

THE HEICON FLYER

OCTOBER 1969

NUMBER 1

The Heicon Flyer is an outgrowth of the organizing of a charter flight to Europe. Since some sort of news will be going out to people interested in flying together to Heicon, I decided to include (for the same postage) information on how to travel in Europe. This serves the purpose of convincing people that you can indeed travel in Europe without joining a tour, and gets more people signed up for the charter flight.

Currently, plans call for 10 issues - one a month - up to the charter flights departure. It will try to contain varied kinds of information on Europe and traveling thereabouts. This assumes people will contribute. So please, anyone who's been to Europe or knows something which might be interesting to others, please send it in. This first issue is kind of sparse; I hope future issues carry more varied material. In addition, let me know what you're interested in and I'll try and get some information on it.

Subscriptions accepted for the issues published up to the charter leaving. Late subscriptions will get back issues as available plus all future issues. To keep expenses of the actual charter down, subs are \$1.00 or the usual. This is solely to cover postage. The cost of publishing and mailing this is not an expense associated with the charter flight. It will not be included in the price of your ticket.

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HEICON CHARTER NEWS

Organizing for the Heicon charter flight was started at the St. Louiscon by distributing a questionnaire looking for some preferences on departure points, length of stay, etc. At the con I got together with Tradewinds Travel Bureau in the person of Dr. Allen E. Nourse and we agreed on how to handle the entire operation. In order to keep costs low, the solicitation, advertising and organizing of the fans will be done by fans through fan publications. Tradewinds will make arrangements with the airlines and handle individual tour requests people may wish to make. This has the advantage of having a recognized travel agency, with all the clout it has, dealing with the airlines. Hopefully, this means we are less likely to be screwed by the airlines. The advantage to Tradewinds is that they get their name before the fans and any arrangements for tours or accomadations by fans will (hopefully) be made through them. A travel bureau gets its percentage off the tour operator or the hotel so you pay no more by going through Tradewinds. So we have a good working relationship where each knows what to exrect from the other. A great deal of time was spent at St. Louiscon settling the details for this working arrangement and I feel it should be beneficial to all.

Since then letters have been flying back and forth to set up the details. As a result, we have two charter groups being formed. One, leaving from the west coast, Dr. Nourse christianed "Heicon Charter West". Arrangements for this will be handled directly by Allan E. Nourse and he will coordinate with me. The other is "Heicon Charter East" for which I am soliciting reservations. The reason for this split-up is geographical. He lives in Washington (state) and I live in New Jersey. Reservations for either charter may be sent to either person, but it slows down matters slightly.

The arrangements for the charter as they now stand are:

Depart - New York City, Kennedy International Airport,
August 7, 1970

Arrive - Frankfurt am Main, 7 hours and 2 meals later

Return - August 30, 1970, New York City

In order to travel on the charter, you must be a member of HEICON so please include your membership number with the deposit. At the present moment we are asking only for a \$50 deposit (per person) which is completely refundable if, for some reason, the charter does not go through. The balance of the money is due in two payments: \$100 on or before April 1 and the remainder (about \$40-50) by June 15. The exact cost depends on how many people go. Based on the number of people already contacted, I estimate a cost of \$190-200. To facilitate matters, include (as a minimum) the following info-
1) Name and address, 2) East coast or west coast, 3) Heicon member number, 4) St. Louiscon member number, and 5) Check for \$50.
Send all this on to ⁽³⁸⁵⁾ either myself or Allen Nourse depending on whether you're interested in Heicon Charter East or Charter West.

Heicon Charter East
Donald Lundry
RD 1 - Old York Estates
Hightstown, N.J., 08520

Heicon Charter West
Allan Nourse
Tradewinds Travel Bureau
Fall City, Washington

Sent \$50 - 12/8/69

#1 subscriber - 12/8/69

WHY A CHARTER FLIGHT?

A lot of people might be wondering what's the point of a charter flight when the airlines fly regularly to Europe. The reason is simply COST! The regular flights are based on the assumption that only about 50% of the plane will be full at a time. So to keep the flight profitable, the price is roughly twice what it would be if the airlines could be assured that every flight would be filled.

The beauty of a charter flight is that the airlines rents you the plane complete with pilot, stewardess, etc. How you fill it is up to you provided you follow CAB regulations. The airline no longer cares. They've already covered their expenses and made a modest profit by renting the entire plane. Now the price per person depends on how many people you can get to go on the flight.

