

# Frequent Flyer

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## Frequent Flyer

One event has dominated our holiday season. I was working at home crunching some employee turnover numbers while Anita was driving to the post office to pick up our mail. It was route both of us have taken many times. She was driving down the street in a 30 mph zone when a pickup truck made a left turn and hit her car head on. Either the other driver did not see Anita, or he expected her to stop, although there was neither a stop sign nor a traffic light. Anita's air bags activated, which protected her from the worst of the crash, although her knees hit the dashboard. (She already had bad knees from high impact aerobics.) There was a small grocery store on the corner, and someone inside called 911. After shutting off the ignition because the engine was smoking, Anita called me on her cell phone, but could not get through to 911 herself. She was not coherent and could not tell me her location, but I followed her likely trail to the post office and found her. Two ambulances and a police car were already there.

Not only did the other driver not have insurance, but also he was driving with an expired license plate that he had borrowed from someone else. Fortunately, Anita has uninsured motorist coverage, as her car was totaled. The paramedics checked her out, but she did not want to go in the ambulance. After giving the relevant information to the police officer and getting the other driver's name and address, she got in my car and we drove off. Before going to the hospital, she insisted I stop at the post office. Anita wanted to see the mail that cost her a car.

From the post office, we went to the emergency room at Tennessee Christian Medical Center. While she was being examined, I was in the waiting room reading the December issue of The Atlantic Monthly. They did not keep Anita overnight.

When the X-rays came back, they showed damage to the ligaments of her knees. She was sore all over for two weeks and walked on crutches for a month. Her insurance company partially paid her for the car, and she has purchased a 2002 Ford Escort ZX2 to replace it. She has seen an orthopedist, who told her the knees were healing and should consider knee replacement surgery in five years.

You will be happy to know that the only party we missed because of the accident was one held that

very night. Anita refused to let the accident keep her from her plans.

### The Packers at the Titans—

The Saturday before Anita's accident, we attended the Libertycon Christmas in Chattanooga. On our way home Sunday, we stopped at Bailey's Sports Grill to watch the Packers play the Bears. There was one fan from the old Packers club that Anita refers to as "the lunatic". He dresses in Packer colors, green and gold, from head to toe and even paints his face in those colors. He was handing out flyers to a Packer night at a downtown bar the night before their game with the Titans.

The following Saturday night after Anita's accident we drove downtown to The Flying Saucer, a bar in Union Station, once the downtown railroad terminal. We found the place with no trouble and saw our football fan acquaintance. We found a seat close to the bandstand and ordered food and beer. It was the kind of place which serves over 100 different varieties of beer, but which Anita did not consider her usual drink, white zinfandel wine, to be appropriate. We had a conversation with one Packer fan from Sheboygan. He was wearing a baseball cap with the Packers "G" logo. The "G" was flashing. The music was mostly R&B, except for a guitar player who sang "The Bears Still Suck", the sequel to the highly popular "The Bears Suck" in honor of the Packer fans. The lyrics consist of repeating the title.

As I wrote in the September mailing, I had tickets to the game. The only question was whether Anita was going and, if yes, whether she should take her crutches. There was a 40% chance of rain. However, the rain held off until our friend Doug came over to ride with us. We picked up Debbie Hussey, who directed us to the Stadium Inn, only a few blocks from Adelphia Coliseum, the site of the game. (Under another name, the Stadium Inn had hosted three Kublakhans, including the one where Joe Celko slept in a closet.) It cost \$20 to park there, but it was the site of a regular tailgate party hosted by members of a Titans message board that Debbie frequents. They included one fan who was a lifelong Packer fan until the Titans arrived. It still had not rained, so after eating and visiting with the Titans fans, we checked



## Frequent Flyer

out the hotel bar. Anita wanted a place to retreat to if it started to rain. Then she elected not to take the crutches, because the stadium was so close. It was a big mistake. Although we took an elevator to the upper deck, she was exhausted by the time we got to her seat.

As it turned out, it never rained, and the temperature approached 60° F. Anita felt much better after I got some anti-freeze (beer) into her. Furthermore, the two ticket holders on her left and one on her right were no shows, so we got to sit together. We faced the end zone, but were high enough to see the entire field. The only problem was that a few fans with weak bladders and the need to smoke cigarettes were getting up and coming back throughout the game. Anita was concerned for my safety, because I was wearing Packers colors. However, there were a lot of Packer fans at the game, and there were only 2 or 3 rude Titans fans.

