaining melodrama about a plane that crashes in the jungle and can take off again with only five passengers. Interesting especially for its very early, very serious Lucille Ball.

Flight #90: Disaster on the Potomac (1984): A TV movie dramatization of the 1982 Air Florida crash in Washington, D.C. Fewer Love Boat-type actors than usual, although Dinah Manoff from TV's Empty Nest does a great job holding on to big pieces of floating styrofoam. Good shots of Air Florida planes at Washington National.

Flight to Fury (1966): Jack Nicholson stars in this low-budget number about a bunch of diamond chasers on a flight to the Philippines. Any movie with a woman named Destiny is worth something.

Flying High (1978): A TV movie with Connie Selleca that spawned a short-lived series about the glamorous lives of three airline stewardesses. Although it lacked intelligence, the movie and series excited many gay airline enthusiasts.

The Ghost of Flight 401 (1978): This TV movie gives a supernatural account of the aftermath of the 1972 Eastern L-1011 crash. Ernest Borgnine's face appears mysteriously as the ghost of the pilot. Watch for Kim Basinger.

The High and the Mighty (1954): Considered one of the higher-quality classics of the genre. John Wayne, Claire Trevor, and Robert Stack are among the passengers forced to re-evaluate their entire lives when they find themselves on a doomed airliner flying from Hawaii to the Mainland.

Horror at 37,000 Feet (1972): William Shatner, Buddy Ebsen, and Tammy Grimes are the unfortunate souls trapped aboard a transatlantic flight that carries a hokey ancient evil. Paging Barnaby Jones.

The Night They Took Miss Beautiful (1977): Sheree North leads a terrorist group that hijacks an airliner filled with beauty pageant finalists. Need I say more?

Non-Stop New York (1937): A fast-paced little British film that climaxes aboard a huge, multi-level airplane with passenger sleeping cabins and an outdoor balcony!

Passenger 57 (1992): Wesley Snipes continues the new action/adventure tradition in airliner movies.

An airport flight departure announcement meant diverse things to those who heard it. For some it entailed sadness and parting; for others, in counterpoint, the prospect of reunion and joy. A handful heard flight announcements with fear; few heard them with indifference.

—Airport, by Arthur Hailey

Some good L-1011 shots, though the film is not as imaginative as *Die Hard II*.

San Francisco International Airport (1970): Van Johnson stars in this rather slow TV movie that inspired an unpopular series; still, some interesting airplane shots.

Skyjacked (1972; also known as *Sky Terror*): Charlton Heston, Yvette Mimieux, and Susan Dey are among the stars aboard this airliner hijacked to Russia.

Stewardess School (1986): This movie is an excuse for straight men to look at Judy Landers' boobs. Or else for die-hard fans of Donnie Most of "Happy Days" fame.

Terror in the Sky (1971): Food poisoning spells trouble for pilots and passengers in this fair remake of *Zero Hour*.

The Tragedy of Flight 103: The Inside Story (1990): Somewhat exploitative re-enactment of the Pan Am explosion over Lockerbie. Quite a bit of attention is paid to Pan Am's financial troubles at the time of the crash.

Valley of Mystery (1967): Airline passengers stranded in a South American jungle!

Zero Hour (1957): It's ptomaine poisoning in this one (what is ptomaine poisoning?). Dana Andrews heads the cast in this story, based on an Arthur Hailey teleplay.

And someday soon: "Hub and Spoke," a terrifying film about a layover from Hell. Stay tuned! ★

Wanted: Contributors!

Help us create the newest genre of travel writing: **Gay Airline Literature!** If you work in the industry, collect a lot of memorabilia, or have a good airline story to tell (fact or fiction), we want to hear from you. We also need interesting black and white photos portraying anything airline-related. Send ideas and submissions to:

Skyjack Magazine
55 Morton Street, #3K
New York, New York 10014-4095

Do you have the guts to read...

Secret Confessions of Gay Airline Enthusiasts!

I got hard-ons during take-off until I was 35!" gushes Ivan, who, as a teenager, collected newspaper clippings of airline disasters. While his excitement about airplane travel surpasses that of most travelers, it certainly is an indicator of the enthusiasm of people like us, the die-hard airline enthusiasts.

I've been hooked on airplanes since my childhood, when I first puked on an Ozark Air Lines DC-9 between St. Louis and Paducah, Kentucky (one-time home of Lily Tomlin and a stop on Joan Crawford's Pepsi bottling tour).