As an example, a group of National Press Club members recently paid \$215 each for a Pan Am jet that flew them from Washington D.C. to Rome and picked them up 30 days later at Geneva for the return trip. We are currently projecting a cost of \$190-200 for the charter from New York to Frankfurt. This contrasts with the following individual fares from New York to Europe:

Regular fare, First class	\$ 834.
High season, tourist class	594.
Low season, tourist class	504.
High season, Icelandic Air	422.70
Low season, " " "	352.70

If you choose you can also get special excursion fares, with the proviso that you do not stay over 21 days, nor under 14. They are further complicated by the extra fee charged if you wish to arrive or depart weekends. If we assume that you wish to start Friday (or Saturday) right after work and return Sunday, then the following fares apply:

High season, tourist only	470.
Low season, tourist only	420.

If you'll settle for departing and arriving on weekdays, you can knock \$60 off those figures.

The above figures are hold-over values from this summer when fares were somewhat standardized. Since then, there has been some vicious fare-cutting on the North Atlantic route. An agreement setting fares for travel over the North Atlantic, pasted together by 22 airlines from almost as many countries, has come unstuck. Representatives of the international airlines belong to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), nominally a trade association, but in reality the fare setting agency for most major scheduled international airlines. At the current time, the IATA is discussing new rates in Switzerland. In order to pressure them into dropping fares somewhat, Alitalia jumped the gun and announced \$299. round trip coach fare for individual travel from New York to Rome during the off-season period of Nov. 1 through March 31. The only condition is that the return trip may not begin until 22 days after departure.

Since then, Pan American World Airways (Pan-Am), Trans-World Airways (TWA), and Air-India have announced their intentions of matching Alitalia fares. So far, Lufthansa, the West German airline, has announced it will charge \$280 for round trip travel between New York City and the West Germany cities it serves. Swissair has announced a \$280 fare for travel between New York City and both Switzerland and West Germany. For our purposes, these fares and all the attendant advertising are deceptive since they apply only to the low season during the winter months. What the high season summer fares will be, is still being negotiated by IATA representatives. The only thing that is reasonable positive is that no matter what the final rate structure is, a charter will still be cheaper.

Fare bargains are also available at rates between the charter rates and the individual rates. There is a group-inclusive tour (called GITS) which allows at least 15 persons to sign up for a given group tour where each must buy at least \$70. worth of ground-travel arrangements in advance. Peak season fares under this plan are currently , for New York City to London (round trip) \$280; Amsterdam, Paris or Brussels \$300. A new animal, the contract-bulk-inclusive tour (CBIT) is scheduled for introduction November 1. With the present rate cutting, it is questionable whether this will still be available for next summer. Plans are for CBIT fares to be about \$230 for a round trip between New York and London. However, this plan requires you to prepay at least \$100 in ground arrangements. Presumably these are the more expensive hotels in Europe. Furthermore, you must, as on the GIT, depart and return together on specified flights.

From all this, you can see the charter is, by far, the most convenient and economical arrangement. We set the times we travel and we have the plane to ourselves. No crotchety old maids wringing their hands over the 'younger generation' or any wisecracks about beards. No narks, hotel dicks, rent-a-fuzz or crude desk clerks. Just fans. That's the real reason 'why a charter flight'.

THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE ALREADY SENT IN THE DEPOSIT:

The checks have been held and not cashed pending approval by the CAB of the Heicon membership as a legitimate affinity group eligible for charter rates. Now that the approval has been granted, the checks will be cashed and placed in a special account for the charter flight.

I O O B

'Pan American World Airways, giant of the international skies, has collided with what it alleges is an illegitimate operation -- involving an organization calling itself the International Order of Old Bastards. Solemnly the huge airline has petitioned the Civil Aeronautics Board under Section 1002(a) of the Federal Aviation Act, claiming the IOOB is not the sort of bona fide organization entitled to charter planes for its members and to provide them with low-cost tours.

'The IOOB, organized by some fun-loving Australians hust after World War II, describes itself as strictly nonprofit, with no dues, no fees and no assessments. Membership is aimed at those 'approaching or past 60 years' and requirements are simple: Drinking habits must be 'hearty.' All OBs approaching a fellow Bastard are enjoined to give a vigorous handclasp and a hearty slap on the back and shout the greeting -- 'Hi, you Old Bastard.' ...The IOOB claims a card-carrying membership of 238,000, including lady members...But Pan Am alleges their association doesn't constitute a genuine 'affinity' group eligible for low-cost charter rights under the law.