The game itself was a mixed experience as the Titans played their best game of the year and beat the Packers. Former Packer Craig Hentrich got his revenge for the Packers feeling that no punter was worth \$1 million a year by placing a ball on the 1-yard line. (The Titans pay Hentrich \$1.1 million per year.) The following play Titan Jason Fisk tackled Ahman Green in the end zone for a safety. After a Packers punt, I assumed there would be a two minute time out for commercials, so I visited the restroom. However, they kept the game going so I missed a Steve McNair fumble and Bret Favre's subsequent touchdown pass. On the other hand, I did see Favre's second touchdown pass of the day. Both passes were in our end of the stadium.

### Work—

My main project for the summer of 2000 was replacing our electronic time clocks. The old system was a DOS one, although it was Y2K compliant, and the new one was based on Windows. Then in January of 2001, we received a form letter from Automatic Data Processing (ADP). It said that we would have to upgrade from version 7.3 to 7.4 of the time clock software, because they would not support 7.3 after 12/31/2001. Furthermore, this upgrade would cost us

\$2,000 per location. We were pissed. First, the fact that we got a form letter at all rather than a call and/or a letter from our account manager was an insult. Second, we thought it unethical for them to discontinue support for software that was less than two years old. Third, the cost of the upgrade made it worth our while to explore alternatives.

We contacted our Application Service Provider (ASP) that hosts our general ledger, accounts payable, and other corporate accounting functions. (An ASP is a service that hosts Internet applications.) They checked into the possibility of adding payroll processing and found Paymaxx, a processor in Franklin, Tennessee, south of Nashville, that had an Internet product. Furthermore, they could utilize our existing time clocks. Beginning this January, we have a new payroll processor.

Personally, I have liked this, because so far I have spent four days at their Franklin headquarters while sleeping in my own bed in Nashville. Since the data is on the Internet, I will be able to run reports and look up information with my laptop from any location. Our hotels are spread through four states, our payroll administrator works in Jackson, Mississippi, the ASP will physically maintain the data on a server in Gainesville, Georgia, and Paymaxx will print our checks in Franklin. There is some additional redundancy in that Paymaxx will also have our payroll data through the most recent payday.

We also changed insurance companies this year, which required me to take one extra trip to Jackson for a meeting. Between payroll and insurance, I've been busy at work.

### Flying--

Air travel has nearly gotten back to normal. Delta has restored my regular flights to Jackson. For a few months, I have had the choice of flying out of Nashville at either 5:20 AM or 5 PM. There was nothing in between. On January 2, however, I was able to take a 9:45 AM flight from Nashville to Atlanta with a connecting flight to Jackson. We pushed back from the gate in Nashville on time, but flew in a holding pattern when we reached the Atlanta area. When we landed at noon, it was snowing. My seat mate and I

## Frequent Flyer

noticed that there were a few AirTran and Continental planes in unusual spots on the tarmac, and we speculated that they were waiting for gates.

When I disembarked, I immediately learned that my connecting flight to Jackson had been canceled, so I rebooked on the next one at 5:20 PM. I had an unhurried lunch and visited the Delta Crown Room to check e-mail and drink Diet Cokes. While I was there, I overheard conversations about the delays caused by the need to de-ice the planes. The jets were having to wait in line as long as two hours, they said.

I proceeded to the gate around 5 PM only to discover that a plane for a different flight was sitting there. The gate agent announced there would be a delay, so I ate a quick hamburger in a nearby restaurant. When I returned, my flight was canceled. Once again, I rebooked my flight. I had a seat on a flight that originally was scheduled to leave at 8:30 PM but had already been rescheduled for 9:20. Once again I went to the Crown Room, but had a couple beers. At the appropriate time, I walked to the gate. Once again, they announced that the plane for our flight was waiting on the tarmac. However, this time they announced a gate change, so we all marched over to new gate. Our flight had a plane and pilots, but no flight attendants. They pushed the departure time to 10:40 PM, then 11 PM. We finally boarded at Midnight.

