

Frequent Flyer

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One of the new airport security procedures put in place since 9/11 is to search passenger's checked baggage. I had never been selected before my latest business trip, but then they checked me both going and coming at both baggage check-in and the gate. I have been selected several times in Atlanta's airport, but only at the gate. In Atlanta, I have seen the inspectors take the first person in line for first class boarding or selecting their victim by eyeballing the line. They don't wait until your boarding pass is scanned.

I am pleased to report that the National Guardsmen and Guardswomen with their M-16 assault rifles are no longer guarding the security checkpoints. Now we have regular cops with regular side arms. The Transportation Security Agency is not up to speed yet, so they are using either local or state police officers and compensating their organizations.

River Stages—

This outdoor rock festival kicks off the outdoor concert season in Nashville. We missed last year's festival to attend the DSC, so we were looking forward to it. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate. There were originally supposed to be six stages, but a thunderstorm on Friday night halted construction on the last one and two workers were injured. They then had to reshuffle the schedule to spread the groups from the original six stages to five. The weather improved slightly on Saturday, but Anita and I decided not to go until Sunday, which was a good choice because the weather was beautiful. Anita had studied the original schedule with great care and then studied it some more when the revised schedule was published in Sunday's newspaper.

Sunday's headliner was Jethro Tull. If you're not familiar with Jethro Tull, he is not a country music singer as the name would imply but a long dead agricultural inventor for which the group is named. They have been singing for over 30 years and are known for combining hard rock and Celtic music. Anita scheduled our day around them.

We parked the car fairly close to the Davidson County Courthouse where we thought Jethro Tull would be playing that night and planned to go home directly afterward. Then we proceeded to the riverfront for the first act. We arrived a little early and found a bench while others got in line. All stages

were within a fenced-in area between Nashville's Riverfront Park and the courthouse. When the initial rush cleared, we entered and settled in for the first act. We received another revised schedule, which said that Jethro Tull would be playing at the riverfront rather than the courthouse, but Anita adjusted our schedule. It involved more walking with Anita's bad knees, but she felt she could cope.

The local media has been hyping Atticus Fault, a young local rock and roll band, as being on the verge of breaking into the big time. Their debut album should have been released by the time you read this. We found their music to be very pleasant and enjoyable, which made for a good opening act.

Although Anita had pretty well scheduled our day, it was flexible enough so that we could listen to a few songs and move on to another stage. Before On-side Red's first song was over, she asked, "Do we have to wait for them to finish?" They were supposedly a heavy metal band. We moved on to the next stage, where we listened to Josh Rouse, who sang numbers closer to our taste.

Delicious Blues Stew is a Cajun rock band, which means that they add instruments such as a washboard and harmonica to the standard guitars and drums. They also use Bongo drums, which while not being especially Cajun, made their sound quite distinctive. They were my favorite of all the groups we heard that day.

We were up at the Courthouse stage waiting for a blues band to start when they announced that Jethro Tull was already playing down at the riverfront, a full three hours ahead of our latest schedule. We rushed down there as fast as Anita could walk and caught the final third of their set. As promised, front man Ian Anderson played the flute in addition to singing. What we heard was good, but there was so little of it. Anita could not understand why they moved the band to the riverfront in the first place, because all the other bands playing there aimed at a younger audience, who scarcely paid attention and talked during the performance.

Then we started to gradually move toward the car. We enjoyed listening to Galactic, which featured a sax player and finished with Less Honky More Tonky. (I think that was the name of the band. By that time, we had no confidence in the schedule.)

Overall, our experience was not as good as in previous years, mostly because we almost missed the one band we really wanted to hear. About 75,000 people attended over three days.

September 11 Aftermath—

The April 15 issue of Business Insurance reported that Lloyd's of London lost \$4.53 billion in 2001 with \$2.88 billion in claims from the 9/11 attacks. The loss of an oilrig, the Sri Lanka airport attack, a factory explosion in France, and Tropical Storm Allison accounted for an addition \$400 million in losses. Swiss Reinsurance Co., the world's second-largest reinsurer lost \$99 million in 2001, according to the issue. They had \$1.77 billion in claims from 9/11. The April 29 issue had a story that St. Paul's Cos. Inc. would spin off its re-insurance division because of 9/11 losses. It had \$200 million in claims from its commercial insurance operations and \$550 million in losses from its re-insurance policies.

Business Insurance has also been tracking 9/11 lawsuits. The 4/15 issue reported that the family of an investment manager killed in the attack is suing American Airlines and Glove Aviation Services, which handled security for Boston's Logan International Airport, for \$50 million. Bonnie Smithwick was a portfolio manager with Fred Alger Management Co. who worked on the 93rd floor of the North Tower. Her family is not eligible for the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund, because she had too much life insurance. This is the first lawsuit by a victim's family against one of the airlines involved. The 4/29 issue said that a gay man is seeking spousal workers compensation benefits for his partner of 14 years who was killed on 9/11. New York's workers compensation laws have never covered same-sex couples. Vermont is the only state that extends spousal workers compensation benefits to same-sex couples. While many companies have extended group medical insurance benefits to same-sex couples and unmarried domestic couples in recent years, workers compensation benefits are set by state law.