In seventh grade, I met my first "airline buddy," J.J.. We each came up with our own "flag" carriers: imaginary airlines that we owned. Mine was called Chesway Global and the advertising slogan was "Chesway Global Takes Your Cares Away;" Carly Simon sang it for me.

I've been hooked on airplanes since my childhood, when I first puked on an Ozark Air Lines DC-9

J.J.'s airline was called Catalines International (later changed to Suncoast, with a base in Tampa because his grandparents lived there). My airline was locked in a fierce imaginary competition with his, which made it all more fun. First, I introduced "dancing stewardesses" on all widebody flights, then he signed up the Village People to perform on selected Catalines flights. Then, on all flights to Hawaii, he installed "Hawaiian Kid Centers," which essentially consisted of a jungle gym in the cargo hold of an L-1011. The kids had to be strapped to the walls to make sure they didn't fall during turbulence.

We also started playing flight attendant on an abandoned school bus in a field near my house. J.J., being the more creative, would always flight with the invisible passengers. "Sit down Sir!!" he'd shriek. "I don't care if you have to go to the bathroom! We're about to land! No, you *cannot* have any more peanuts!!"

But I didn't know until my first visit to an airline memorabilia show that there were so many other people who were like me: people who are tantalized by the pungent smell of airline food and entranced by the measured cadence of the baggage claim. I didn't know that there was anyone else whose favorite ride at Walt Disney World was "If You Had Wings,"



Eastern's corporate-image ride in Tomorrowland. It was like my first visit to a gay bar, when I realized that I wasn't alone in my strange desires.

We come to buy, sell, and trade timetables, inflight dinnerware, airline uniforms, airplane photographs and models; practically anything with an airline logo on it. This is the frenzied world of the airline enthusiast, a good portion of which is decidedly queer. Now, there's even a Gay Airline Club (and a great fanzine called *Skyjack!*). What attracts gay people to the airlines?

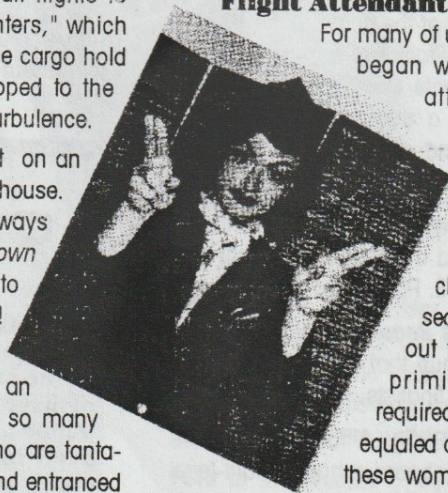
"A lot of gay people are drawn in by the glamour," says Hernan, who lives in Los Angeles and collects Pan Am paraphernalia. "It's such a visual industry. The airplanes, the destinations, the uniforms. The approach the airlines take is very glamorous.

"I always love take-off and landing," J.J. tells me. "The power. The thrust. It's cool."

Maybe it's the phallic nature of a thick 767 rising up to part the supple, yielding clouds. "Take-off is very erotic, and I also get turned on by turbulence," agrees Ivan, who points out that air travel holds still deeper meaning for some: "We all have a need to get away from ourselves, and airlines represent the other end of the rainbow."

Flight Attendant as Goddess

For many of us, part of the magic of flying began with the image of the flight attendant. When we were young, she was the ultimate in cool poise: decked out with elaborate hairdos, stylish polyester skirts, and the "I'm-in-charge-you-must-take-your-seat-now-sir" pumps. Pointing out the emergency exits was a primitive vogue routine that required an air of detached concern equaled only by Willie Ninja. Perhaps these women of the skies appealed to our latent drag tendencies. "I thought they were the living end," says Hernan. "They were just



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RIME OF THE ANCIENT WHISPERLINER: EASTERN AIRLINES Remembered

On January 18, 1991, officials announced that the silver jets would fly no more. The final Eastern Airlines flight landed, and an important part of aviation history ended.

Although many had predicted the carrier's imminent collapse, reality was still a jolt. Never one to miss a chance to grab some airline paraphernalia, I had already persuaded an industry friend to try and arrange for me to visit Eastern's New York offices before they closed for good. I was just waiting for someone in the office to call.

Several months passed, and I assumed that Eastern employees had more important things to do than to invite me over to go through their garbage. Then one afternoon, I got a call from a gentleman in Eastern's offices in New York City (I won't mention his name or position). He suggested that I drop by before they close up shop for good, to look through some junk that had been left behind. This was a once-in-a-lifetime chance!

