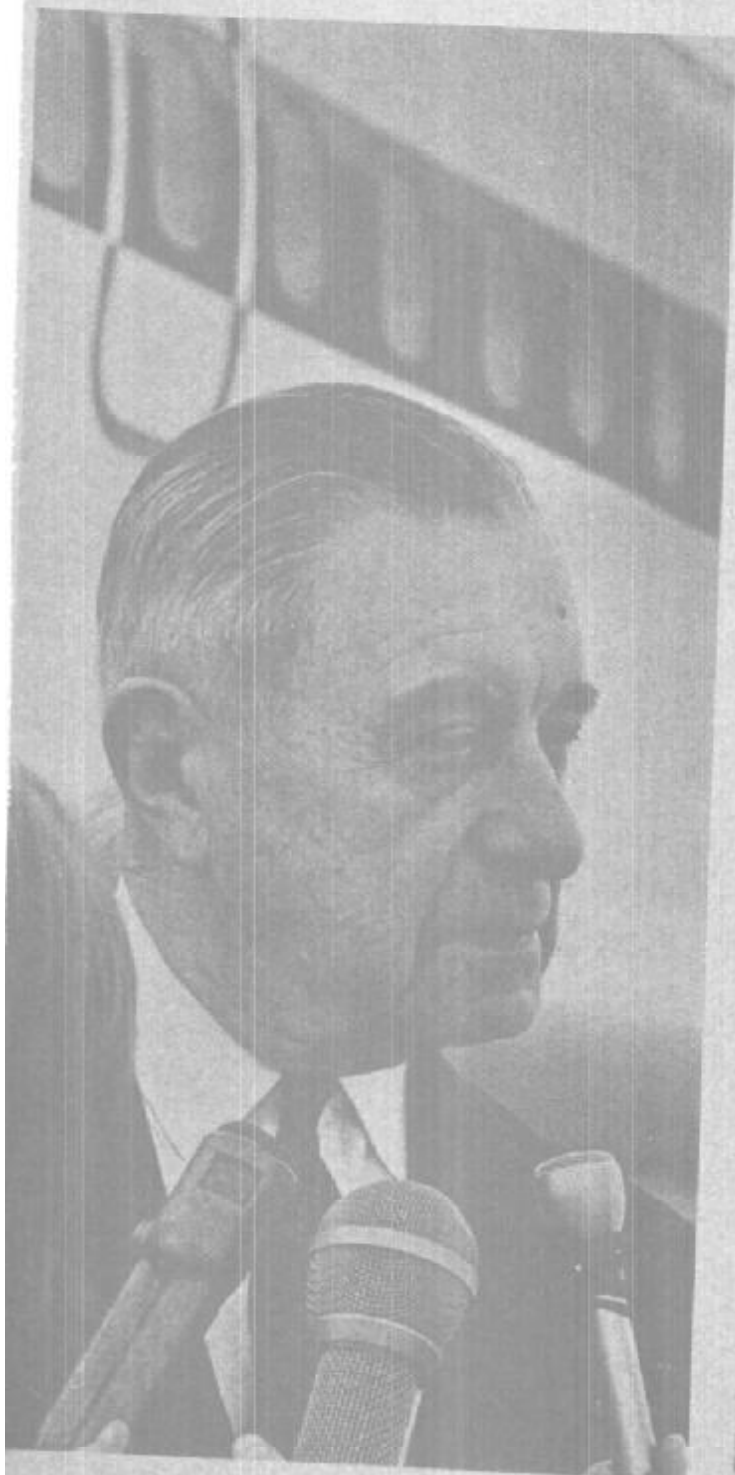
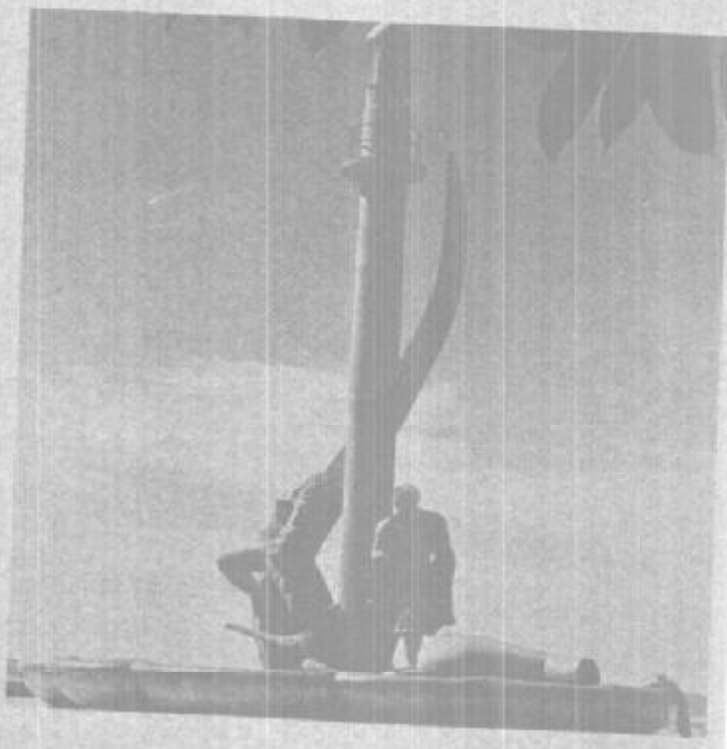
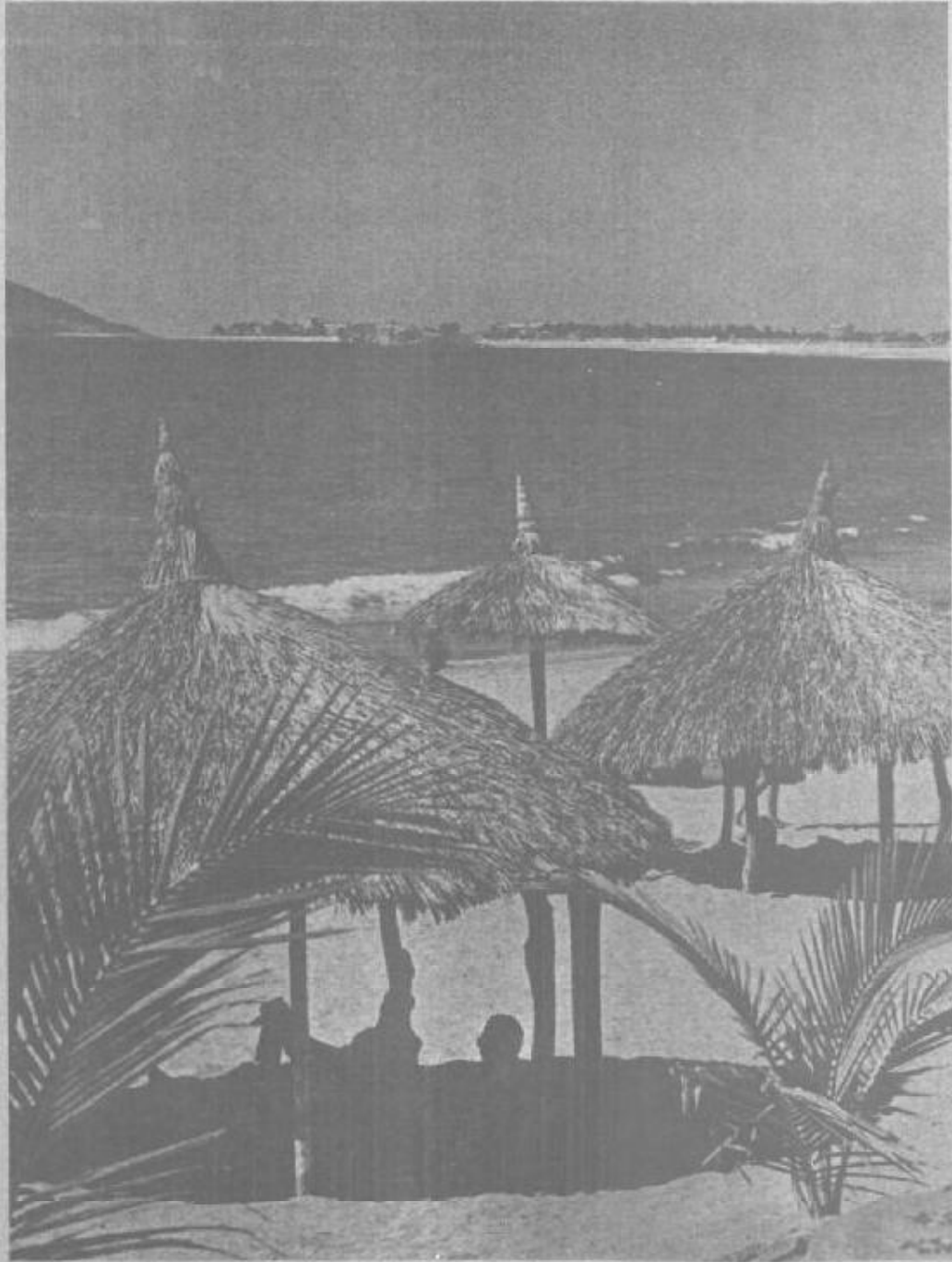


