

# Aviation Dilly



Friday, December 14, 2007

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Happy Holidays from the staff (current and some former) of Aviation Daily and its sister publications! We have been doing the Dilly for more than 30 years, against our better judgment, and yet, year after year you tell us you look forward to each edition. So whether you are the joker or the joked-on, please know that the only reason we all, you and us, laugh so hard is because we love this crazy aviation business so much.

## Guesses

**President Bush** declared he will allow commercial aircraft to land at night as a way to reduce delays over the holidays. "This is my holiday gift to the country," he said. The White House, however, had to retract the statement when officials discovered that aircraft have been landing at night for decades much in the way that aircraft using military airspace off the East Coast since 2000. The ATA, however, did not stop applauding the move.

**Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W. Va.) will support** an FAA Reauthorization bill this year (or any year), he says, as long as FAA headquarters is moved to West Virginia along with the FAA academy (now in Oklahoma City), the FAA command center (now in Herndon, Va.), the New York City Terminal Radar Control (TRACON) and two other FAA facilities to be named at a later date (but not very much later.)

**NADA (NASA Against Drunken Astronauts)** announced it will hold its first organizational meeting on Dec. 31. Active members of the U.S. space program are encouraged to attend the meeting, to be held at McGee's Irish Pub in Cape Canaveral. No booze will be served, only Guinness, so bring your own bottle, or flask, or jug.

**Sir Richard Branson**, the king of publicity hounds, is going to name one of Virgin Atlantic's planes after has-been pop group the Spice Girls. The aircraft, an aging 747-400 with a lot of miles and wear and tear, is to be called "Virgin Tart."

**US Airways CEO Doug Parker** is girding for another round of buyout bids, but insiders say his style this time around will be marked by methodical planning rather than boldness and bluster. For example, Parker reportedly has already lined up a designated driver for the evening following his next buyout failure.

**Boeing will build a new** single-aisle airplane called the 797, and then quit manufacturing commercial aircraft. "We'll be out of model numbers at that point, so we really don't have a choice," says the 797 program manager, Mike Bair. "We'll just have to find some other line of work."

**James C. May, president and CEO** of the Air Transport Assn., says he doesn't think business and general aviation should pay fuel taxes, fees, or anything at all really for using the National Airspace System. Tolls and fines are another matter, however, he says, outlining his plans for toll booths on taxiways and speed cameras on runways.

**The European Parliament is abandoning** its objective of creating a Single European Sky in favor of creating as balkanized a carve-up of airspace as possible over the continent. Upon realizing that the goal had been reached, they declared victory. All of the representatives responsible for the situation then went home to consume Belgian beer and to write the first draft of the proclamation changing Saint Patrick's Day to Single Sky Day.

## NASA's Moon Mission To Retrieve Cernan's Car Keys

In an exclusive interview with The Dilly, prior to being awarded the Wright Trophy, Apollo 17 Mission Commander Eugene Cernan revealed the true motivation behind NASA's decision to return to the Moon.

Cernan, who was the last human to set foot on Earth's natural satellite, left his car keys on the seat of the Moon buggy. After more than three decades of lobbying successive presidents, Cernan finally persuaded President George W. Bush to order the U.S. space agency to go back to the Moon for the keys.

Cernan says Bush only agreed after he agreed to let Bush drive the car, which has been parked outside the astronaut beach house at Kennedy Space Center since the afternoon of Dec. 6, 1972, when he left for the launch pad.

"It wasn't really that hard to convince Georgie," Cernan says. "After all, it's an absolutely cherry convertible '65 Vette with headers, lifters, a roll bar and – naturally – *Moon discs*."

## Ryanair, Unsatisfied With Courts, Sues Self For Frivolous Litigation

Unable to find an airline or European government it has not brought legal proceedings against, Ryanair has filed a suit against itself for frivolous litigation.

Ryanair emperor Michael O'Leary says, "It is outrageous that passengers have the costs of this army of lawyers passed on to them. What's the 'no fuel surcharge' promise worth if there is an indirect lawyer surcharge?"

Asked about the claims, O'Leary denies the accusation. "That idiot doesn't know what he's talking about. And just to prove it, we will offer the first lawyer to actually win one of our cases free tickets for a full year."

Aer Lingus is weighing in on the proceedings. An airline executive says Aer Lingus wants the case thrown out. "The thought of Ryanair winning a case, any case, makes us physically ill, so we are looking for a way around that," and, he adds, "it's clear that whatever Ryanair says or does, we think it's a bad idea."

