

BUDDY PASS BASHING

Pro-afa F/As appear to be criticizing our buddy pass benefit because Delta makes money on it - “\$41 million for 2000. Not bad!!!” We have no idea whether this is accurate or whether they’ve just made it up, but it doesn’t matter because complaining about buddy passes is like office workers complaining about getting another holiday because they’ll lose two coffee breaks. Pro-afa F/As who are upset because Delta profits from buddy passes, can refuse them and, for example, have their relatives pay full fare. That’ll show Delta!

MORE afa DECEIT

A Tuesday, June 5th afa e-mail headed “*Delta and Continental reported in merger talks*” was obviously intended to stir up fear of an imminent merger. It went on to quote a June 5 Associated Press story saying Delta and Continental “*reportedly have begun talks about a merger in which Continental would acquire the much larger Delta.*” The article went on to say “*The discussions are very informal,*” “*in the very early stage,*” and “*Both Delta and Continental said they prefer to stay independent, but would consider a merger or some other alliance if competitors’ mergers are approved,*” The afa conveniently failed to mention the year in which this “June 5” story appeared. One of its quotes tells us – “*Last month, American Airlines agreed to acquire financially ailing Trans World Airlines.*” That was in 2000, not this year! Sending it out on June 5th of this year was obviously an attempt to frighten F/As by making us think merger talks are *currently* in progress. This is another example of how the afa will say anything, no matter how misleading, outrageous, or deceitful to lure us into its clutches.

We very seriously doubt that Delta, Continental or Northwest have held merger talks lately. Why? Because the prospect of United’s purchase of US Airways being approved is remote and growing less likely by the day.

- The *Houston Chronicle*: “Cabinet officer says air merger unlikely. WASHINGTON – Transportation secretary Norman Y. Mineta said Tuesday [June 5, 2001] he expected the federal government to reject the proposed United Airlines-US Airways merger. **Asked if he thought the merger was dead, he replied ‘If I were to read the tea leaves as they are right now, yes.’**”
- Speaking of the merger, Sal Colak, a research analyst at CIBC World Markets, a New York-based investment firm, said “***There’s no financial reason anymore to do it. When you add two negatives, it makes a bigger negative.***” The negatives he was referring to are that both airlines report that they expect to post losses this year. If the merger were approved, it would increase those losses by another \$400,000,000.
- Jon Ash, managing director of Global Aviation Associates, a Washington, D.C. – based consulting firm, said, “***If this deal is consummated, you will have the biggest failing carrier you’ve ever seen in five years. You have to be careful what you ask for, because you might get it.***”
- Crain’s Chicago Business: “While the size of the merger raised alarms from the start, **a summer of flight delays, cancellations, and lousy customer service aroused public outcry that has hardened opposition in Congress.**”
- “*They have to overcome the growing political opposition to it [the merger], says George Hamlin, senior vice-president of Global Aviation Associates... The feeling is: ‘Gee, you can’t run the company you’ve got, and you want to make it bigger?’*”
- On June 4, 2001, *Crain’s Chicago Business* reported that **the United-US Airways merger is “now considered all but dead.”**
- AP, June 7, 2001: “**United acquisition of US Air not dead, but on life support ...Airline consultant Michael Boyd suggested that United, which last month suspended the work of its merger preparation team, is looking for a face-saving way out of the deal.**”

We think Michael Boyd’s suggestion that United is “*looking for a face-saving way out of the deal*” is right on for several reasons – 1) United’s offer is for \$60 per share and US Airways’ stock has plummeted to under \$24 (with US Airways losing money, \$30 per share would be generous), 2) other unions are clamoring for raises like United gave the pilots to get their support for the merger, 3) horrendous seniority integration battles loom, 4) rising fuel costs and declining business are seriously impacting the profitability of both airlines.

MEANWHILE....

“Seeing continued turbulence ahead in labor-management relations, pilots at United are contemplating another union-led stock purchase to gain decisive control of the world’s second largest carrier...” So sayeth Crain’s Chicago Business. Incidentally, in the article, Rick Dubinski, chairman of the Air Line Pilots Assn. (ALPA) Master Executive Council at United is quoted as saying, **“Nobody likes working here, and that’s the problem.”** Thanks for the insight Mr. D. Union pushers here at Delta are always cackling about how great everything is at United because F/As there are represented by the afa. You’ve certainly dispelled that misguided notion. Bye the way, we wish all the unions at United luck in your endeavor to take over the company. If the merger doesn’t miraculously re-emerge and kill United, union infighting, bickering and control certainly will.

STICKING POINT IN AMERICAN F/A NEGOTIATIONS

Dallas, June 6 (Reuters) – **“American Airlines has said it is offering an industry-leading contract, but the union has said the proposed base pay falls short of what Delta Air Lines pays its flight attendants...”** How far short? *“Union president John Ward last week said differences remain on salary, minimum pay and health and life insurance, with a gap of about \$200 million.”*

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR – FROM A PRO-AFA F/A, NO LESS

Pro-afa F/As have been belly-aching because our uniforms are similar to those of other Delta employees. One of their own has taken issue with them. She thinks there are other issues that can get F/As involved in the afa’s drive, but she doesn’t buy their uniform complaints. We think she is even embarrassed by them, but you can decide that for yourself:

“I’m still having a hard time with the wing issue. If a person from ACS ever decided to play flight attendant for a day, his/her name would not be on either the pre-departure or departure report, and of course, any f/a would question it. A call to scheduling could further verify, so I really don’t see it as being that much of a problem for safety or security. In a ground emergency, I wouldn’t be caring if it was cabin service, maintenance or a flight attendant...I’d be finding the first and closest person to help. As for mistaken identity, I can’t recall how many times I’ve been behind the gate podium in our old navy blue uniforms to get a pre-departure report, and some passenger began asking questions about seats or what have you. The fact is, if people have questions, they only look for a uniform...they don’t look close enough to see if it’s a f/a or other personnel.”

It’s refreshing to find a pro-afa F/As who isn’t doing her darndest to prove P. T. Barnum was right.