# AIR WEST



VISIT TO VALLARTA





Air West, Mazatlan

# viva mexico, viva air west

The north-south axis of Air West suddenly has doubled in length.

With the granting of authority to Bonanza Air Lines to serve four Mexican cities through the Phoenix-Tucson gateway, Air West finds itself with one foot in the warm sands of a semi-tropical coast, and the other in the rugged Rocky Mountains of Canada.

Starting in another six weeks, its DC-9 fanjets will make three weekly round trips to La Paz, Mazatlan and Puerto Vallarta. The latter is 1,100 miles from Phoenix, 2,400 from Seattle via Salt Lake City, and Air West will be the first American carrier to serve it or the other two resort areas.

The new service is equally important to both Mexican and American travelers.

Mexico accounts for almost twenty per cent of all tourists to the United States—more than any other country in the world. Like their neighbors, the citizens of Mexico are great sightseers: eighty-seven per cent of the Mexicans visiting the United States travel for pleasure.

Air West country, embracing all of the Far West's natural and recreational resources, is their favorite destination.

There is good reason for Mexico's reciprocal interest in the advent of Bonanza and Air West into its tourist picture.

Arizona, Nevada and Utah, just three of the eight western states in the Air West system, were visited by forty-three million tourists in 1965—and there were many more last year. Arizona alone sends more than ten per cent of the visitors entering Mexico, and the state is experiencing a growth rate twice that of all other areas of the United States.

The pace of life in Puerto Vallarta is quiet and largely centered on its marine fascinations. Next year Western International Hotels will inaugurate a commodious beachside hotel that will make it easier than ever to relax in Puerto Vallarta.

Even today, views like the one on the opposite page are not too difficult to arrange.

Nick Bez and Boise Mayor Jay Amyx



Top, J. N. Bez Jr. and E. N. Altman,  
Executive vice presidents, Air West

The idea of a local service airline spanning the entire Pacific Coast originated in 1940 with Nick Bez, who now, as chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Air West, is seeing the idea materialize.

I've been riding on Mr. Bez' airline since its inception, but I must admit never having grasped the true impact of this line or the man who founded it until going along on the first DC-9 'quick to Boise, quick to Salt Lake' flight last November.

His reception in the Idaho and Utah capitals revealed this impact and put the meaning of local service on a coastwide scale into true focus. It not only marked jet service to the farthest eastern point on the Air West system, but established a milestone that had been a Bez goal for more than a quarter century.

Bez knew before World War II that his idea would work when he asked the government for a certificate to operate West Coast Airlines from the Canadian boundary to Los Angeles.

It took the length of the war and several months more before any certification was granted. By then others had taken up the idea, too. The result was a partition of the Pacific states in 1946 into a series of systems with his airline being given the territory from Seattle to Portland and waypoints in Western Washington. Southwest Airways, forerunner of Pacific Air Lines, won the rights in southern California.

Although this was the least attractive region—for population reasons—Bez was willing to establish West

# NICK BEZ

by Bob H. Hansen

Coast Airlines far inside the dimensions of his original proposal. Subsequently, he got his service area extended to Medford in 1947, to Idaho in 1952, to Salt Lake City and San Francisco in 1959, and to Canada the following year.

He knew it would work. He knew it would strengthen and expand because he'd already demonstrated the potential of the local service airline business. The experience had been gained with far less efficient aircraft over much more challenging territory. That first local service airline of his was Alaska Southern and its 'schedule' was maintained with six-passenger float planes between Alaskan fishing ports. The planes took off for announced destinations at any time when four passengers or sufficient mail or cargo to make the difference were ready to be put aboard.

With this airline Bez proved to his fellow fishermen in Alaskan waters that air travel was a better way to get around. He also showed that mail service by air was necessary for doing business in the modern way. Most of them paid willingly for a better service when it came to bringing in parts for boats and canneries.

At the time Bez founded Alaska Southern he was engaged in his full-steam-ahead way of putting the salmon fishing and processing business through one of its steps forward. He was operating fishing boats, contracting with others to fish for him, and keeping his shore canneries and cannery ships in efficient operation.

He knew from his own daily needs that air travel

and the fishing business went together. He proved this to almost every one of the other early day operators from the Aleutians to Ketchikan.

Alaska Southern, with its connections established between Seattle and the farthest outpost in the Bering Sea, was sold to Pan American and became the foundation for its Alaskan and North Pacific routes.

Between 1931 and 1934, when Bez was expanding Alaska Southern, he established the unusual combination of business activities spanning the fisheries and airlines industries. He now devotes his energies to both of these, spending a part of the day in his airline offices and the balance at the Seattle headquarters of Peter Pan Seafoods and its affiliated companies.

A man who thrives on work, he has been working and building in the same way since he arrived in Tacoma as a boy of 15 back in 1910. He tried only one other line of work before he became a fisherman. That was as a cook, a job he needed because he was not only broke, but in debt \$20, and he lost the job because he'd never heard of pancakes in his native Yugoslavia.