The European Court of First Instance, the EU's highest judicial body, hasn't said, yet, if it will take the case. But one court representative says that if it does, a ruling will be decades away. French justices are still waiting to hear Air France's position before endorsing it.

O'Leary insists "we have a strong case. But win or lose, we will appeal."

## FAA To Open Up Slots To Ebay Auction

FAA has decided to solve the flight caps issue at JFK Airport by auctioning off slots on eBay.

Efforts to get the airlines to agree to cut capacity at the delay-plagued facility were going nowhere, said an FAA

spokesman. "So we had to turn to Ebay to be the arbiter of the slots," he said. "It's really simple now – if you want to play, you've got to pay."

Negotiations were bogged down by representatives of certain unnamed carriers who decided to hold their breath until they were blue in the face rather than give up flights, the spokesman said. "DOT Secretary Mary Peters was really concerned that someone was going to get hurt, so she decided to put down the hammer and force everyone to bid on slots on Ebay," he said

The Dilly staff checked Ebay on progress of the auctions, and so far the top bidders are: OhSoBlue; AAMonCarter; RAllen7.5; and PHXRising. Bids close on Dec. 31, 2007

## Airline Merger Rumors Span The Continents

The Dilly has learned that six airlines are deep in merger talks to create one large global airline.

Hawaiian, United, Garuda, Emirates, Singapore and Thai (HUGEST) would span the globe and attempt to compete with the merger announced last week by GOL, Iberia, Northwest, Olympic, Ryanair, Mexicana, Onyx, US Airways and Saudia (GINORMOUS). The airline mergers follow the move by 26 airlines to all combine, informally known as MegacARRIERwithloadsofdebt. Combined with the mergers and acquisitions announced last week, this would leave the world with four airlines - MegacARRIERwithloadsofdebt, Hugest, Ginormous and Southwest.

## Northwest Devises New Plan To Save On Fuel, We Think

Northwest intends to ferry fuel in barrels in its unused freighter aircraft that weren't making any money in Japan, to fly barrels of oil from Alaska to Minneapolis/St. Olaf International because of cheaper gas prices in the state.

CEO Doug Steenland said, "It's, like, 20 cents a gallon cheaper there, dude." The airline estimates that if it transfers 100 barrels of oil a day to its hub in the North, it can save an estimated, or actually, it can save exactly, "a boatload of money."

Former ALPA President and pilot turned golfer Randy Babbitt, doing some calculations in his head equating the weight of a barrel of kerosene, multiplied by barrels carried minus the cost of the fuel burned to carry the barrels, said that if one gallon of kerosene weighs 6.7 pounds, and fuel burn increases about 50 pounds per hour for each extra 1,000 pounds carried, then the mathematical result of Northwest's plan is "a truly dumb idea."

Northwest's CFO was last seen slapping himself upside the head while muttering, "Stupid, stupid, stupid!" Steenland told him not to be so hard on himself. "Chill out man. We don't have the pilots to fly it up here anyhow."

## Emirates Buys More Aircraft, Puts Downpayment On Grand Cayman

Emirates placed an order for 300 Boeing 777s and 250 A380s yesterday while the reaction from the collective international aviation trade press was a big yawn.

The always chic Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, seemingly bored himself, woke up a few journalists by saying he would throw in an offer for the Caribbean island of Grand Cayman as well. The small island, he noted, is known for its excellent shopping and large number of banks, making it a good fit in the Emirates portfolio. Plus, it gives the UAE airline somewhere to fly with a cooler climate than Dubai.

As he was suggesting the idea, the chic Sheik was overheard asking an aide if Qatar Airways owned any islands. "Let Akbar top that one," he reportedly said.

## Qatar Airways, On A Whim, Makes Purchase Offer For ABC Islands

Qatar Airways Chairman Akbar Al Baker surprised those in the industry who weren't paying attention with his intention to acquire the so-called ABC islands in the Caribbean – Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.

The offer was made after Al Baker placed a record order for 301 Boeing 777s and 251 A380s. He said Qatar will be the first airline to fly to the Caribbean islands, to own not just one but three islands, and to build a new \$40 million Premium Terminal. After he was informed that airlines do, in fact, already fly to all three islands, he replied "not any more."

When asked if this was a competitive response to a nearby, very successful carrier, Al Baker said, "That is ridiculous. Dubai, Schmoobai. I have no idea what you are talking about."

