

TRAVEL, OR MAYBE TRAVAIL

We spent a week in Florida in February, flying out of Syracuse, New York. I'm not fond of travel, but Diane likes it, so we compromise and travel more than I would like and less than she would like. A good compromise, it is reported, is where neither party is entirely satisfied, so I guess this is a good compromise. Each time we travel, I am forcefully reminded of how the last fifteen years in Milford have made me less citified.

I was aware of increased security requirements on aircraft. After all, I do read the paper. But I didn't know that when you traverse the metal detectors, you have to take your shoes off, even on domestic U.S. flights. They have chairs once you pass inspection so you can sit down and put your shoes back on. A good thing, too, because with increasing age the ground has become further away and I can't lean over to tie my shoes without toppling like a stack of wooden blocks. You are not allowed to lock your baggage, either. When we got home, there were notes in each of our bags stating that they had been opened and investigated. Who thinks of this stuff? George Burns said, "It's too bad that all the people who know how to run the country are busy driving taxicabs and cutting hair." They should run the security of the U.S.

Years ago, I worked in the Great Canadian North, timber cruising. All summer we slept in tents, and cleanliness was something vaguely aspired to but never reached. My clothes and belongings were kept in my brother's army duffle bag, one that opened on one end and was secured with a large clip. After an entire summer bathed in fly dope and sweat, I flew home with my overripe clothing stuffed in the duffle bag. Passing through U.S. customs, the officer enquired as to the contents of the bag. I informed him with an air of insouciance, "Just old clothes and stuff." He elected not to believe me, probably thinking I was transporting dead animals, and uncoupled the clasp. Peering into the dark contents, he was obliged to reach in and remove one of the garments. I don't know what it was, but he dropped it as though he had grasped fecal material, and maybe he had. This was in the days before rubber gloves, so I really felt a little compassion for the poor man. Serves him right, though, for disbelieving an honest student. As an aside, my mother threw all the clothing in the bag away. Didn't even wash it.

We do not own a cell phone, though it appears every other North American does. As we're boarding the plane, and as we get seated, everyone is babbling on the cell phone. "I just got on the plane, Phyllis. I just sat down, dear." Are people really interested in every step they take? As the plane lands, the cell phones re-appear. "We landed safely at 4:31 darling. Put on the spare ribs." They talk in restaurants, in the shopping malls, in the grocery stores.

"Should I get the Doritos? They're on sale for \$1.99. Do you want the Ranch or the Cheddar?" I somehow think the interest in my every movement, in my most innocuous decision, is limited to one person. Me. I'm certainly not interested in overhearing the conversations of total strangers unless those conversations are extremely ribald. Maybe not even then. However, I seem to be out of step with the world.

When a telephone is not nestled in the ear, little earphones are inserted, and those who cannot bear a

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issues from An Inconvenient Truth, and will explain how we can all reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and ecological footprint.

March 28 - Water (Local Issues & Solutions) - St. Thomas' Anglican Church. Mark Mattson, President of Lake Ontario Waterkeeper, founder of the Environmental Bureau of Investigation,



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