When he took to fishing it was with the work-until-the-job-is-done pattern that he has followed in all activity since.

As a fisheries operator he developed the native talents which have made him a winner in both his business fields. He is a man with goals who equips himself with knowledge of the facts that is particularly

An airline president finds himself filling multiple roles,

astounding to the adversary who might make the mistake of trying to corner him on the witness stand at a hearing.

An admirer described it like this:

'The wise soon know that it doesn't pay to give Big Nick a chance to come out of the corner with his bag of facts. He'll win every time.'

**B**ez is a native of the Dalmatian coast of Yugoslavia. His father was a wine grower and brandy distiller on the island of Brac. He took to fishing as a youth with the natural ability which has typified Yugoslavians as fishermen the world around.

His older son, John, who grew up with his father on the fishing boats, is an assistant to Bez at the seafood offices. At the airline is his son, Nick, Jr., who will be an executive vice president of Air West.

In both enterprises Bez has associated himself with able and active men in leadership positions.

These aides on the West Coast Airlines side of the Bez enterprises have helped him bring the system into the jet age. This is the age Bez saw ahead when he launched West Coast with a fleet of wartime DC-3s in 1946, and became the first airline operator to put the Fairchild F-27 propjet into commercial service in the U.S. He moved into pure jets in 1966 with DC-9s.

Combining the routes and assets of West Coast with those of Bonanza and Pacific airlines, Air West will perfect the air network that Bez originally sought and extend it, moreover, into distant Mexico.

With Bez and Ed Converse, president of Bonanza, as its top executives, Air West will blanket eight western states with service to seventy-nine airports and more than a hundred cities. One of these is Calgary, Alberta, and another is Puerto Vallarta, over two thousand miles away on the west coast of Mexico.

Bez likes to point out that his and other local service carriers have made this a nation of air travelers. Many of today's go-anywhere air travelers had their first experience flying a local route.

'And now in Air West we'll have good people, good airplanes and good routes,' Bez summarizes. 'Together we can give a service none of us could provide individually.'



like sharing a television spotlight with a Miss Idaho,

or running a yacht,



or keeping a Eunice Parker loaded with paperwork

# THE TALL ONE



Since its early days as a city, Seattle has always maintained a lofty viewpoint for its visitors.

Back in 1914, when the bustling port had a population of 255,700, a New York builder erected the forty-two story L. C. Smith Tower, which at a height of four hundred sixty-eight feet carried the proud boast, 'largest office building in the world outside of New York.'

The Smith Tower with its ornate observatory lavishly decorated in oriental carvings, quickly became a popular visitor attraction, reigning as Seattle's tallest structure until 1962. That year, the Space Needle, with its famed revolving restaurant, opened for the Seattle World Fair and has continued to grow in popularity as a sky-high address.

Today, a new spire is being added to the city's profile—the fifty-story Seattle-First National

#### Bank Building.

When completed early in 1969, the six hundred-seventy foot building will provide homeowners and visitors with an unmatched sweeping view from its observatory and forty-sixth floor restaurant, from which diners will be able to scan Puget Sound, Lake Union, Lake Washington and the surrounding Cascade and Olympic mountain peaks.

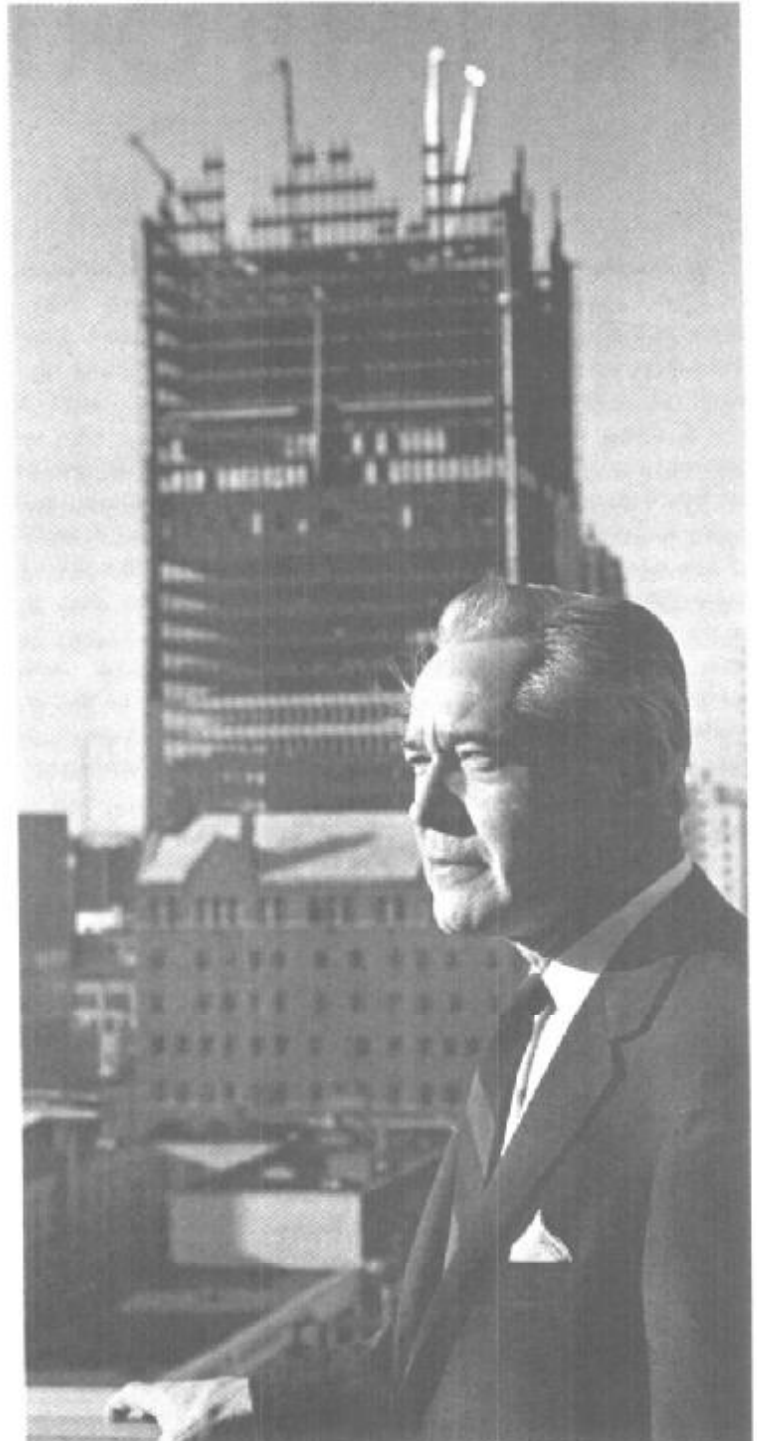
For the hurrying businessman or tourist, helicopter service will be available from airport direct to the building's helistop.