## Greenland-Based Investors Want United To Spin Off Chicago HQ

FLJ Group, a Greenland-based investment company and trash-hauling concern with 0.0143% stake in United parent company UAL Corp., yesterday urged United's management to sell off its headquarters in Chicago in order to create shareholder value.

"We originally were going to demand that United sell off its maintenance division, but we thought people would think us greedy," said Olaf Olafsson, president, CEO and security guard at FLJ Group. "But during our planning sessions, we realized that all we really wanted was enough shareholder value to cover

the cost of a DJ and some imported beer for company holiday party," he said. United management has yet to respond to the request, issued yesterday in response to an open letter published in the obituary section of the Chicago Tribune, but sources at the company said management likely would consult representatives of its nine dozen union groups within the next day or two.

## Aircraft Overhaul Should Be Limited To Central Midwestern States

The Teamsters and Machinists yesterday declared as unsafe any heavy airframe maintenance done anywhere but the Central Midwestern U.S. According to union officials, heavy maintenance only should be done in Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. "How could anyone, in good conscience, have heavy MRO done in places like Minnesota or Texas," said Teamster President Jimmy "Giants Stadium" Hoffa. "Both of those states share borders with foreign countries."

According to "guidelines" the unions are sending to all their members of Congress, heavy maintenance only can be done in states that have at least a one-state cushion between themselves and a foreign country or ocean. In addition, all heavy work must be kept at least two states away from California. U.S. Rep. James "There's No Place Like Home" Oberstar (D-Minn.), who is a long-time opponent of MRO outsourcing to places like Singapore and China, could not be reached for comment.

## Virgin Atlantic Testing Train-Pulled Gliders

Virgin Atlantic Chairman Richard Branson, seeking just a little more publicity, yesterday outlined a new operating scheme for inter-European operations.

Noting the continent's well-developed train system, Branson said Virgin plans to tie its aircraft to high-speed Eurostar trains using really strong kite string. The trains will pull the aircraft aloft much like a kid running with a kite.

Once the glider-type aircraft reach cruising altitude, the string will be cut and the aircraft will quietly and cleanly glide to its destination, said Sir Richard. He said there still are a few minor details to work out, but that he fully expected operations to begin in the "near" future.

Following the announcement, Aviation Week, Air Transport World and Flight International all rushed to announce more industry honors for Branson and to stipulate that all their employees would be required to bow in his presence.

## Blame Them

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Vol. 1 Issue 35, We Think

## Airlines Charge Passengers Surcharges For Their Own Food

U.S. domestic airlines stopped serving peanuts to save pennies, and now they are taking the next logical step as part of further cost-cutting measures – ceasing beverage service and charging people for bringing onboard their own food.

"We should have taken this action years ago because it decreases people's output, and thus, decreases our lavatory cleaning

expenses, as well as reduces aircraft weight by eliminating beverages and carts," said a Northwest Airlines official. "As for charging people to bring their own food onboard, it's logical, as well. Food smells, especially fried food such as burgers and fries, wafting through the cabin make other passengers unhappy, and happy passengers is what we strive for," he added.

## ATA Evaluates Selling Life Jackets Onboard

An Air Transport Association working group is evaluating options to deal with the issue of passengers who periodically steal life jackets as tokens of their flight, similar to people lifting towels from hotels.

A working group member revealed that the number one proposal is to sell standard-issue life jackets onboard as souvenirs, which could garner extra revenue and prevent the losses.

Another idea came from a mainte-

nance engineer, who suggested placing a radio frequency identification (RFID) tag on each life vest and an RFID reader at the cabin doors. If a passenger tries to steal a life jacket when exiting, the reader would beep and the flight crew could recover the vest or collect cash. Maintenance crews also like the idea because they could walk down the aisles and scan for preservers, which would save them and cabin crews lots of time.

## Boeing conducts High-Speed Ramp Rash Tests For 787

To quell mechanics' doubt that the 787 Dreamliner's composite fuselage can be repaired in a timely manner, Boeing swapped a beverage truck's engine with that of a C-130's, and then repeatedly rammed the vehicle into the aircraft. During the equivalent of a normal turnaround time, mechanics applied patches to the ramp rash damage and the 787 took off for another test flight. No prob-

lems arose inflight or on the ground during subsequent nondestructive tests.