The preceding was an excerpt of an article which appeared in the Wall Street Journal last March. It sounds funny, but science-fiction fans are a lot more loosely organized than that and it might have been us. It is no secret in the travel industry that this past summer was the worst on record for illegal trips (those that failed to meet the strict affinity requirements). The C.A.B. cancelled a number of departures, but many flights bearing ineligible passengers continued to leave.

Fortunately, Tradewinds Travel Bureau has foreseen this problem and has already cleared our group with the CAB. But you must join Heicon more than six months before flight departure. In fact, just to cover yourself (and us) join Heicon first; then send in your deposit for the flight. To join Heicon, send your Deutsche Marks on to the following place:

Mario Bosnyak
6272 Niedernhausen
Feldbergstrasse 26A
West Germany

Attending memberships (which are the kind charter flight people are interested in) are 16 DM up until December 31; after that they will cost 20 DM. Those who have already bought supporting memberships can change them into attending memberships by paying an additional 6 DM before December 31. With the revaluation of the exchange rate, supporting memberships will also have to pay an additional 4 DM or all publications will go by seairmail. Currently the exchange rate is one West German DM for 27-1/2 ¢.

THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE...

were heavily weighted towards New York as a place of departure. Since New York is centrally located on the East Coast, this was not too surprising. The breakdown was: New York 47%; Boston 12%; Washington 15%; Montreal 7%; Los Angeles 10%; Chicago 7%; Others 2%. Some 67% said that they would not object to leaving from New York. 19% said they would object somewhat.

The departure time was almost unanimous for Friday evening. In view of the fact that many people may be arriving from Washington, Boston, or elsewhere for this

flight, late Friday was chosen as the time of departure. The exact time awaits signing a final contract. With the current problems of the air traffic controllers, scheduled departure times are allotted by the CAB in order to spread the load more evenly so I can't set a definite time yet. Every attempt will be made to assure that it is after 10:00 PM Friday evening, even if it means leaving Saturday morning. This is to enable people from outlying areas to arrive in New York with sufficient time to make the charter flight.

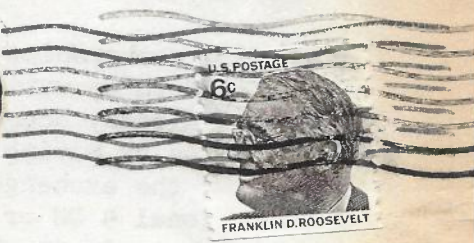
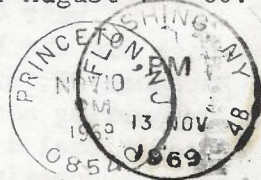
The poll results on the length of the stay were: 1 week 17%; 2 weeks 28%; 3 weeks 28%; 4 weeks 17%; over 4 weeks 10%;. The people desiring two and three weeks split evenly. The final decision to pick three weeks was based on several factors. Most people get two weeks vacation, so squeezing another week out of the boss, even without pay, is fairly easy for a European trip. Furthermore, most European charter trips are for three weeks, so management already expect people going to Europe to request three weeks. I would have preferred four weeks myself since I'm holding one week of this year's vacation over until next year. Unfortunately for me, the questionnaire did not bear out my desire for four weeks.

Frankfurt am Main (Heidelberg) was the choice of arrival for 58% and the choice of departure for 60%. Some 9% didn't care about where they arrived (maybe Vladivostok?) and 18% didn't worry about where they left from. The only place really considered other than Frankfurt was London, with 25% wanting to arrive there and 20% wanting to depart from there. We are currently attempting to set the flight up to arrive in London and depart from Frankfurt. While it is easy to set up a flight to arrive and depart from the same spot, the airlines seem to balk somewhat at splitting the arrival and departure points. They also want more money. If there is an excessive extra charge for this, the idea will be dropped. For those people worried about getting from London to Heidelberg or the reverse, each charter newsletter will contain information about traveling in Europe so that those who have never been there will feel more confident.

The first time I traveled to Europe, I went over col- turkey -- no friends to meet me, no tour, just a plane ticket. It scares hell out of you before you leave, thinking about all the problems that can arise because you don't speak the language but the worries never seem to materialize. To an S.F. fan who is used to dropping into a strange country every time he starts reading a new story there should be no problem at all.

So the results of the questionnaire were to leave from New York for three weeks, but which three weeks? Well, obviously the three weeks should include Heicon which is scheduled for August 20-22. And a lot of fans teach so they must be back by Labor Day. So the solution was to put Heicon on the last week of the three and return the weekend before Labor Day, thus avoiding the air traffic tie-up which occurs on Labor Day. Thus the dates of August 7 - 30.

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