At ground level, a broad, granite surfaced public plaza will occupy two thirds of the block-square site, surrounding the building on all sides with plantings, fountains and a reflection pool.

But Seattle's landmarks span a lot more than pretty geography. The distance between the spire of the Smith Tower and the Space Needle can be measured in city blocks. But the period in time between these two pinnacles hurdles a whole chapter in Seattle's history.

Similarly, the Seattle First National Bank building has been conceived and planned to represent the Seattle of tomorrow, a city whose economy and aspirations are airborne.

— Jim Faber



Robert S. Beaupre, president, Seattle-First National Bank

# SFO HELIPORT

It was like taking an indispensable computer away from the payroll department of a large concern when commercial helicopter service ended suddenly in San Francisco at the close of 1963.

Business travelers from the banking, insurance and stock and bond community in San Francisco's financial center once more found themselves in the dark ages of aviation, fighting their way through unbelievable traffic congestion on the Bayshore Freeway to and from San Francisco International Airport. In the thirty-one months that San Francisco Oakland Helicopter Airlines operated from a site alongside the Ferry Building to the airport, the businessman had learned to depend on this fast, convenient air bridge.

But in 1963, the landing site, which was supported by pilings on the edge of the bay, was condemned. For four years city officials, SFO President M. F. (Mike) Bagan, the Chamber of Commerce and others sought a suitable site for the resumption of helicopter service.

Finally, as air travelers fretted at seeing the big Sikorskys overfly the city on their way to Marin County, it was determined the original site could be repaired and enlarged. The city put up the necessary \$170,000 and leased the property from the port authority. Bagan, in turn, signed a three year lease with the city.

By this time, Bagan's ten-passenger choppers had been replaced by twenty-six-seaters. The SFO network had expanded

not only to Marin, but to Oakland, Berkeley, Lafayette, Palo Alto and San Jose. The helicopters also expanded their services. They were no longer just passenger carriers, but provided a fast express service for vital air shipments of materials and instruments to electronics firms, medical laboratories and the air space industry.

San Francisco was, indeed, a missing link in the natural service pattern.

But after four years and one month (and virtually unheralded because of a newspaper strike) SFO helicopters returned to San Francisco. A handful of passengers and public and company officials gathered that gray morning of February 1, straining their hearing for the sound of the whirring rotors that were once more to become a part of the city's everyday life.

As the S-61 settled on the new 16,000 square foot landing pad behind the modern new 1,600 square foot terminal building, Mayor Joseph Alioto handed Bagan the keys to the new building and said:

'These keys represent our faith in SFO to provide the type of service which the growth of San Francisco has made necessary . . . and which the people of our city have the right to honor and expect.'

Cyril Magnin, president of both the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and Port Authority, expressed what other seasoned air travelers were thinking:

'It's hard for me to understand how we got along without the helicopters for so long.'

— Henry Kusserow





Historic Ferry Building tower and Bay Bridge are scenic bonuses to San Francisco-Oakland Helicopter customers

Hugh N. Stratford photos

# THE FLYING STEWARTS

by C. Budd Dugan

Harley Stewart is number two on the pilot's list of West Coast Airlines. Having achieved this seniority among the line's airplane drivers he can pretty much pick the flights he wants. It's convenient.

Take, for example, the time about a dozen years ago when he got interested in a lady wrestler named Shirley Winters. That wasn't her real name; her real name was Gene Spangler but that isn't too important any more.

Gene or Shirley was with a troupe of six men and four girls who were playing the circuit south of Oregon City down to Klamath Falls, Medford and places like that. Five nights a week they'd wrestle, each night in a different town.

Harley first saw Gene during a layover between flights. Harley was staying in Portland and he went across the river to Oregon City to watch the matches. It was something to do, a way to kill time. Gene really caught his eye and Harley started talking to the flight dispatcher.

'Sure I noticed him,' comments the lady. 'He was just another tourist. It did seem rather funny how he'd show up in different towns every night. I didn't know it

then, but when we wrestled in Klamath Falls, he'd lay over there or leastwise he'd get there. It was the same in Medford and the other towns along the way.'

Harley's aerial pursuit ended in 1955 when Gene gave up the squared ring for the other kind and became a housewife. She hasn't forgotten the wrestling. It was fun, just about as much fun as being a rodeo trick rider and she's been that, too.

'It was rodeo riding that got her into wrestling. 'I used to ride at the rodeos up in Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas with Bill Linderman's act,' Gene says. 'In the summer it was a good job but in the winter there were no rodeos. That's why I became a wrestler.'

Wrestling could be a good-paying proposition. The participants worked with a twenty-five dollar a night guaranteed minimum against a percentage of the admissions. 'Lots of times we'd make two hundred dollars each a night,' Gene said.

'I was both a good girl and a bad girl in the ring,' she said. 'But I liked to play the heel better. Sure I got tossed out of the ring. You'd let the other girl know where you wanted to go and out of the ring you'd fly. I'd always pick nice soft people to land on . . . never



skinny ones. You get hurt that way.

Gene, who is a young-looking 42 now, gave up wrestling for three years to serve a hitch in the Marine Corps. She believed the recruiting posters and thought travel to distant lands would be fun. Instead, the Corps kept her stateside as a physical training instructor.

As a wrestler Gene weighed one hundred sixty solid pounds. Today, the weight of the housewife has been trimmed down to one hundred forty-five which offers hope to other housewives who believe that pushing a carpet sweeper just isn't enough to keep the muscles in tone.

Housekeeping isn't all of Gene's day. There's also welding, plastic molding, airplane building and flying which she figures would be perfectly natural for any girl married to a fellow like Harley. Harley, you see, not only flies airplanes for a living, he lives for airplanes.

He was sixteen when he first learned to fly and became a barnstorming pilot in an old Waco Nine stunt plane. World War II caused Harley to change his flying style. He was a civilian instructor for the Army-Air Force teaching first primary and later as a transition instructor

for B-24s.

Trans World Airlines hired him to pilot DC-3s and he then became a first officer with Zimmerley Air Transport of Lewiston, Idaho, a company ultimately absorbed by West Coast.

During his working hours Harley flies F-27s, but off duty he heads for Puyallup, Washington's, Thun Field and either his Piper Cherokee four-place plane or his real love, a 145-horsepower Warner-powered Monaco.

Naturally, since she is married to a pilot, Gene has had to become one herself. She's got two hundred fifty hours now, some solo, some dual. 'I got my private license in 1964,' she says, 'but for a while there I thought I was going to be a career student pilot.'

'You know how it is flying with one of these pilots like Harley,' she continued. 'Everything has to be perfect. Here I think I'm flying the plane and then I feel a little tug on the wheel or a little pressure on the pedals. That's Harley sitting over there on his side making little corrections. With him everything's just got to be perfect.'

And, after meeting Gene, you get the feeling it is.

show up in different towns every night. I didn't know it

... I'd always pick nice soft people to land on ... never

# slowdown at robertson's

There are 2,100 feet of runway at Bellevue, Washington, airport but Lyle Flick seldom uses that much of it. Lyle, test pilot for the Robertson Aircraft Corporation, just taxis his plane out, points the nose into the wind and shoves in the throttle. In something like a seventh of the runway he's flying.