"But why didn't they try bump tests with a baggage belt or a ULD loader? Would we really only see paint marks?" asked a mechanic, who still doubts the composite's reparability and longevity. Visit [www.dilly.com](http://www.dilly.com) to see a video of the bashing and repair processes.

## US Airways Increases Revenues, Reduces Congestion With Express Lanes

Pressured to find ways to reduce congestion to the nation's largest airports, US Airways has come up with a new fare class to achieve just that while bringing in new revenues.

The airline will charge a \$100

"Express Lane Fee" for all seats on flights that use what is usually restricted military airspace. The airspace was opened up for five days during the Thanksgiving holiday by the feds. But

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*US Airways from page 4*

US Airways has decided to continue the practice going forward. US Airways CEO Doug Parker says there is little risk to passengers because the military has so much airspace to play around with, and the DOD cannot afford to use live rounds of ammunition for training because of the cost of the war in Iraq.

Not to be outdone, those savvy marketing folks down at Southwest are now promoting the fact that they are not flying through restricted airspace. The new promotion is called "Southwest Has Only Transportation to Dallas, Other Ways are for Numbskulls (SHOTDOWN)."

## ATA To Fire Edna As Smart Skies Mascot

The U.S. Air Transport Assoc. plans to fire the cheerful, yet ineffective "Edna" as the chief mascot and spokeswoman of the group's Smart Skies campaign as she has yet to win a new payment/funding model for airlines.

The bill to reauthorize FAA is stalled in Congress and will likely not see any movement for months to come, leading ATA's board to take action this week. ATA has spent \$57 million for the Smart Skies campaign, including \$10 million for Edna's big wigs and related hair spray.

The debate to end her contract was contentious within ATA, sources tell *The DILLY*, but the mounting costs could not justify the costs to keep Edna employed.

During her one-year term at ATA, Edna (whose real name is J. Edgar Hoover, Jr.) failed to sway public opinion and had some embarrassing mishaps at Washington press conferences.

Earlier this year, she got in a bloody fight with Pinocchio, who crashed an ATA press conference with AOPA President Phil Boyer. Edna won the fight but was later arrested. It was also discovered that Edna really doesn't like big hair and prefers to be bald.

Losing interest in the FAA Reauthorization campaign, ATA is recruiting for a mascot for its upcoming marketing campaigns.

Sources tell *The Dilly* ATA is close to signing a two-year, \$9 million deal with an unidentified New York taxi driver, who will use "tough talk and lots of expletives" to tell DOT Secretary Mary Peters that her JFK Airport congestion pricing proposal is "freakin' stupid."

ATA will likely use the tagline "Fuggetaboutit!" Looking ahead to its environmental campaign, ATA recently met with the Jolly Green Giant and Smokey The Bear.

## Industry Speculates Where AIA's Douglass Goes Next

When asked in a telephone interview with the *Dilly* what he plans to do after leaving his post at the Aerospace Industries Assn., John Douglass said "Alexis is going to kill me for saying this, but..." and then the phone line went dead and the inside story was lost.

Apparently service had been cut off at AIA headquarters, perhaps by Alexis Allen, the communications director who has worked hard to keep her boss John out of trouble for the past decade. "Not that it has been an easy job," Alexis mused. Reporters on the aviation beat will no doubt miss those golden words from John telling them to wake up there may be a story in the making.

## Rube Goldberg Surprised With New ATC System Design

Famous cartoonist Rube Goldberg rose from the dead last week and was shocked to learn that the FAA, the Pentagon, the Commerce Dept., the Homeland Security Dept. and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy were planning the NextGen ATC system without consulting him.

He said that even though rumors of his death had not been exaggerated as was the case with Mark Twain, he still was aghast that no one had stopped by the cemetery to see if he had any good ideas on how to design the new "system of systems." No one had suggested there could be systems made out of other systems in his day, he said, which was too bad because his cartoons would have been even funnier.

Goldberg reminded everyone that he had earned an engineering degree and could have become either an engineer or a cartoonist, though he had never lived in Washington, D.C. so stand-up comedy (or even worse becoming a politician) was always out of the question. When told the main idea behind NextGen is something called SWIM, he chuckled and took out a pen and began to draw one of his famous Rube Goldberg machines. He said he was worried for a minute that the Feds would not screw up this colossal project properly, but when he learned that five federal agencies were already involved he was no longer worried.