The next day during my lunch hour, I walked over to the Eastern Airlines offices at 10 Rockefeller Plaza, a building Eastern had moved into on July 15, 1940, and where they continued to maintain office space even after the executive offices were moved to Miami. The ticket office on the ground floor was completely closed off, and heavy desks and chairs were stacked on the sidewalk next to the gold door that led to the offices.

I rang the bell underneath the gold lettering and was buzzed in. A sticker inside announced that I was entering a "Disaster Area." I understood the sentiments. Inside, a handful of people buzzed around, throwing office supplies into the boxes that covered the floor of the small office. The gentleman who had telephoned greeted me with a handshake and a package of Eastern L-1011 post cards.

My newfound friend showed me to another room where hundreds of brochures lay in dusty piles on top of brimming file cabinets. "We're trying to get rid of everything," he told me, "Just rummage through and

see what's there. Help yourself." Then he left me alone to look through this treasure chest of Eastern Airlines history. I couldn't wait to dive in. I found airplane photographs, fact sheets, timetables, photos of flight attendants from various time periods, and other public relations material. Since I had missed an auction of larger items at LaGuardia airport earlier in the year, this was surely my final chance to increase my Eastern Airlines collection at the source.

"You're looking for memorabilia?" a voice asked as I bent over a file cabinet. I turned around and met an Eastern employee who had come in to grab some of her possessions. I explained that I was an uncontrollable airline fanatic. "You might want to check for stuff over here too," she suggested, pointing to another cubicle where material was piled up. "We told the offices in Miami about all of this stuff, but they haven't expressed any interest in taking it." I asked her

how employee spirits were in the final weeks. "Grim," she replied as she left, "but people are looking forward to the whole thing ending, so they can move on."

Sorting out all of the paraphernalia left behind at Eastern's office was like cleaning out the house of a deceased relative. You find some things you remember from long ago, and you find some things you never knew existed. I remembered my first sighting of an Eastern DC-8, and the excitement of my first flight on an Airbus from Miami to New York. There were mementos of Eastern's long relationship with Eddie Rickenbacker and proud announcements of the first all-jet service on the ground-breaking Air-Shuttle. I did not know, however, that Eastern was headquartered in Brooklyn from 1929 to 1932, or that they were the first airline to hire male flight attendants.

Continued on page 11

Did you know?

The son of David White, who played Larry Tate in television's *Bewitched*, died in the Pan Am explosion over Lockerbie, Scotland.

GAINING ALTITUDE:

Gays and Lesbians in the Airline Industry

by Mark Chesnut

"I hear you don't like men," a company official

said to Sheila* a new pilot at Eastern Express, an affiliate of now-defunct Eastern Airlines. "I want you to know that if we find out that's true, you won't make it in this company."

This was just the beginning of an extended "hazing" period for the new pilot; an experience she says would not have been so cruel if she weren't a lesbian. But Sheila was powerless to fight the situation because Eastern had no policy addressing anti-gay discrimination, and no structure to deal with anti-gay harassment.

Sheila's experience is an unpleasant reminder of the precarious nature of lesbians and gays in the airline industry. Although homosexuals have traditionally played highly visible roles in the business, most of them work with little or no protection from discrimination, and must accept benefits unequal to those of their heterosexual counterparts. Only recently has the industry begun taking steps toward promoting tolerance and equality for gay and lesbian employees.

The Friendly Skies?

Lesbian and gay airline employees describe varied degrees of acceptance. The gay flight attendants interviewed for this story reported fewer encounters with homophobia than those who work in other areas. Many of these flight attendants said the stereotypical image of the gay male flight attendant actually works in their favor: people expect to see gay people working the aisles, so it's not a problem.

Gay people in other positions are more likely to feel the need to remain closeted. "Cockpits are heavily influenced by the military aspect," explained Sheila, the pilot. "It's probably the most conservative job in the most conservative industry in the U.S. It's real hard."

When it comes to the corporate structure, however, it doesn't matter whether you're a flight attendant, pilot, or senior vice president — nearly all the U.S. airlines

have the same policy when it comes to lesbians and gays: none. Most airlines have a written policy that forbids discrimination based on gender, race, and religious or ethnic back-

ground, but they don't include sexual orientation. Only two major U.S. carriers — United Airlines and American Airlines — include sexual orientation in their written non-discrimination policies. Northwest said it was considering adding sexual orientation to its policy.