Coming in for a landing it is much the same thing. The airplane creeps along through the air on the approach and at about 35 to 40 mph., the landing gear touches, the wheels roll a few feet and the plane is turned off into the taxi strip.

Granted, Lyle is one sweetheart of a pilot but this short-roll takeoff and landing stunt isn't so much of a tribute to his ability as it is to his boss, Jim Robertson. Jim, you see, found out how to make light planes into STOLs (short takeoff and landing aircraft) and they don't use much runway.

A year ago Robertson aircraft was just an idea of Jim's, then a Boeing Company project engineer. Today the firm is the delight of his banker. In the first six months of operation

What Jim did was compromise. Instead of building a STOL from scratch, he took a mass-produced factory airplane and made a few changes.

The standard Cessna as it is delivered from the factory stalls at 65 mph., which determines the takeoff and landing speed. Converted into a Robertson STOL, the stall speed will be reduced to 35 or 40.

Jim's basic idea is simple. As delivered from the factory most airplanes have flaps on the wings to give additional lift on takeoff and landing. Outboard of these flaps are ailerons which are used to roll or bank the airplane. As both the flaps and ailerons have somewhat the same shape and effect, Jim knew that if these two surfaces could be combined more lift would result.

The first step was to mechanically hook the flaps and ailerons together so that when the flaps were lowered, the



over the leading edge and other air currents rush into the gap created by the extended flaps.

'What I did,' says Jim, 'was to apply modern-day technology to a wing that hasn't been changed in two decades.' An aluminum 'cuff' was installed over the leading edge which changed the wing's forward edge configuration. The gap between the wing and the extended aileron was sealed.

A couple other changes were made.

One is the stall fence. These are thin, inch and a half high vanes running fore and aft atop the wing. There is one on each wing and they are located about midway between the fuselage and the wing tip. 'These fences,' says Jim, 'confine the stall to the inboard portion, keeping the outboard panels effective throughout the stall maneuver.'

The customers are a mixture and there is seemingly a never-ending stream of them. Typical are the businessmen or fly-for-fun pilots who want an airplane that will fly slowly in emergencies and turn around in 2.7 times its own wingspan.

Other customers are bush pilots and sportsmen who want to fly into and out of small clearings or lakes. Missionaries in Africa and prospectors in South America have sent their planes to Jim.

Once an airplane has been converted into a STOL, Jim

won't allow an owner to walk in, pick up the keys and take off. That's where Lyle Flick comes in. Lyle, a retired Navy pilot with a post graduate degree in borate bombing forest fires with B-25s, flies with the customer for three hours after the conversion is done.

'It takes just about that time to change the customer's habits and thoughts about slow flying,' says Robertson.

The name of the company might cause some confusion among aviation historians as Robertson Aircraft Corporation is a title almost as old as any. The company, founded in the early 1920s, built the famous Robin which was later to become the Curtiss Robin. It's still the same company, only updated and reborn.

Jim's father, William B. Robertson of St. Louis, Missouri, was the founder of the original company. In the early days the company delivered mail and even operated an airline. One of its pilots was Charles Lindbergh and the senior Robertson was a backer of the Lone Eagle's transatlantic flight.

Robertson Aircraft slipped from the headlines after Jim's father died in a World War II glider accident and now, some 2,000 miles west, the company is going again.

You might say, growing swiftly making slow airplanes.

- C. Budd Dugan

# VIA MEXICO

by Gordon Kent

asn't yet faded to the middle-brown I wear nix, but it's been getting lighter ever since am a ten-day swing through LaPaz, Mazatlan 'allarta a short while ago.

ostal cities are being added to the Bonanza stem following approval by the Civil Aero- f and President Johnson in February.

t — Air West when the merger with West cific Airlines is accomplished — will operate hrough Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona.

rd Mazatlan are sport fishermen's paradises. ing, too, and just lazing on the beach. abound at Mazatlan. The city is built along e, and benefits, as do LaPaz and Puerto n cool evening sea breezes.

Hotel DeCima, in the downtown area, has a tunnel under the seafloor road (Olas Altas or High Waves by name) to the sandy beach. Junior suites that are very comfortable go for about fourteen dollars daily double. Another top hotel is the Playa Mazatlan, where I stayed on an earlier pre-tourist season visit for eight dollars.

Throughout the three cities, rates can be found to suit every vacation budget.

During college vacations, youngsters from Southern California fly their surfboards to Mazatlan to try their luck. Residents say the surf is best in the summer months, when most of the Mexicans prefer to swim.

They say they're so acclimated to the warm summer ocean water they feel chilled when they swim in the winter. The water gets well above eighty in the summer,





Photographs by Hugh Stratford

and was about seventy-three degrees in January— not at all uncomfortable after that first plunge.

Suntanning is a snap since so many hotels and restaurants feature patios around a swimming pool or near the ocean. Nothing finishes a day of sightseeing so well as a sunbath and a tequila sunrise. Thatched cabanas provide shade for those with tender skin.

Near the beachfront road, commercial fishermen come in each morning with boatloads of fish, one of which may wind up on your plate that evening. The seafood is delectable, although lobster tail tastes slightly more gamy than that served in the States, and the butter also has a different flavor.

Top spot for eating, in my book, is LaCopa de Leche in Mazatlan. Operated by a gracious family of Greek descent, this restaurant has a delicious specialty: shrimp wrapped in bacon and grilled, served with a fine melted cheese. The meat is great steaks, too.

Outstanding architecture is almost commonplace in Mazatlan. Much of it is the work of Sergio Pruneda, a dynamic young man who is also in charge of the federal tourism department here, and Greek consul.

He delights in the use of seashells and other materials for facing, splashes colored tile and other materials through his designs.

Pruneda designed the private Balboa Club which is an outstanding meld of the old and new. His own home is a multi-story structure nestled against a sharply dropping mountainside overlooking the rocky shore below.

In Puerto Vallarta, much of the building is traditional. Red tile and thatched roofs spread out below those choosing the right vantage points. Hotel Posada Vallarta, however, is Spanish in a pleasantly modern way, emphasizing sweeping arches and tiled walkways. In-season rates start slightly over twenty dollars a day per person, modified American.

Next door, the Playa de Oro is less expensive and more rustic. An outrigger canoe suspended from the ceiling of an oceanfront lounge sets the theme.

If it is, you shouldn't miss Yelapa, a jungle village reached only by water (daily tour boats). Hotel Lagunita offers bungalows with woven mat walls and thatched roofs set among thriving bougainvillea. No glass in the windows here; you just drop a canvas flap for privacy.

Modern plumbing, though. And rates start around sixteen dollars a day for two including three meals daily. They call it the Tahiti of Mexico and rightly so. Lush vegetation and a beautiful white sand beach invite you to forget the rest of the world. You taxi from the tour boat to shore in a sort of canoe.

Between Yelapa and Puerto Vallarta is the set from the movie, 'Night of the Iguana.' No false front facades, these buildings all have four walls. They were built for the movie, then left.