## Delta Could Buy Continental For A Song

Airline consolidation rumors swirl around incessantly, but the latest speculators surmise Continental

*Continued on page 6*

*Delta from page 5*

and Delta airlines are likely merger candidates because their route structures are so complementary.

To help save the airlines the \$500 million fee that image consultants charge, the Dilly staff suggests the following monikers for a potentially merged airline: DelTaCo (but Spanish language dictates "el" should proceed "taco," so this is not grammatically correct), Taco (a simpler version, but would fliers confuse Taco with El Salvadorian Taca?), Coda (which means a musical passage that brings a movement or composition to a conclusion, but because Delta already tried out Song as a carrier's name without much success, this might not be the best choice) or, our favorite, Code (with spy television shows and books being so popular, this could provide intrigue to lure passengers on board). If the airlines merge and use Code, think of the creative marketing possibilities.

## Despicable SkyMiles Restrictions Exposed At Delta

Two weeks after Delta unfairly declared certain flights off limits for SkyMiles awards at any price, The Dilly has obtained an internal memorandum detailing this unconscionable breach of faith with its long-suffering, loyal customers whose allegiance played a significant role in "keeping Delta their Delta."

According to an undated memo from Lee Macenczak, executive VP of sales and customer service, to Delta officers and board members, the airline would ensure fairness in reining in the SkyMiles program by using a standard for eliminating eligibility based on the route, not on the destination. "It would clearly be unfair to customers for us to specify that certain cities are not eligible for SkyMiles awards," the memo states. "That would completely disenfranchise customers who live in those cities."

Instead, the new restrictions exclude SkyMiles award eligibility on any flight that travels more than 50 consecutive miles over water. "For example, certain city-pairs in the Great Lakes region would be excluded, while other city-pairs involving those same airports would be eligible," the memo states. "SkyMiles continues to be the airline industry's premier loyalty program," said Macenczak, in response to Dilly inquiries regarding the new information. "With high fuel prices and, you know, stuff, we're confident that our customers understand that we must make certain adjustments from time to time.

In addition to certain city-pairs in the Great Lakes region, Delta's new policy also would exclude any Delta flight between points in the continental United States and points in Hawaii, Bermuda, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, South America, Africa and Australia.

"Yeah, I suppose that if anyone wanted to fly to places like that, our new SkyMiles policy would have that effect," Macenczak told The Dilly. "But If you think this is bad, you should have heard what 'The Grinch' had

planned to do with SkyMiles."

Totally, totally off the record, Macenczak confided to The Dilly that former CEO Gerald "The Grinch" Grinstein had signed off on a plan in early 2007 to have customers' miles credited automatically to SkyTeam Alliance member Czech Airlines. Anyone wanting to use those miles for Delta flights instead would have had to pay a \$99.95 convenience fee for each award booked."

"Every time someone internally objected, Ol' Grinny would grumble, 'Hey, those morons should thank us. Budapest is a lovely city,'" Macenczak said. "Of course, nobody had the nerve to tell him that Budapest is in Hungary. Thank goodness he was a lawyer and not a pilot."

## NextGen Non-Lethal Weapon Systems Launched In Iraq

In an effort to win the "hearts and minds" of the Iraqi people, the Dept. of Defense is bulking up its arsenal with non-lethal weapons, the next generation of which was recently unveiled at the Al Asad air base Weapons Expo Dec. 1.

"Our first priority is to reclassify the weapons to better identify them," said Senior Adm. Shye Sauzen, deputy undersecretary to the assistant backroom secretary of the underdepartment of defense. "From this point forward, we will be referring to non-lethal weapons as sort-of-sometimes lethal, but not intentionally, weapons."

The change in naming convention is partially attributable to an unfortunate accident involving an area-denial system which, when aimed at a senior official, caused him to burst into flames. "It's just supposed to make you hot and uncomfortable so you'll move," said designer Bar Fee of Raymart Weapons. "I wasn't told he was a Marine prior to the test event. We usually don't use Marines because they don't move out of the way no matter how bad the pain is." Fee also designed the so-called "Puke Ray," intended to make people in its path feel ill.

Additionally, the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) has been engaged by DOD to provide research on Odor Deterrent technology, adding another dimension to sort-of-sometimes lethal, but not intentionally, weapons. Lead scientist Jefferson Morris is in the process of hiring 12 new specialists under an \$11 billion contract with DOD. "I've combed the world looking for qualified noses," said Morris, adding that he spent last summer in France poaching genius perfume developers from Chanel and Dior. Morris's highly skilled staff will be asked to develop the most vile and hideous scents to use as deterrent weapons.