For their part, some airline spokespersons said that a bias-free workplace is a priority. "We believe that our employees, regardless of sexual orientation, deserve to work free of harassment and with dignity," said Richard Danforth of Continental Airlines.

This sentiment echoes the thoughts of airlines like American and USAir, who stated flat out that discrimination based on sexual orientation just isn't a problem. According to a TWA official, gay issues "never arise in the workplace." But these claims ring hollow for lesbian and gay airline employees who have looked to their employers for written policies protecting them from harassment and discrimination.

The airlines score even more poorly when it comes to spousal benefits such as health care and "buddy" or "companion" passes for free flights. No major U.S. airlines provide health care for "non-traditional" domestic partners. Only Continental, TWA, and USAir make companion passes available. Southwest Airlines did not return repeated phone calls.

Of all the U.S. carriers, perhaps Delta has received the worst press regarding lesbian and gay issues. In 1991, the airline was accused of asking illegal interview questions — including questions about sexual orientation — during interviews with former Pan Am employees after Delta bought many of Pan Am's assets. Delta later agreed to settle a case brought against it, in which a former employee claimed that Delta fired him on the basis of sexual orientation and his perceived HIV status; but Delta has continued to deny any wrongdoing.

Delta has taken some positive steps; some "public contact" employees have received training to sensitize them to lesbian and gay concerns. Although this may just be a response to criticism, it nevertheless puts Delta ahead of many carriers.

Delta's case is unique; usually, reports of harassment involve co-workers rather than the company itself. But none of the major airlines have responded to anti-gay harassment with any sort of sensitivity training to encourage understanding of lesbian and gay co-workers. Mike Mitchell of America West Airlines pointed out, however, that their company has presented a video about working with HIV-positive employees.

Airline companies are by nature slow at responding to complaints, if they do at all. It reportedly took American Airlines two years to issue an internal memo condemning anti-gay graffiti that appeared in some of its cargo holds as early as 1990.

In defense of the airlines, many employees interviewed, particularly flight attendants, said that they don't feel discriminated against. But there is little recourse for those employees who do experience discrimination.

Unions to the Rescue

Some union representatives say they are not surprised by the airlines' reluctance to deal with gay issues. "They don't like anything that doesn't smack of middle-of-the-road society," said Vicki Frankovich of the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA), a group that represents TWA's flight attendants. Union negotiation attempts are made even more difficult by the sorry financial state of the airline industry.

The airlines will probably never change their benefits structure voluntarily, according to R. Frederick Casey, national vice president of the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), which represents 30,000 flight attendants from carriers including United and USAir. "It's going to have to be legislative," he said. Indeed, a federal definition of what constitutes domestic partnership would give the unions more negotiating power — but that kind of progress is a long way off.

The AIDS crisis has become an additional focus for some union members, who have started groups like the AIDS Resource Network, founded by an American Airlines flight attendant. In addition, several unions and airlines have been represented by contingents in AIDS

fund-raising walks across the country, and have contributed panels to the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt.

Many flight attendant unions are pushing for equal benefits for lesbians and gays. Nevertheless, several unions have no written policy regarding lesbian and gay issues. Unions that don't involve flight attendants take a more conservative view: lesbian and gay concerns are simply "not an issue," according to David Mallino of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA). "It hasn't come up, to the point where the institution has found it necessary to deal with."

It may be this lack of attention that fostered the recent growth of gay airline groups. These include the Gay Pilots Association, formed in 1990, the Pink Triangle Committee in Canada, and Gay and Lesbian United Employees (GLUE). Since the group was founded in 1992, GLUE president Tom Cross says their membership has grown to include an array of United Airlines employees, including pilots, reservationists, mechanics, and people in management positions.

The birth of these new groups, coupled with new recognition at airlines like United and some Canadian carriers, indicates that progress is underway — American even served as the official airline of the International Mr. Leather Contest. But the anonymity required by many members of the new gay groups proves that it's still difficult to be out of the closet in the airline industry. ★

Only two major U.S. carriers — United and American — include sexual orientation in their written non-discrimination policies.

The original version of this article appeared in Out & About, a really cool travel newsletter.

Advertisers!

Here's your chance to reach a well-traveled gay and lesbian audience in a highly targeted medium. If you have something to sell — especially if it relates to travel — Skyjack is the vehicle for you! For information about our reasonable advertising rates, call (212) 243-1169.

