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airport services

MANAGEMENT

The Hare Kṛṣṇa:
Who are they?
What do they want at the AIRPORT?

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editorial comment

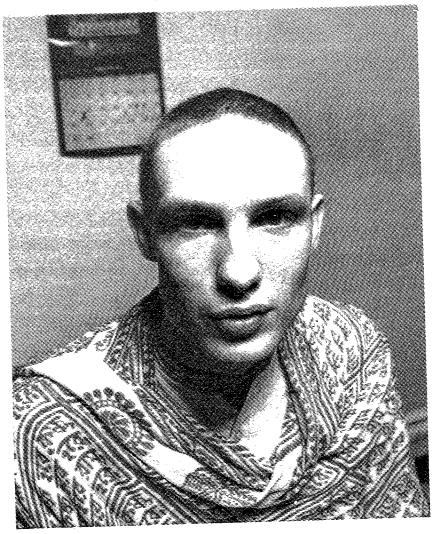
I've been nailed at Washington National, Seattle, Cincinati, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles. Once too often I've had a young lady rush up to me and start to pin me with flowers and candy and pitch me with records, books and magazines. Once too often. Who the hell are these people?

The Hare Krishna. Gentle folk patiently explain their love for a God they call Krishna. Peacefully with their curious smiles they tell me that the airport is essential to the distribution of religious literature. They tell me about their centers all over the world, about the beauty and the joy.....damn. I wish the world was full of peace and joy too. I wish the human society was perfected, I wish the Nations wouldn't war, I wish there wasn't hunger .....but there's no way young lady that we are going to compromise a vital transportation system and turn over the airports to the spiritual passions of Krishna devotees—or any other religion.

No way. I'm a believer in the material world. It's an empirical fact. I've seen it war, yes. But I've seen it feed hungry nations. I've seen it destroy the land, yes. But I've seen it meet the needs of distribution too. I've watched the material world cure sickness, educate the illiterate, and explore worlds beyond our own. I'm not ready to drop out and meditate.

But the Hare Krishna are in the airports. Protected by the First Amendment and they will remain in the airports. So what do we do about it? Manage it. We'd make a stupid mistake underestimating the ability of the Krishna movement to meet us on every level of confrontation—they're sharp businessmen.

So it appears someone will have to open a dialogue. The Krishna are willing, so should we. The relationship of Krishna and the airports has been for the most part courtroom chatter that has opened airport doors to their solicitations but closed the doors to understanding of each others goals. That's not good.



BHAKTAVATSALA: Solicits for Krishna.

The first step is for airport management to review the airport goals and objectives. Know what the hell you're doing for the community—what your contribution is to the transportation system as a whole. Then, gather your citizens advisory group into the conference room and review the airport plan. Determine without philosophical bias what the impact of religious solicitations will be on your customers—the passengers, concessions and tennets of the airport terminal.

Then contact the Krishna people and show them the plan. Show them what must happen to maintain airport harmony. It has been ASM's experience during the past month or so that the Hare Krishna people will do their part to keep the machinery working smoothly. They've got to, they need the airport as much as we do—they do not want to destroy it.

The problem will be shifting your philosophical gears. Understanding that the Krishna Conscious people are a cult of Hindu, that their world view is spiritual rather than material—yet they use the material world to achieve spiritual goals—It is a mouth full, and hard to take, but we are not susposed to be disputing their beliefs—we are attempting to realize harmony in the airport terminal. And what is really scary is that the Hare Krishna may be setting a precedent for a lot of other groups who haven't got the Krishna credentials. So we'd better learn how to manage religious cults like we learned how to manage bombers and hijackers and teen age crowds of Beatle fans.

The Irony of the whole thing is the air transportation industry has so reduced the time and space between Nations and Ideas that in several hours time hundreds of people, all with different philosophies, with different clothing, and beliefs pass through our terminals. Airport management is learning how to control all that energy and permit it to flow smoothly from airside to landside

We haven't got the time to sort out who is Christian, Jewish, Muslim or Hindu. We must simply move them—and their philosophy out into the world.

