

November 2, 2011

I left home mid-afternoon yesterday, driving to Morgantown and my friend Corky's home. It was a beautiful day, 65 F, sunny blue sky and still color over the mountains although it was now more brown and oranges of the dying leaves with mixed patches evergreens. It was nice paced drive, no hurry to be anywhere, allowing others to pass as they needed in the 2 ½ hrs on the road.

Once at Corky's there were more supplies waiting to be sorted and packed (thank you Miranda and classmates). I am allotted three bags (2 free) on British Air @ 50 lbs maximum each. One was already at that limit, one at 43 and my backpack at 35 (which I don't like to overload). I chose the best of the supplies that came to around 10 lbs and split it up. I have one bag that as the 3rd cost \$119 to put on board. For those \$ I could not have bought the same amount or quality of supplies in Nepal. Quality is important, I wouldn't give the cheapest supplies to the children; they deserve the same quality as we would provide our own.

Corky went off to his darts league game and I stayed back to call Kane and Kara, take care of more small details, etc. Our friend Jeff came by with his 2 canine friends and we had a nice visit catching up and sharing. I also watched a little TV since I don't subscribe at home. There are too many things that I enjoy in life and TV is so very seductive and mindless (mostly)! I was asleep when Corky returned.

I woke at 6:30 to shower and have coffee with Corky as our friend David was coming by to take me to the Pittsburgh Airport. Corky was initially going to take me but Wednesday was going to be a great weather day and he is in the process of laying the foundation for David's new garage. I would be there 6 hours before my flight but it was the best plan for everyone and I got a little time with David. David had his friend JT (I believe) with him. They were driving to Chicago (where I was flying to) for a huge antique auction of cars, motorcycles and memorabilia. He showed me the multi-paged flyer with just a very small selection of the items to be auctioned. It was impressive the collection this one man had amassed in his lifetime.

We arrived at the airport and I was quickly deposited with luggage, David having spotted a free cart (\$4 for use!!). I have three large bags, a smaller backpack and my camera....lots to get anywhere so it wasn't happening without a cart. It was a fun ride and good conversation with both he and JT and am thankful for such friends.

I stop by the airlines counter to ask a question about luggage limits as American Airlines states there are only two allowed. I find that as long as I have paid for the third one thru British Air, all three can go. This was relief as many times over the

years I have had extended, frustrating conversations with airline personnel over baggage as I always have more than the usual and have paid dearly.

Stay with me for a moment....for the past several months I have spent considerable time attending to the details of the project, raising funds, obtaining visas, making flight arrangements, corresponding with folks in Nepal and getting my own life's business in order so that I can leave with some small level of confidence that I may actually have it together. There is a point to that last sentence and that is this (remember I'm at the airlines counter).....the ticket manager leans across the counter so others can't hear and says to me "do you know you are here a day early"? Ok, I can hear you laughing and thinking what a dumb***. I was thinking the same thing. Not an insignificant detail to miss-read.

So, I'm here 30 hours prior to my flight leaving for Chicago. No use trying to go back to Morgantown and I don't know anyone well enough in Pittsburgh to annoy. The airlines direct me to the Hyatt attached to the airport. As I was about to enter I hear my name called. I turn around and it is Jerry and Ann Carper from Spencer. They are on their way to Paris for a week, what a nice chance encounter.

I check in and I'm quickly down \$100 for my un-mindfulness. Then there is the internet charge and breakfast the next morning. It also turns out that there is a silver lining to this. I could use another good sleep before I spend 20 hrs flying time plus the layovers which total 12 hours before reaching Kathmandu, a total of 32 hours of sitting up attempting to rest. I spend all of my time at the Hyatt in the room, resting, enjoying the quiet (surprisingly I never hear aircraft sounds) catch several interesting TV pieces on the food industry, asteroid/meteor threats to the Earth, why dinosaurs disappeared (smoking), watch some news, and getting a good sleep.

I wake to a beautiful red sunrise on the horizon and the sky with only a few hazy clouds. I skipped lunch and dinner yesterday so am ready for a good breakfast as I will not take in an actual meal until around 8pm when we are on our way to London. Eating meals and then just sitting around the airport isn't a good thing.

The morning paper is filled with the usual mix of craziness. How did the EU and other nations allow Greece to be a determining factor in the success or failure of the world's economy? Why aren't we looking at other economic methodologies instead of this all out consumerism that will not last as we destroy our limited resources? There is a full page ad from AmericasPower.org lying about coal being clean energy and to stop the EPA from enforcing current legislation and then warns of blackouts, loss of jobs, etc. Unfortunately many will believe this. Why are people's lives so devoid of interest, excitement and curiosity that they would follow what happens to Lindsey Lohan?

I am disappointed in the few property destroyers in the Occupy movement in Oakland whose actions distract from the real issues. These few are a reflection of the same callous and destructive attitudes towards which we are attempting to change. I am also not surprised by the Oakland Police's over-reaction several days ago. This is a still-rising movement, a message to corporations, government and ourselves to re-examine how we currently do business, how we treat people (corporations themselves are NOT people), and how we will use the earth's resources more wisely. We are each a part of the solution and must be honest about what we are willing to do as individuals to create positive change. I believe that the choice of products we do or do not buy is as powerful as my political vote. We are at times limited in these choices, for instance I cannot get phone reception in my rural area with any of the more socially responsible service providers and WalMart the only local outlet for some of the organic foods I choose. We do the best we can, but we do something.

When I despair, I remember that all through history the ways of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants, and murderers, and for a time they can seem invincible, but in the end they always fall. Think of it--always.

Mahatma Gandhi

Peace

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