On my last visit to The Cape (Provincetown in particular), I visited a shop which specialised in different pins. One of the pins I bought was a pair of "Rainbow Wings." These were very well designed by a company called Queer Gear and they had the gay rainbow on the wings, with the inverted pink triangle in the centre.

Two friends of mine and I purchased these at a cost of \$9.00 each. We all wore these on our different flights, and received various comments from both crew

Wings Over the Rainbow

and passengers alike! My friend and I wore them on a flight from Glasgow, Scotland to Boston, and whilst I was serving coffee, a very "straight-looking" guy asked me what the wings were for.

by Graham Leith

I explained that the rainbow was a representation of gay pride, and the triangle represented the Second World War, when gays were treated worse than Jews. The guy looked at me and said, "Good! My brother is gay and I just wondered if you knew what they were for, or if you just thought they were pretty!"

Another time, a member of the (usually homophobic) cockpit crew came back to chat and asked "Where did you get those wings, Graham?"

I said I bought them in Provincetown, on the Cape.

Within less than 30 seconds the flight deck member disappeared, and I did not see him again for the rest of the flight.

I was also approached by a very good-looking gentleman (who may read this article, and if so, thank you!) who said "I like your wings and I hope that you wear them with pride."

I think that it is great that we have such things as the rainbow flag to identify ourselves, however I do feel sad that we have to wear a pin to say "who we are." What if I had not worn these wings; would these people have ever spoken to me?

A very rude passenger also commented on my wings, and again, my reply was very basic. When I said, "It's a Gay Thing," the sad person replied that he didn't have very much to be happy about right now, as he was going to be late!

There is a sad ending to this story, however. On a flight coming into Boston, I left my serving garment on the aircraft by mistake, with my "Wings" still on it, along with a bar giving my first name. There is only one Graham based in Boston, so I thought I would get the whole thing back — but I didn't. Maybe some red-neck has given the "pretty" wings to his wife — or lover! ★

Graham Leith is a flight attendant with Northwest Airlines. He has also worked for Laker Airways, Britannia Airways, Florida Express, and Braniff.

Secret Confessions

continued from page 6

so cordial, so plastic, so glamorous. People looked up to them because of the job."

These early images led many gay airline enthusiasts to work in the industry. "When we were little," J.J. recalls, "we saw these flight attendants in high-heeled shoes, and we said, 'that's the job for me!' You have to look good as a flight attendant, you have to think you're the top of the world when you're really not. And you get to walk around when the seat belt light is on."

J.J. worked as a flight attendant for two domestic carriers before calling it quits. "The reality is that being a flight attendant is hard, just like everything else in life," he reports. "It just looks fun. And nowadays, the flight attendants take off their high-heeled shoes when they get on the plane." ★

Incomes of the Rich and Famous

1992 Total Compensation for selected CEOs in the airline industry:

AMR/Robert Crandall	\$4,009,000
UAL/Stephen Wolf	\$2,548,000
SWAir/Herbert D. Kelleher	\$962,000
USAir/Seth E. Schofield	\$961,000
Delta/Ronald W. Allen	\$536,000

Source: Forbes Magazine Executive Compensation Review

Are you in need of some friendly advice about on-board safety or etiquette? Then Para Sue, former editor of Sky Queen International, quite possibly has the answer for you. Write her a letter with any question on your mind, and she'll do her best to answer.

Dear Para Sue:

A friend told me I should always go to the bathroom before take-off so that my bladder doesn't explode if the plane crashes. But she also told me that the suction when you flush a toilet on a 757 is strong enough to suck your fingernails off. So I'm afraid to use the loo. What should I do?

Signed, *Quizzical in the Quad Cities*

Dear Quizzical:

The only thing you really have to watch out for is the front lavatory in American's Fokker 100s, because there's no handle to steady yourself with, and a little turbulence could send you careening into the bowl. Other than that, as long as your nails aren't press-on, you should be safe as can be. The only problem I had was back when I used to wear my "Speed Wedge" wig. Once it flipped right off my head and into the toilet on a BAC 1-11. But those days are gone, honey.

Para Sue
Seguridad...