Pierre Nez, acclaimed for having developed Coco Mademoiselle, is working on a putrid mix of elk feces, cat gut and decaying fish for a Marine Corps special operation in Afghanistan in late 2009. "Elk feces is particularly disturbing to the Afghan tribespeople," said Nez, who added that he experimented with cow dung first, but found its fragrance vaguely familiar and not at all bad. "I realized I needed something truly powerful."

## RichAir To Launch With Two-Seat Aircraft

In a further refinement of the premium-travel segment being exploited by carriers such as Maxjet, Eos and Silverjet, super duper affordable luxury startup RichAir announced plans to fly New York-London routes next spring.

Eos typifies the current segment with 48-seat 757s, and RichAir will take this to the next level, outfitting 767s with just two passenger seats. Two inexpressibly comfortable seats that deploy into exceptionally flat beds—we are talking flat—and with ginormously comfortable pillows. Typical pricing will be \$750,000 per roundtrip, which will be promoted with the slogan “Multi-billionaire service at billionaire prices.”

Though airline executives admit marketing will be a challenge, they insist they can succeed by taking niche advertising to the next level. “We can make much fewer sales with this model and still break even,” an insider said. “Initially, we’re focusing our efforts mainly on Douglas Whitsworth of 35 East 61st Street, New York. Whitsworth and his neighbor, Larry somebody, which is why we added the extra seat.”

## Passenger Assist Card Offers Helpful Airport Hints

Singapore-based Paxflow is preparing to expand the capabilities of its Passenger Assist (PPA) Card, which recently completed a pilot program at Geneva’s airport.

In that first phase, the system tracked passengers in their movements through the terminal and provided alerts about their flights, including advice about gate information and boarding delays. The next-generation PPA will list which restaurants are least likely to cause food poisoning, hacker codes for Halo 3 and tips on personal grooming. Field tests have produced mixed reactions among customers, with alerts like “You know that comb-over you’re trying? It doesn’t make you look hot.”

## EU: Inflight Coffee Service Banned As Part Of ETS

The European Union yesterday announced that from 2011, all carriers flying to the EU will not be allowed to make or serve coffee onboard.

The move is part of the expansion of the emissions trading scheme (ETS) to include aviation from 2011.

“Brewing coffee requires the generation of electricity, which increases fuel burn and raises an aircraft’s greenhouse gas emissions,” a European Commission spokesman said. “Copious amounts of fossil fuels are burned to raise coffee beans, not to mention the greenhouse gas emissions from roasting, grinding and transporting it to the airport,” he added.

Whether Fair Trade Coffee and other organic beans will be allowed remained uncertain at presstime. A proposal before the European Parliament calls for all organic coffee to be exempted, although the EC spokesman said regulators and Members of the European Parliament remain stymied by the greenhouse gas emissions caused by brewing coffee, organic or not.

The U.S. industry represented by the Air Transport Association cried foul, saying that it is “impossible” for flight crew and passengers to remain awake without caffeine. “Besides the sovereignty issues already raised by the ETS, there is a significant safety issue with the EC’s latest proposal,” an ATA spokesman said.

IATA, in contrast, was more measured, saying any coffee bans should be moderated by ICAO. Addressing EC Vice President for Transport Jacques Barrot, U.S. House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman James Oberstar (D-Minn.) said, “Cher ami Jacques, cette regle est impossible.” No further details were available when the Dilly went to press.

## New Navigation Technology Shares Name With Animated Movie

Jerry Seinfeld said he was thrilled with the box office results for his ADS-BEE movie — the first time an obscure navigation technology has joined forces with the voices of human actors and animated insects to create a film as wacky as an FAA program.

Chris Rock, who played a Mosquito in the film, said his character reminded him of an all-plywood, high-altitude reconnaissance plane used by the RAF in World War 2. ITT, the prime contractor on the movie and the FAA program the film was named for, said the sequel will have an English cast from the Royal Shakespeare Company and will be titled ADS To BEE or Not To BEE. Thales, the talented subcontractor for the film and the FAA program, said the sequel will have subtitles in French and the film credits at the end will explain that the Shakespeare Company is actually an Airbus subsidiary.

## Congestion Pricing A Curse Upon Mankind, Airlines Note

Airline groups yesterday warned the U.S. Dept. of Transportation that congestion pricing is not only ineffective, it can also make you go blind.