ASM felt the Hare Krishna Movement might be the place to start. I visited with Krishna devotees in their temple, in the airport and on the street. They are likable, generous, devoted people. They are also capable of sickening aggression when it comes to airport solicitations—although the Krishna leaders say they are trying to control that. There are members of the Krishna movement who I'd like very much to have as friends—there are others I've come to dislike. What's important is the Hare Krishna are people who can reason, understand and help create harmonious relationships on the terminal floor. We may not be so lucky with other groups.

So it is in this issue of ASM we begin to explore the world of the Hare Krishna. We included a visit by ASM to the Minneapolis center and a story submitted by the Krishna headquarters in Los Angeles. There is a profile of a Minneapolis citizens group who is trying to discourage solicitations. Next month we will look at legal aspects of the Krishna presence in the airport.

The airport is the door to the community through which pass all manner of people and ideas. It is not up to airport management to screen the traveling population—but it is essential for management to provide safe, efficient travel opportunity for the public. The airport like no other transportation unit is subject to management of people who only hours before practiced lifestyle unique to "The American Way". It is not the role of the airport authority to change their behavior, but to manage it.

And it is important as never before for the airport manager to develop and maintain a community advisory council. A group of citizens who may act for the public interest within the airport environment.

As technology continues to shrink the world—as philosophies clash—the airport will become a meeting place in need of expert human behavioral management techniques.

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washington report

NASP criteria to drop hundreds of general aviation airports from the National Airport System Plan are replaced by a new draft that seems to do little harm. The 1976 law called for a revision of the NASP by Jan. 1978. Two officials, now gone, wrongly held that Congress wanted many of the nation's smaller airports out of the NASP and thus cut from federal aid.

To further the plot, the NASP re-do was taken from FAA's Office of Airports Systems, expansion minded, and given to the Office of Aviation System Plans (ASP) where it was thought GA should be curtailed. The job was behind schedule. Administrator McLucas, as he left office, gave it back to Airports subject to DOT approval.

The Airports people sent their own criteria to the regions so new lists of the NASP fields could be compiled and fed into a computer. Wm. V. Vitale, Deputy for Airports, briefed the aviation groups. They agreed he was on the right course.

The criteria are subject to revision before the new NASP is final. The old list stands in the 1977 fiscal year ending Sept. 30. As the draft goes, some small airports may lose but can appeal. Of 4,037 fields now in the NASP, about 80% are existing and the rest not built, perhaps mostly never to be.

More than 400 private fields are in the NASP. Though not eligible for ADAP improvements, they can be bought for public ownership to save closings. No clear priority is set.

The new criteria include all air carrier and commuter ports; may be too restrictive for reliever and GA airports. Exceptions can be made in special cases such as isolated communities. At the 59 cities with relievers, at least one reliever is to have all-weather capability.

The slow transition from Nixon-Ford to Carter leaves aviation facing new troubles and few benefits yet. This is written before the April 20 fuel message. Aviation groups stand by unable to pierce the wall of secrecy. If, as in 1973, they find it urgent for you to appeal to Congress, action must be immediate. Whatever Carter proposes, not much can happen till Congress decides.

If future growth is restrained, airport plans must be refigured. More likely flying will be a bit more expensive but still competitive with slower ground transport. There should be no panic as in the last crisis when GA fuel was to be cut nearly half.

Meanwhile the Carterites are spread thin in top jobs. Big government will be hard to manage till Central Casting fills a thousand high-paid supporting roles. The Nixonites put more than a thousand under Civil Service where they remain, not good for aviation.

Though no aviation adviser is in the White House, the peanut farmers are directing DOT Secretary Adams in personnel and in policies such as airline deregulation that Carter wants passed by summer.

Adams in turn has clamped a lid on public statements in DOT and FAA. He is considering a single transportation trust fund to pour aviation's money into railroads and urban transit. Those naive people who hailed his advent as the Second Coming may now wonder if he is a gift from Heaven after all.

Whether there will be a DOT Under Secretary for Air, further to bury aviation, remains to be seen as Carter's reorganization powers are used. His idea of the "zero base" budget can be good if it cuts useless functions and strengthens the useful rather than the opposite. A "sunset" plan for useless agencies can be great if it kills DOT.

In the all-powerful Office of Management and Budget, a new man is seeking FAA economies for better or worse.

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