There are a few long distance telephone lines to Puerto Vallarta, but the townspeople get along without telephones. If you want to talk to someone, wander over and see him.

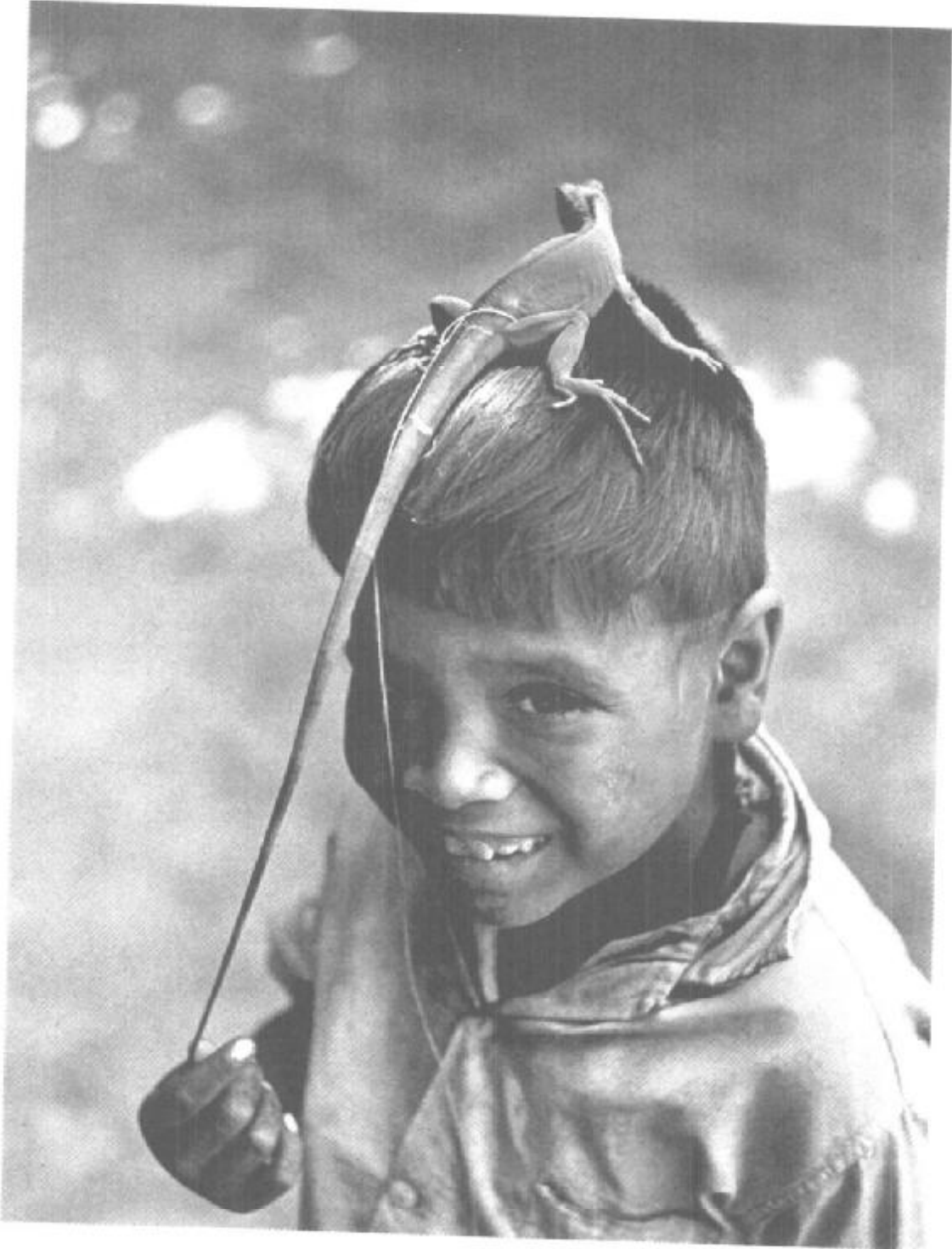
Of course, you have no way to call popular restaurants like La Iguana for a reservation, but Gus, the owner, can almost always find a spot for you somewhere.

He'll tell you proudly that the menu, during the tourist season, includes kosher food. Chinese and Mexican dishes are always available, as are the favorites of tourists who bring stateside preferences along.

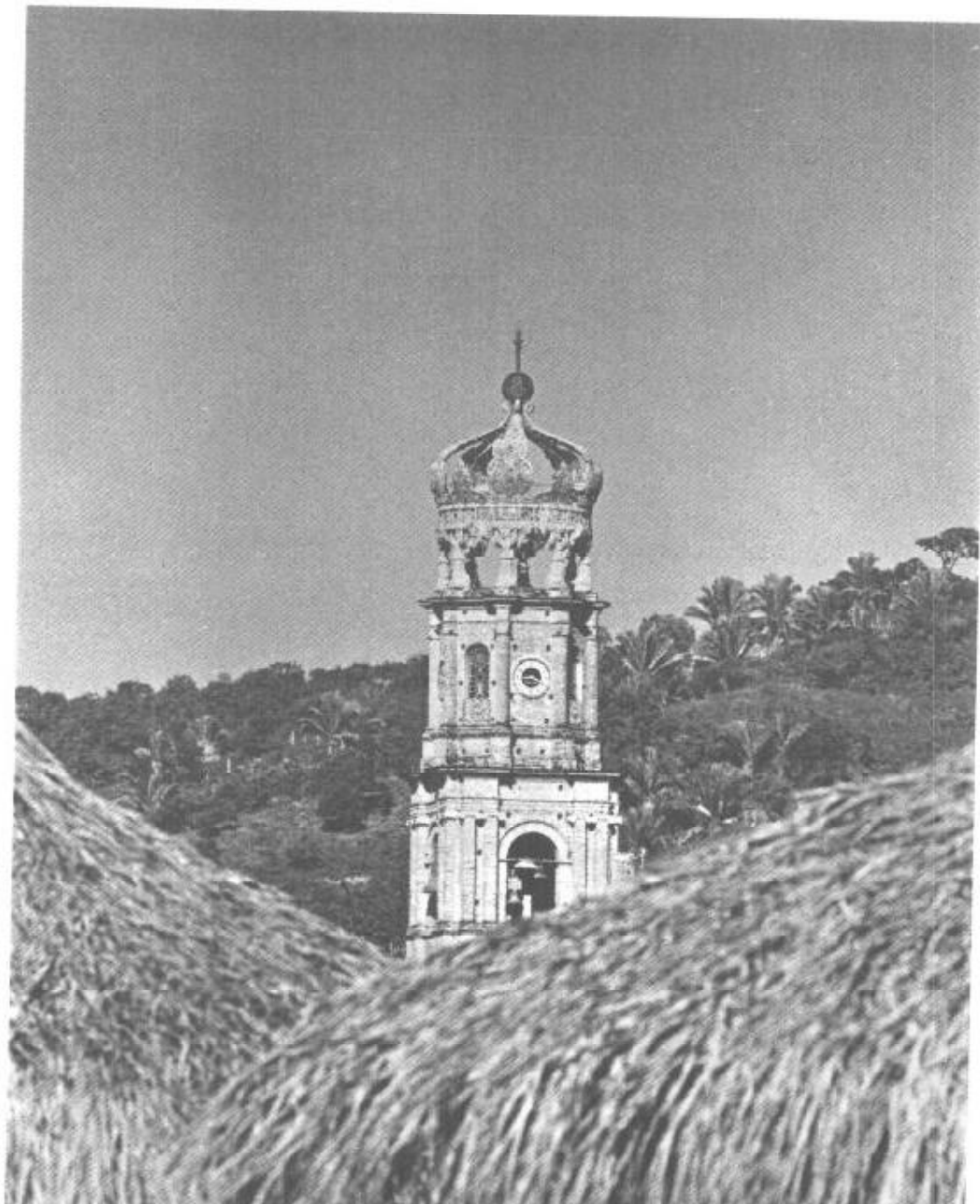
'In fact,' says Gus, 'I operate the only kosher Chinese Mexican American restaurant in Mexico.'

