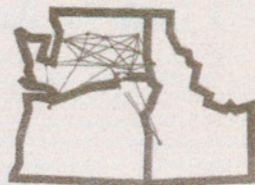


Serving 21 communities through 13 airports in Washington, Idaho and Oregon.



By E. Heller Briggs

"Our service is to fly passengers for business or pleasure from point to point or to get them there on time to meet another airline going cross country or worldwide," writes Mark Chestnutt, president of the commuter airline, in the slick magazine found in the pockets of seats in Cascade's airplanes.

We were on Flight 333 to Walla Walla, having departed Sea-Tac at 8:10 a.m. on a lovely, sunny morning in late August. Bob Hagar, 2707 business rep, had arranged for me to take the flight and was escorting me to meet cockpit and ground personnel and catch a glimpse of Cascade's system. "You'll like them," Bob said. "They're a great bunch of guys and it's a great little airline."

He was absolutely right. Although busy, ticket and boarding agents were smiling and seemingly unhurried. The 19-seat Metro II was filled to capacity. Takeoff was on time with Captain Pete Hilmo and First Officer Steve Bang at the controls, and the hour-and-a-quarter flight over the fog-shrouded Cascades and serene farmlands was smooth. Touchdown was so perfect I didn't realize we were on the ground until we were taxiing to the airport. I said so to Capt. Hilmo and he grinned. "Well, I get a lot of practice," he said.

In Walla Walla's airport coffee shop, Captains Jim James and Jerry Bryant were waiting. They are both 2707 stewards and had come especially to talk about their airline. "The company has tremendous potential, and with some good decisions we can go a long way," Capt. James said. "We're in a segment of the industry that's growing, and in the Northwest particularly, with Boeing and regular industry and agriculture — we're all growing."

He went on, "Flying conditions are severe here as any place in the country. In the winter we've got icing conditions and snow on the runways, some pretty high mountains with downdrafts and severe winds that transverse — and combined with ground fog on the coast and valley fog here, we're on instruments a great deal of the time." He smiled, "but I like the variance. It's challenging and exciting. I like that kind of flying . . . and in three months we'll be having radar in the aircraft. That'll be a help."

Larry Stotts, Cascade's VP Maintenance, came in and joined us at our table. "Deregulation has been favorable for our steady growth. We see great possibilities for our commuter."

James and Bryant wanted me to see their newly enlarged hangar where maintenance is done. "It isn't even painted yet, but it'll look great when it's all finished," Bryant said. Inside steward Bruce Depping and Joe Bova, both lead mechanics, were working on a Beechcraft 99. Depping said, "I like what I'm doing, like to see what makes them tick . . ." He motioned with his wrench toward the airplane. "I like to keep them in the air. That's why I'm here."

Although Mike Cline, shop specialist was hobbling around with a cast on his leg, he was hard at work. "This is a great area," he said. "Not overcrowded. I like to ski and hike, backpack and camp. When I'm off work, I'm out." Stock clerk Dan Arevalo walked over. "I like the Cascade passes and plan to go to Japan to see a cousin who lives there. My parents can use the passes too."

It was time to board the Beech 99 to go back, so we said our goodbyes. We left Walla Walla at 11:30, stopped at Pasco for 20 minutes to take on passengers and fuel, and it was over the mountains again to Seattle. A short ride and a pleasant one, with again a perfect landing by First Officer Don Nichols. Capt. Tim Komberec said Nichols flew it all the way. A lot of professional pride.

And pride shows in the pages of Cascade's inflight magazine. "Now we are logging over three million passenger miles every month. Cascade has flown a long way since our beginning in May of 1970. That first flight had four passengers Spokane to Seattle. Two planes did the flying that year. Another airplane was added in early 1971 . . . In 1972, four more aircraft joined what was to become a fleet of ten, as we continued our steady, well-planned growth."

Presently Cascade flies 15 Beechcraft 99's and 18 Metro's and has a pilot complement of 92 with 34 ground personnel.

"We opened 1979 with a record-breaking year behind us, and Cascade already was the Pacific Northwest's largest commuter airline. Our passenger load was up again over 50 percent: 219,000 passengers who flew with us in 1978."

Pegasus says . . . "Cheers, Cascade. We admire your fine spirit and optimism and wish you great good luck and many happy landings . . ."

fueling . . .

chatting . . .

waiting . . .

boarding . . .

checking . . .

riding . . .

inquiring . . .

viewing . . .

buying . . .

working . . .

after texting . . .

concentrating . . .

reassuring . . .

Photos by E. Heller Briggs

