

Entertainment Outlook

Fear of flying for white knuckle flyer

As one of the world's foremost white-knuckle flyers, I am naturally delighted to hear of new in-flight services which airlines introduce to make flying a more pleasant experience.

Oh, it's not that these additions make flying any more pleasant for me. My own prejudice is that there are some experiences which will not be anything remotely resembling pleasant, no matter how many service extras are added.

Flying is one. Hemorrhoids are

another. Still, it's always interesting to hear about the lengths airlines will go to in order to delude passengers into believing they're in for a good time. And that's why it was especially intriguing to read about the little bonus which British Airways has dreamed up — plastic handcuffs.

It seems the airline is fed up with passengers who become unruly or abusive, particularly on boozy charter flights. As such, they've ordered thousands of pairs

of plastic handcuffs, which will be issued to cabin crews.

This, you will admit, is a fascinating concept. Passengers now have three choices when booking a seat on British Airways — first class, economy class, or cell-block C.

"Good afternoon, and welcome aboard Flight 439. The stewardesses will be distributing free coffee, tea and beverages, just as soon as they've finished beating the prisoners with rubber truncheons."

Granted, it is undoubtedly true that airlines have occasional problems with abusive and unruly passengers. And this raises the admittedly troublesome question: what exactly are you supposed to do with them?



Ian Welr

regards who, precisely, these women are. My own theory is that they are hired by the airlines as professional washroom-occupiers, on the grounds that cabin crew would get terribly bored on overseas flights were it not for the entertaining spectacle of long line-ups of passengers hopping up and down with their legs crossed.)

Still, I'm pretty iffy about this idea of slapping plastic handcuffs on unruly passengers. This seems a bit draconian — and you have to wonder whether it's even effective, given the strong possibility that plastic airline handcuffs will work about as well as plastic airline earphones.

Besides, handcuffing unruly passengers seems to overlook the basic problem — which is the reason why passengers get unruly in the first place.

Perhaps you could argue — hypothetically — that the simplest solution would be just to lock them in the washroom.

But this is strictly a hypothetical suggestion, given the nature of airplane washrooms. As anyone who has ever taken an overseas flight well knows, it is impossible to get into one in the first place.

Airlines operate on the premise that, on any flight exceeding six hours, there should be one functioning washroom for every 4,978 passengers. On any given flight, half of the washrooms will be out of order, and the remainder will be occupied by women who lock themselves in 10 minutes after take-off and are never seen or heard from again.

(There is some controversy as

British Airways seem to be implying that passengers on charter flights get unruly when they have too much to drink. My personal experience has been the opposite — that the unruliness starts when passengers have too little to drink.

Airlines entice passengers aboard charter flights with the promise of free drinks. To the grateful passenger, this seems a warm, humanitarian gesture — the airline is recognizing that an overseas flight, like an unanesthetized battlefield operation, is not something which should be experienced by the sober.

Face in the Crowd

Take a close look, you may be a winner. If the face shown in the circle is yours, you're the lucky winner of a pair of Georgetown Cinemas courtesy passes. Call us at 877-2201 or 877-8822 or drop in at The Herald, 15 Guelph St., Georgetown, Ont. to claim your prize. If you're not a winner this week, keep on looking. Next week, it may be your turn.

GEORGETOWN CINEMAS

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