The May 6 issue reported that Aon Corporation is suing a Lloyd's of London syndicate for \$100 million. Aon is arguing that a business travel insurance policy that covers terrorism should be extended to the

176 Aon employees killed in the 9/11 attack, even though they were working at the home site.

The April 18 issue of Workplace Substance Abuse Advisor reported that 26 states and 6 cities have experienced an increased demand for substance treatment since 9/11. In addition, Massachusetts reports an increase in tobacco sales and Rhode Island reports an increase in mental health treatment.

Harry Potter—

The May 5 electronic issue of The New York Times had an article on why J.K. Rowling will miss this summer's deadline for getting the fifth book out. However, what I found most interesting is that the article mentioned that there are over 4,000 Harry Potter fan fiction web sites. There is indeed Harry Potter slash, although the article's author may be ignorant of the term. There is one popular slash series in which Harry and Draco become lovers when they grow up and, even worse, become gangsters. There are also fan feuds based on which characters become lovers.

StarTrek.net—

You may have seen commercials for this new service. According to the February 11 issue of Information Week, Paramount and the Internet Service Provider (ISP) Earthlink have "teamed up to form StarTrek.net, a *Star Trek*-themed service that offers Trek-kies Internet access, a StarTrek.net E-mail address, themed software, customized goodies for the desktop, and access to exclusive *Star Trek* content."

Comments on #226

Enron—

There is currently a 401K reform bill in Congress, which includes the following Enron-inspired provisions:

1. Participants can sell company stock received as the employer match after 3 years, instead of at age 50 in the Enron plan.
2. Participants must receive 30 days advanced notice of blackouts in which they cannot conduct transactions.

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3. Top executives cannot sell stock they own outside the 401k plan during blackout periods. Last year, several Enron executives sold their shares when 401K participants could not.

Jeffrey Copeland—

I really liked your trip report, but never having traveled to that part of the world, I have no comments.

I've never seen *Dawson's Creek*, although reviews of *Smallville* have compared it to that TV series.

Anita and I recently watched the original *Rollerball* on cable. It holds up well, although one of the main premises, that the world will be ruled by a handful of corporations, seems more remote now than it was in 1975. (On the other hand, there's been a lot of consolidation in several industries in recent years.) I think their model was International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT), which I don't think exists anymore. For about the 15 years prior to the movie, ITT was taking over another corporation something like an average of once every 3 months until the 1974-75 recession forced a drastic change in their growth strategy. Their business model said that they could manage any kind of business, manufacturing or service. At one time, they owned the Sheraton hotel chain and the Avis rental car company. Ironically, the flaws in that model were becoming evident just about the time the original *Rollerball* came out.

Gary Robe—

The problem I had with the back-story in the new *The Time Machine* movie is that it delayed the trip to the future, which I found more interesting than turn-of-the-previous century New York. Also, would even nukes blow up the Moon? Admittedly, that is more plausible than the premise in *Space: 1999* that nuclear explosions would propel the moon out of the solar system faster than the speed of light. Otherwise, we thought the new *The Time Machine* better than the reviews indicated.

Gary Brown—

I picked up a copy of Weekly World News at one of the Xerps in 2010 Worldcon bid parties. One of the articles said that the ghosts of Charlie Chan and his Number One Son had been sighted in Washington, D.C. in connection with the Chandra Levy disappear-

ance. However, the picture of the son was not Keye Luke, but rather Victor Sen-Yung who played the Number Two Son. Now I ask you, how seriously can you take a publication that is so careless about such important facts?

I agree with you that *Pearl Harbor* was three movies combined into one. I would also say that those three movies had already been made: *Tora, Tora, Tora*; *A Yank in the RAF*; and *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*. By the way, I recently watched the *History vs. Hollywood* episode on *Tora, Tora, Tora*, which was mostly favorable toward the movie with the exception that it did not include Japan's highly efficient espionage service in Hawaii prior to the war.

Guy Lillian—

Anita and I saw Sean Penn in *I am Sam* and thought his Oscar nomination well deserved.

I knew I saw Louisiana patches on those uniforms in *Monster's Ball*, but also knew the story was set in Georgia. Thanks for letting me know I was not hallucinating.

There is one brief political reference in *We Were Soldiers*. Before shipping over to Vietnam, Mel Gibson's character has a conversation with his commanding general over Johnson's failure to declare a state of emergency, which would have prevented his most experienced officers and men from leaving the army after their enlistments expired.

I'm not aware that the Alamo episode from Disney's Davy Crockett series was repackaged as a movie release, although I believe the whole 3-episode mini-series was.

Richard Dengrove—

If a Japanese tea ceremony put you to sleep, I would consider that a calming effect. Just too much!

In his book *The Borderlands of Science*, Charles Sheffield uses the analogy of walking on a beach to distinguish science fiction from other forms of literature. If you are on the solid ground, you are in a techno-thriller. If you wade into the ocean, you are in science fiction. There is a portion of the beach that if you stand still, sometimes you are in the water and sometimes out. If you swim out and lose sight of land, you are in a fantasy. If you go inland and lose sight of the ocean, you are into non-fiction.