We pushed back from the gate soon thereafter and got in line for the de-icer. I usually don't sleep on flights, but this time I nodded off and had a dream about attending a council of Mafioso where one of them demonstrated a back stretch. When I woke up at 4 AM, we were still in line. We finally reached the front of the line at 4:40 AM. It took 20 minutes to de-ice and we were on our way. With the time change, we arrived in Jackson at 5 AM, where there was no snow. I counted myself lucky, because the flight was originally supposed to continue to Monroe, Louisiana, but they canceled the continuation. They did, however, charter a bus to carry the Monroe passengers to their destination.

The rental car counters were closed, so I took a taxicab to our office, where I shaved, brushed my teeth, and changed clothes. Then I proceeded to perform routine paperwork. I knocked off, early, however, checked into my hotel, and read and slept for the

rest of the afternoon and night. As I said, air travel is back to normal. If I had gotten the 5:20 AM flight, I might have gotten through Atlanta before the flights began to back up. If I had taken the 5 PM flight, they probably would have stopped me from getting on the plane in Nashville in the first place.

### September 11 Aftermath--

On October 18, George Bekov, a Russian immigrant living in California, flew into Nashville on Southwest, but his luggage did not. Bekov makes a living repairing lasers used in eye surgery, and his luggage contained thousands of dollars worth of equipment. He became irate and has admitted to telling a Southwest employee, "I blow your brain". Later, he claimed this was a literal translation of a common Russian phrase. The employee, however, interpreted this as a threat, and Bekov was arrested. He is charged with two counts of threatening an airport facility. Maximum penalties are \$500,000 in fines and 15 years of prison. It goes without saying that it was a bad time for someone to lose his temper.

The November 30 electronic issue of Information Week contained the following short article:

### Desperately Seeking Bin Laden

Americans love to hate the bad guy. That's the only way to explain Osama bin Laden's four-week run as the most popular term entered in the widely used Lycos search engine. Even the vaunted Harry Potter, he of the blockbuster film that raked in nearly \$200 million in its first two weeks in theaters, couldn't unseat the infamous al Qaeda leader. - Tony Kontzer

The October 29 and January 7 issues of Business Insurance report that the World Trade Center's leaseholder, Silverstein Properties, and the WTC's insurance companies are going to court over the issue of whether there were one or two events for the purpose of the insurance policy. Silverstein is arguing that the crashes were separate incidents, entitling it \$3.55 billion more than insurance companies are offering. The November 19 issue reports that they are also disputing the timing of the payments, Swiss Re arguing that they are not required to pay the claim immediately if

## Frequent Flyer

Silverstein and the New York Port Authority (the owner of the buildings) are going to rebuild the complex. Furthermore, they are disputing the cash value of the buildings before 9/11.

The 10/29 issue reports that American Airlines expects to receive \$2.3 billion from its insurance companies for the events of September 11. On the other hand, their premiums for liability and hull insurance are expected to rise between 90% and 125%. AMR, the parent company of the airline, reported that they lost \$798 million in the fourth quarter of 2001 compared with a \$47 million profit for the same period in 2000. Revenue dropped 22%. For the year, AMR lost \$1.76 billion compared with a \$819 million profit for 2000.

Continental lost \$149 in the fourth quarter as compared with a \$44 million profit in the fourth quarter of 2000. Revenue fell 28%. For 2001, Continental lost \$95 million versus of profit of \$342 million in 2000.

The December issue of Network Magazine reports the rise hoax telephone calls from cell phone thieves who claim to be on a hijacked airplane. Since 911 operators cannot determine where the caller is, Air Force jets have been scrambled in response.

The December 5 issue of USA Today contained a long article criticizing the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for not cracking down on unruly passenger cases in which there was "interference with [the] flight crew." There were 1,519 such cases from 1990 to 2000. In 508 of those cases, the FAA collected a fine; in 449, it did nothing; and in the rest, it "sent a warning letter, was unable to locate the offender, or determined that a fine was 'uncollectable.'" Although the FAA has the authority to issue fines up to \$25,000, most were for \$100, even cases in which the passengers became violent and/or broke into the cockpit.