Rime of the Ancient Whisperliner

Continued from page 7

Of course, I saw nothing that reflected the extreme difficulties the carrier encountered — the promotional material contained no mention of management difficulties, labor relations, bankruptcy. There was nothing to remind me of the time I flew on frequent flyer miles to Buenos Aires just after the strike started, when Eastern's routes were so heavily reduced that it was more a Latin American carrier than a U.S. domestic. What I found in that office was only the best, only the proudest memories of an airline that holds an important place in aviation history.

I spent forty-five minutes in that office, getting my hands filthy from the old files and loving every minute of it. I left with four full plastic bags and a travel poster under my arm and thanked the gentleman again. Even after the airline stopped flying (as schlocky as it sounds), its people were still earning their wings.

Post Script

Since my trip to Eastern's New York offices had met with such success, a couple weeks later I called the Miami headquarters. I wasn't sure if there would be anyone at the other end to answer, but I called anyway.

"Good afternoon, Eastern Airlines," a woman answered pleasantly, with no hint of the fact that the

airline was effectively extinct. I explained that I was calling to inquire about memorabilia, and she told me that there was a separate department, known as "asset sales," that handled such requests. I was cheerfully transferred to a woman in that department who said I was too late; all remaining memories of Eastern Airline had been sold. Apparently I wasn't the only one out for this stuff. ★

PLANE SPOTTING CONTEST

Where was the Continental Airlines 747 in Jurassic Park? The first two people to write to *Skyjack Magazine* with the correct answer will win a free Eastern Airlines datebook/checkbook wallet and a Delta Airlines napkin. To win these glamorous prizes, write down the exact scene in the movie where you saw the airplane, and mail it to:

Skyjack Magazine
55 Morton Street, #3K
New York, NY 10014

Winners will receive their wonderful prizes by mail within 6 weeks.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE:

by Ed Parsons

The AIDS Resource Network

I founded the AIDS Resource Network/Volunteers for AIDS Information and Services As a non-profit service organization in 1987, when I was actively employed as a flight attendant with American Airlines. ARN was founded due to the growing need in the workforce for a source of information about AIDS, and to provide assistance to HIV+ employees regarding medical, disability benefits, and referrals to community-based organizations. All information is provided on a strictly confidential basis.

ARN has representatives in 17 cities across the United States. Volunteers for the network must complete a comprehensive eight hour training to become mem-

bers of the Network. While support from American Airlines' corporate offices has been minimal, the Association of Professional Flight Attendants provides an annual budget of \$19,000, which pays for Network-related phone charges as well as providing financial support to send representatives to the annual National AIDS Conference in San Francisco.

Although ARN representatives have been approached by employees of other U.S. airlines seeking information about the organization, ARN remains the only organization of its kind currently operating within a U.S. carrier. For more information, write to ARN, P.O. Box 79, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254. ★

The Skyjack Bookstore

In order to raise funds to continue the publication of *Skyjack Magazine*, we're selling a limited number of the following books, all of which are required reading for the airline enthusiast:

Countdown: An Autobiography
by Frank Borman (1988)..... \$8
Borman gives his own (sometimes believable) view of his career in space and at Eastern Airlines.

Grounded: Frank Lorenzo and the Destruction of Eastern Airlines by Aaron Bernstein (1990)...\$8
A fascinating study in how to ruin an airline.

Terror in the Skies by Capt. Thomas M. Ashwood, Chair of the Security Committee of the Int'l Federation of Air Line Pilots (1987).....\$6
How safe is it to fly? Ashwood takes a serious look at terrorism and other perils.

What It's Like to be a Flight Attendant
by Elizabeth Rich (1982).....\$5
An unintentionally campy, outdated view of flight attendant life.

All books are hardcover. Prices include shipping and handling. Offer is valid only while supplies last, so hurry and send a check made out to **Mark Chesnut, 55 Morton Street #3K, New York, New York 10014.**

In the next issue, we'll be listing the best "company stores" — those official outlets of airline memorabilia and employee goodies. Write to us with your favorites, including specifics about where they're located — include city/airport name, terminal, floor, and any specific information that will help people find the store, plus whether it's possible for "non-employees" to gain entry.

Plus, North Central memories, Sex and the Single Flight Attendant, Celebrity Travel Profiles, Frequent Flyer tips, and a Profile of Air Atlanta: The Nation's first minority-owned jet carrier.

To make sure you get the next issue of *Skyjack*, fill out the form below and mail with \$4 (cash or a check made out to Mark Chesnut), and mail it to:

Skyjack Magazine
55 Morton Street #3K
New York, New York 10014

Your name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Country/Zip _____

What would you like to see in Skyjack?

