

Workaday Holiday

by Alice Poling Good

Guest columnist Alice Poling Good recalls a real-life experience of traveling with her auctioneer husband. Contrast between the two travelers provides a humorous look at a family outing.



Paul headed for the car carrying two light bags of luggage and all his responsibilities. As I closed the back door, I locked all my cares and concerns inside our home. "Oh great," I thought, "I'm finally getting away for a few days."

Before our nephew had time to start the car for our drive to catch an early-morning flight, Paul thought aloud, "Billfold, cash, credit cards, keys, reservations and marked catalogs. Well, I guess I have everything. Alice, can you recall anything I might have missed?"

"No," I answered and thought, "Why would I be troubled with thinking when I have such a competent travel companion?" I settled into my seat to enjoy the 40-mile drive because this time I was not delivering Paul to the airport, I was accompanying him to his destination.

As we drove along, I said, "Paul, I've made this trip taking you to the airport so many times I know the habits of all the people along the way. I enjoy this back road drive. What time do you suppose these dairy farmers arise? Regardless of the hour we pass, they have started morning chores." Already immersed in his work world, my husband ignored my questions and comments.

"Do you recall if I put my overshoes in my bag?" he fretted. "The forecast doesn't indicate rain but I should have them, just in case."

"No, I didn't notice," and I countered, "From all indications this old Victorian farm home shelters a large family. Every room, up and down, is ablaze with lights this morning."

"Did you bring that Mail Pouch from the kitchen table?" he queried. (He wasn't referring to the postman's bag.)

"I'm looking forward to Denver. What time do we arrive?" I asked. I should have known better than to have posed such a question.

"With this fog, I doubt if we'll ever get there. Our incoming flight will probably not land in Fort Wayne," he worried. "It will circle and go right on to Chicago. If that happens, I'll never make the sale on time. I should always make allowance in my schedule for this early-morning fog in our area. But you couldn't very well have left last night."

As we entered the airport, he tensely bustled toward United's desk, glanced at the flight schedule, noted our plane's arrival time, pulled the correct credit card from his wallet and watched carefully as the agent checked our bags. He recalled that recently his luggage traveled east when he went west.

"Paul, would you like to read this book while we await our boarding time?" I asked. "We have 40 minutes according to the schedule."

"You're going to get interested in a story and we'll miss our flight," he admonished.

"If he doesn't think it wise to read," I thought, "I'll people watch. I can always read another time. Paul, isn't that an interesting family? Do you notice how attentive the father is? Do you see anyone we know this morning?" I asked.

"OK, be certain you have your purse, Alice, we can board now," he interjected.

"This is what I call living," I thought as I adjusted my seat belt and heaved a big sigh. "I don't understand why Paul is so tense. We always get to our destination. You'd think he hadn't traveled before."

We began to taxi down the runway. Paul glanced at me with a quizzical expression. "Listen to that left engine. We're not going to take off," he fretted.

In the next moment the captain's voice came over the intercom, "We're returning to the gate for minor repairs. We hope to take off in 30 minutes."

"Now, what'll we do?" Paul stormed. "We're going to miss our connecting flight and I'll be late for my sale."

I frantically questioned, "Paul, did you bring my purse? I brought my book but I think I left my purse in the chair."

Thus were his concerns throughout many years of traveling. Today in retirement, Paul's worries should be alleviated. Not so! When we travel he navigates full time and monitors all details from his passenger seat! His worries have compounded, for the gal at the wheel continues her chatter, as always, and enjoys all the sights "along the way." **AJ**