Reuters reported on 12/28 that U.S. hotel revenues per available room were down 16.3 percent in November versus a year ago. Luxury hotels were down 23.4 percent, but economy motels only 8.7 percent. That's consistent with our experience. The September decline was 23.4%, and 17.7% in October. Marriott predicted that their revenue per available room would be down 25-35% from 2000 in the last

quarter of the year. Hilton reports that occupancy levels have returned to pre-9/11 levels, but only because of steep discounting. Both companies report that the hardest hit markets are the Hawaiian Islands, Boston, San Francisco, New York, Orlando, and Washington, D.C. We have one hotel, an Embassy Suites, in Orlando.

The December 20 issue of The Tennessean, our local newspaper, predicted that Christmas and New Year's travel at Nashville's airport would be down about 18% this year from last year. Total revenue at the airport was down 8% in November from last year with parking revenue down 12% and the number of passengers down 15.3%. There are 38 fewer flights in and out of Nashville since September 11.

### Technology news-

The following article appeared in the electronic editions of Information Week. From December 17

#### LED Could Lead To Ultrasecure Communications

Scientists have developed a light-emitting diode (LED) so precise it sends out a single photon of light when turned on. ...

Researchers for Toshiba Europe, working in concert with scientists from Cambridge University, produced the LED with standard semiconductor manufacturing techniques and say it could soon be produced quite cheaply for commercial use. Previous devices that produce a single photon have required expensive lasers or low temperatures, making them unviable for general use.

An LED that produces just a single photon would be incredibly useful for computer security, thanks to the properties of light at the quantum level. Individual photons can be polarized to carry information, and since Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle tells us that you can't observe a particle without changing it, it would be obvious if someone intercepted the photon. That would let people share cryptographic keys



## Frequent Flyer

and other messages, while being sure no one has eavesdropped.

Pete Lindstrom, director of security strategies for Hurwitz Group, says the technology will help cryptographers stay a step ahead of advances in computing power that threaten to crack their codes. Current computers aren't powerful enough to manage the brute-force attacks that try every possible key combination to crack encryption. But advances such as quantum computing will significantly shorten the amount of time in which such breaches can be accomplished. By using quantum cryptography, people can be sure their codes haven't been intercepted and won't be cracked. Says Lindstrom, "Years from now, if quantum computing makes public key cryptography obsolete, it's nice to know quantum cryptography will be there to take over and solve the key distribution problem." -

David M.Ewalt and Tony Kontzer

From December 24

### IT Confidential: Implanting A Chip On Your Shoulder

Last week, Applied Digital Solutions introduced an ID chip intended to be implanted in humans. The VeriChip, which the Palm Beach, Fla., company describes as "about the size of the point of a typical ballpoint pen," contains an ID number and can store a small amount of data, such as medical information.

The data can be read by a scanner, and could, for instance, let emergency technicians know a person's most pressing medical needs. Applied Digital also recently introduced a product (and a subsidiary) called Digital Angel, which combines biosensor technology and wireless communications linked to a global positioning system in the form of a watch and a pager-sized device. When worn, Digital Angel can not only track a person's location but report medical data such as body temperature and blood oxygen level. It's useful for

patients with diseases such as Alzheimer's, who can wander away and get lost. ... But think about when the two technologies are combined (which they will be), and the call for a national ID system takes on a whole new meaning. - John Soat

## Comments on #224

SFPA sightings—

I saw Gary Robe at the Concave New Year's Eve party.

Janice Gelb—

Here is a piece from the October 29 issue of Network Computing that you might find amusing:

In [the] July 23 issue, a Microsoft advertisement was promoting its Internet Security and Acceleration Server 2000. ... The ad promises: "Your systems are under attack. You are outnumbered. You are surrounded. You are unruffled." ... It should have added: "You are using a Sun Ultra 5 workstation," since that is what the person pictured is doing.

I had read a speculation that the 9/11 terrorists did not go after the Statue of Liberty is that the loss of life would have been too low.

I don't know how much contact you've had with evangelical Christians, but many of them take the attitude that only about 1% of the U.S. population are true Christians.

Gary Robe—

I thought you and Naomi did a really nice job with the New Year's Eve party. We enjoyed it.

Since 9/11, no one at the airport security checkpoints has asked me to turn on my laptop. I am now carrying my passport with me when I fly. My only other picture ID is my driver's license, and when I saw myself using in 4-5 times during a trip, I decided I needed backup in case I lost it.