“Studies have shown that overuse of congestion pricing at airports can lead to loss of sight and malaria,” said the International Air Transport Association. “Other side effects may include hair loss and involuntary urination.” DOT had threatened to introduce congestion pricing to reduce delays at New York airports, which the department is “quite frankly rather bored with.”

In a touching display of unity, the Air Transport

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Association supported the IATA position with its own findings. "Verily, congestion pricing is the less well-known eighth deadly sin," ATA said. "Woe unto them who visit it upon our house."

## Some Groups Slow To Congratulate, Hutchison Notes

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) says she is taking careful note of which industry groups were slow to offer congratulations when she was named ranking member of the Senate aviation subcommittee.

Within minutes of her new post being announced Dec. 5, airlines and alphabet groups were issuing press releases saying how very pleased they all were. However, Hutchison observed that "a few of the groups were quite tardy indeed .... They know who I'm talking about." According to standard Washington protocol, you don't get your calls returned unless your congratulatory message arrives within 30 minutes of the announcement.

## A380s Needed To Return Convicts To U.K., Qantas Says

Qantas finally admitted that it ordered all of those Airbus A380s because of the large number of convicts the Australian government plans to ship to the U.K. in coming years.

"They did it to us, so we have no problem returning the favor," said Australian emigration official Bruce "call me Bazza" Murphy. According to screening rules mandated in Australia's national song, all tucker bags will be searched for waltzing matildas and jolly jumbucks, whatever the heck that means.

## BAA Pay-Per-Use Scheme Begins Jan. 1 In The U.K.

Airport operator BAA has decided to run its U.K. facilities on a pay-per-service basis to help fund things like terminal improvements and government security mandates.

Tired of having to beg the U.K. government for money, BAA has decided to throw in the towel and just charge passengers for every aspect of their time in an airport. The fees, effective Jan. 1, 2008, will start the minute passengers enter airport property, said a company spokesperson.

The fee scheme is as follows: GBP2 to enter an airport's official property line; GBP3 to pick up or drop off passengers; GBP1 to walk into the terminal; GBP2 to use a kiosk or ticket counter to check in; GBP5 to enter the security checkpoint line; GBP5 to

exit the checkpoint line; GBP3 "x-ray execution" fee; 3GBP to walk through the shopping hall (this will be refunded if you buy at least GBP50 in merchandise) GBP1 to sit in a seat in the shopping hall or gate area; GBP5 to use halls or moving walkways to your gate; and a GBP5 jetway boarding fee.

"We hate to pence and shilling people to death, but we have no choice. You heard former Heathrow Chief Executive Tony Douglas say it - Heathrow is being held together by sticking plaster. And unfortunately, someone has to pay for it," the spokesman stated.

## Delta Studies Why Load Factor Fell Below 98 Percent

Delta Airlines executives confirmed they are conducting an audit of ticketing and operations records after initial reports indicated the carrier's load factor on flights out of Atlanta fell below 98% in November.

The preliminary load factor for O&D flights from Atlanta came in at 96.4%, the first time in four years the carrier's load factor from its home base airport has been below 98% in the month of November. "It's just difficult to imagine how this could have happened," said Wie Packem, a Delta marketing spokeswoman. "On all our flights out of Atlanta our flight attendants are required to check for any empty seats on the airplane before closing the entry door," Ms. Packem told *The Dilly*.

If empty seats remain after standby passengers are accommodated, specially trained teams of Delta employees rush to nearby boarding gates with megaphones to announce that a plane with empty seats is about to leave. That tactic almost always succeeds in filling any empty seats no matter where the flight is headed, Ms. Packem said. She noted that at any given hour there are thousands of people with mournful expressions wandering around Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport killing time because their own flights have been delayed, canceled or missed. "You'd be surprised how eager so many of them are to jump on an airplane in order to get out of Atlanta, even if they don't know where the flight is headed," she said.

**The new CEO of Virgin America**, David Cush, was in the hot seat within one month of taking the job after Wall Street analysts hounded him about the airline's business plan. Cush assured GoldmanSachsFifthAvenue analyst Jerry Maguire that the startup has plenty of cash on hand, and continues to plan for rapid expansion. A skeptical Maguire asked Cush to "show me the money." Meryl LynchbergLemonade analysts did not take part in the grilling, saying Virgin America "had us at hello."