No iguana tail on the menu (it's supposed to taste like chicken) but there are some good sized iguanas on display near the patio. They are native to the area, and grow to good size.

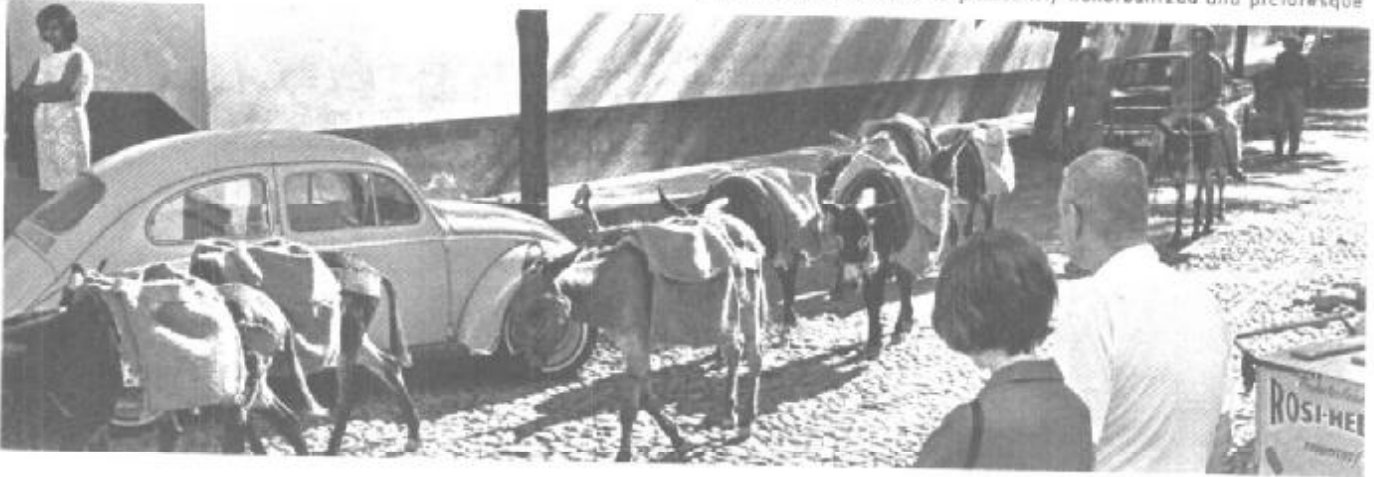
While tourism is building up here (Western International Hotels has an outpost in the making), there's still more than ample space on the beach at Puerto Vallarta. If you hurry, you can stake a claim to a wonderful new vacation spot.



Knight of the Iguana



Life in Puerto Vallarta is pleasantly nonurbanized and picturesque



Color slides of Robin Hood compete with those of the Batman for attention of youngsters in Puerto Vallarta