For some reason, the metal detector at the Jackson, Mississippi, airport does not like my shoes.

## Frequent Flyer

Twice since 9/11, I had to take them off and run them through the X-ray machine. Then I had to walk back through the metal detector in my stocking feet. Fortunately, on both occasions my socks matched and did not have any holes in them. I have been selected once for a random search at a gate in Atlanta. They made me take my shoes off, too.

If Delta had canceled my 9/13 flight before I got to the airport and through security, I would have driven my rental car home to Nashville. As it was, I got home a little earlier than I was originally scheduled.

I also use Zocor to control my cholesterol.

Toni Weisskopf—

I see that your buddy Michael Shane Lasseter of Gainesville, GA, who single-handedly shut down Hartsfield International Airport in Atlanta on November 16, has been charged with disorderly conduct for running past security guards and down an up escalator. AirTran (formerly ValuJet) has also filed a lawsuit seeking \$100,000 in damages. I was flying home that night from Jacksonville, Florida, and he caused me to be 90 minutes late getting to the house. However, I did not suffer like the people in Atlanta. I comfortably waited in Delta's Crown Room in Jacksonville for my flight to arrive.

Sheila Strickland—

I find myself noticing the World Trade Center towers in movies and TV shows made before 9/11. I hadn't paid them any attention previously.

Anita likes large print books, too.

Gary Brown—

I liked your article on Superman. Coincidentally, I am writing these comments on a Tuesday night. A new episode of *Smallville* will be on later. I'm really enjoying the show.

I don't understand why major league baseball needs fewer teams. I think the preferred solution would be to move the troubled franchises to other cities and/or to change ownership.

Richard Dengrove—

I don't recall seeing Clyde Beatty in a serial,

but I do recall seeing him play himself in a feature-length movie.

Anita has given up caffeine, so I've been drinking a lot less of it, too.

Fortunately, I've never had to test how well my files are backed up to CDs. So far as I can tell, they are copied correctly.

I once heard a high school band perform *The 1812 Overture* in which they fired rifles during the finale. I have read of a performance in which an orchestra used restored 18<sup>th</sup> Century cannons.

Ned Brooks—

Batteries power electronic door locks in hotels, so they will work when the power fails. If the battery runs down, the door becomes unlocked.

Guy Lillian—

I saw *The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Rings*, and your fears were not realized. Arwen (Liv Tyler) saw more action, but she was not part of the Fellowship. On the other hand, I always enjoy looking at her. Nor was there any hint of a homosexual relationship between Merry and Pippin. I wonder if there is any Hobbit slash fiction.

*Back to Bataan* (1945) has a prologue showing actual survivors of the Bataan Death March. It starred John Wayne and Anthony Quinn.

Mike Weber—

Billy Wilder used "Johnny Comes Marching Home" to great effect in *Stalag 17*. It signified the hope that the prisoners would get home alive and in one piece.



## Fess Parker

I looked him up in an Internet movie database and found his credits.

Film/TV show	Part
Climb an Angry Mountain (1972) (TV)	Sheriff Elisha Cooper
Smoky (1966)	Clint
"Daniel Boone" (1964-1970) TV Series	Daniel Boone
"Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" (1962-63) TV Series	Sen. Eugene Smith
Hell Is for Heroes (1962)	Sergeant First Class Pike
Jayhawkers!, The (1959)	Cam Bleeker
Hangman, The (1959)	Sheriff Buck Weston
Light in the Forest, The (1958)	Del Hardy
Old Yeller (1957)	Jim Coates
Davy Crockett and the River Pirates (1956) TV	Davy Crockett
Great Locomotive Chase, The (1956)	James J. Andrews
Westward Ho the Wagons! (1956)	John 'Doc' Grayson
Along the Oregon Trail (1956) (TV)	John 'Doc' Grayson
Battle Cry (1955)	Speedy
"Annie Oakley" (1954) TV Series	Tom Conrad (1954)
Bounty Hunter, The (1954)	Wild Cowboy at Finale
Them! (1954)	Alan Crotty
Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier (1954) TV	Davy Crockett
Dragonfly Squadron (1953)	Texas Lieutenant
Thunder Over the Plains (1953)	Kirby
No Room for the Groom (1952)	Cousin Ben
Untamed Frontier (1952)	Clem McCloud