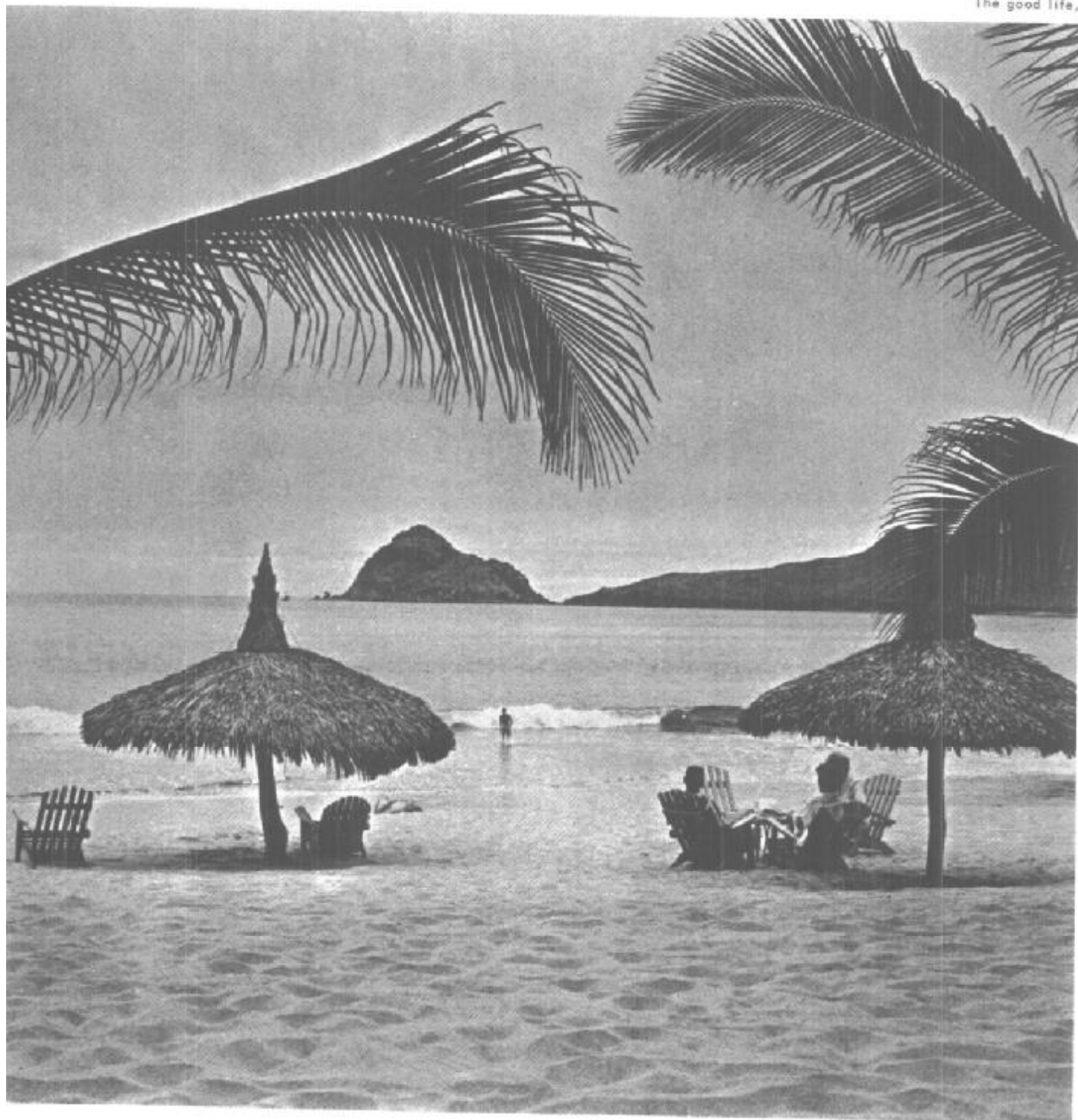
A do-it-yourselfer in Mazatlan,



and a merry minstrel group on the esplanade



The good life,



seen from the Hotel Playa Mazatlan



## first flight

Another trailblazing track was added to the chart of famous aviation events when Carol Ann Nicolay, a stewardess for West Coast Airlines, became the first person to travel coast to coast solely by regional airline jets.

Representing Frontier, Ozark, North Central, Mohawk and Allegheny airlines with mistletoe greetings for civic officials along the way, Miss West Coast Airlines left Seattle December 4, 1967, and made stops at Boise, Salt Lake City, Grand Junction, Denver, Kansas City, St. Louis, Peoria, Chicago, South Bend, Battle Creek, Detroit, Albany, Hartford and Providence.

Then she flew on an Allegheny jetliner to Washington, D.C., where she was greeted by Gen. Joe Adams, executive director of the Association of Local Transport Airlines; John W. Black, director of the U.S. Travel Service, and three western Senators, Warren G. Magnuson, Henry M. Jackson and Wayne C. Morse.

The trip dramatized the swift conversion of the country's regional airlines in 1967 to the glamour jets.

The transition has been remarkably sudden, too; had Carol attempted such a trip earlier, she couldn't have made it without traveling part way on propeller-driven aircraft.

Carol Ann, who is married to one of West Coast's DC-9 captains, Ted Nicolay, also made local history in Seattle. Among those in the take-off party at Boeing Field was Tim Hill, a young state legislator who had just won a position on the Seattle City Council. He was there representing Mayor Dorm Braman in his first official assignment as a councilman.

The exchange of amenities between Miss West Coast and Councilman Hill made a pretty picture, and Air West's flight...



Carol Ann and Councilman Tim Hill got the trip launched

with cameraman Ron Sanford as witness

# AIR WEST U

by Don Gooding

**B**everly Ann Barrett, a graceful twenty-one-year-old, was a hostess for the Space Needle Restaurant in Seattle, a semi-stewardess acclimated to heights up to six hundred feet. Before that, she had studied at the University of Washington and clerked for Pacific Northwest Bell. Last December she became a reservations agent for West Coast Airlines.

While in training Beverly met Leslie Maloney, a West Coast Airlines secretary, who shared a table in the orientation course the company offers its new employees.

Leslie, twenty, is married to a Seattle city fireman. A petite blonde, she weighs one hundred three pounds and stands five feet, three inches, or so she claims. She was a student at Washington State University and once studied modeling; for a while she operated a teletype for the King County sheriff. After West Coast becomes a part of Air West, Leslie is going to be a reservations agent, too.

The fact that the two young women met is less important than the fact that they met while studying the background of West Coast Airlines in a course aimed at opening the door to an interesting career.

If it germinates the way Gene Neavitt has it figured, Beverly and Leslie may not be around forever, but while they are, their job is going to prove more beneficial to themselves, the company and its customers.

Neavitt is director of education for West Coast, concerned with uplifting the fact of employment to a more meaningful and productive level. Last year he began a complete overhaul of training as it applied to customer service, clerical and supervisory personnel.

'Our pilots and stewardesses already were being supplied through training prior to line service and so

were maintenance personnel,' he recalls. 'Many other employees had comparatively little exposure to formal instruction and clerical types had none.'

'We now have a staff and a comprehensive curriculum, and new employees are receiving systematic training regardless of job class. From accounting clerk to first officer, Air West University offers learning opportunities for everyone.'

The branch of Air West University with which Neavitt's cadre is occupied at the present time offers separate two-week courses in three job categories—reservations, station operations, ticket counter. The first two days are devoted to an examination of the company and the aviation industry, and this segment is designed for all starting employees. The courses usually fall in the first month after hire.

An advanced curriculum exists for older employees. Courses include theory of management, passenger tariffs and ticketing, international cargo procedures, interline travel.

One especially important seminar is called intermediate customer service, and its function is to acquaint agents with the importance and the means of giving the public the kind of service it likes.

'In a sense this course is strictly for our customers,' says Neavitt. 'They get the benefit of better service, and that's our aim.'

One final phase of the program extends to every airport station and ticket office on the system.

Agents are selected from personnel at the stations to serve as trainers. They are put through special training themselves to provide followup field instruction in those critical first weeks of an employee's career.

'The value of training as a means of achieving high standards of employee excellence is readily understandable,' says Neavitt. 'What is less appreciated is its indispensability as a tool for assimilating changes. These are coming along every day, and we can count on almost continuous modifications of procedures and technology requiring some degree of additional education to master them.'

**B**eing 'educated' for an airline career is a stimulating experience.

The study regimen by reason of compactness is fairly rugged, but at the end there is an opportunity to reflect on the wisdom of career choices while flying over the Air West system in a DC-9 fanjet.

This closing field trip is Neavitt's idea of a practical graduation exercise.

In the class with Beverly Ann and Leslie were four other reservation trainees, Susan Robbins, Joyce Gerrard, Mona Pearson and Claudia Dixon. The sextet had an opportunity to inspect flight control, cargo and passenger facilities at Boeing Field, and the vast air terminal operation at San Francisco, before buckling down to the work of handling real life situations in the Seattle reservations center.

Leslie Maloney's smiling reaction was typical. 'The training class showed me how the hundreds of pieces that form the jigsaw puzzle known as the airline business fit together - and how I fit into this general pattern.

'It also whetted my appetite with that certain taste of excitement and touch of glamour that makes the airline industry special.

'In a more personal way, it made me feel a useful member of our company.'

That really is what the whole thing is for.



Beverly Ann Barrett

Director of education Gene Neavitt



Senior agent Chris Jensen instructs Joyce Gerrard, Susan Robbins and Beverly in the function of call distributing console



The class listens to senior agent Renee Bertsch Geisler tell how reservations for individual flights are controlled







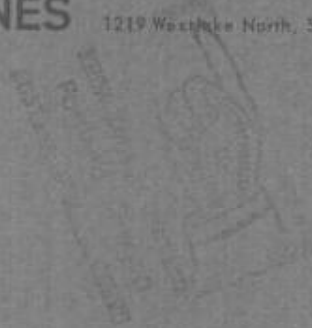
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**AIR WEST**

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**Photography**

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**Editorial**

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