

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

NOTES FROM THE TRAVEL LITTERBOX

"Canada is a country so square that even the female impersonators are women"
- Richard Benner

A couple from New York has sued American Airlines for \$500,000 because the airline lost their baggage for eight days, after first claiming that it had been located. The couple was on their honeymoon.

I vaguely remember aspects of my honeymoon and I don't know that I would have placed a value of \$500,000 on my luggage. Couldn't this couple replace their luggage with something by Louis Vuitton for a few thou?

Well, it appears that the couple suffered emotional distress and a malady referred to in legal documents as "ruination of their honeymoon". Couldn't they have had fun anyway?

Of course, you have to understand that they were from New York where, from everything I read, it appears that stuff like emotional distress is just worth more than it is around here.

American Airlines, for its part, went to trial when the couple turned down its offer of \$634.90, the amount of compensation American says is due the couple based on current industry standards, which means the way the airlines set it up so they wouldn't have to pay people lots of money when they totally screw up their honeymoon or vacation by losing their luggage.

Judge Robert Sweet, in the U.S. District Court announced his ruling recently, saying that the couple could sue for fraud and negligent representation but not emotional distress. In other words, the airline's mistake, according to the ruling, was in telling the couple that the bags had been located. Apparently, American should have responded with an answer like this:

"Folks, we've got to tell you, we fly to five continents and eighteen countries not to mention some of the most remote, miles away from Wal-Mart, no French food for two thousand miles, places in the United States. And we haven't got the foggiest notion of where your bags are or when they'll be returned." If they had just done that, American might have gotten off with their offer of \$634.90. By the way, how did they arrive at the ninety cents?

* * * *

Up until now, I have not been able to recommend a China Tour for those who like to travel on a tight budget. So I'm pleased to tell you that Cosmos Tours, a division of industry leader Globus, has announced a 17-Day "China Dynasty" package that includes stays in Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai, and Xian. In addition to special activities like "bowling for dollars" along the top of the Great Wall, there are a number of special activities like a cruise on the Li Jian River. The package including decent accommodations, daily breakfast and seven

Churchill & Turen Ltd.
Copyright 1999 Churchill & Turen Ltd.
www.traveltruth.com
1-800-445-7979

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

lunches, three flights within China, and a comprehensive sightseeing program with private guides, is priced at \$1,899 which is just about \$110 per day. If you want to include airfare, figure the total tour cost at approximately \$3400. That's an amazing price for a seventeen-day vacation run by a reputable organization.

* * * *

Are you headed to Disneyworld this summer? I hope you are, because I like to help the Disney company whenever I can because of my affinity for the "little guy" in business. Who knows, when Walt is eventually "de-iced" he may wake-up to discover that he owns everything in the USA except for certain sections of California which will belong to Bill Gates.

Anyway, how do you save money visiting the giant rodent's place? There are three things I want you do if you're traveling with the kids and you're on a budget. First, make sure you have a copy of "The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World". It's filled with strategies and sage advice designed to help you get the most out of your stay. Each of the attractions is evaluated and specific plans of attack including "best times to visit" are offered. Remember, going to the Magic Kingdom is war, and you need to be prepared.

Secondly, I 'd suggest that you stay "off property". You will find that several of the on-site properties are rather far away from the attractions. The actual "off-sight" hotels, just beyond the front gate, have prices that are 20-40% lower than comparable properties on the grounds but far away from the action.

Finally, be sure to order a free booklet called the Magicard which is put out by the Orlando Tourism people. The booklet has discount coupons for many of the better-known attractions such as Sea World and at restaurants such as "The House of Toast" and "Goofy's Gyros". Call 800-551-0181 to get your complimentary copy.

* * * *

If you're traveling to Venice this summer, I must appraise you of a very serious situation. The Gondoliers Association has advised its members to refrain from singing and some are refusing to talk with visitors. They are taking this action because the government has decided that their singing places them in the job category of "freelance musicians". As such, they have been asked to pay into a state pension fund for entertainers.

This has, as you might imagine, caused a good deal of gesticulated discussion on corners surrounding the Piazza San Marco. Italian gondoliers have always preferred singing when the mood strikes, and these days, the mood rarely strikes for less than eighty or ninety dollars.

Several years ago, Angela and I set out from a tributary beside the Grand Canal on a starlight night in Venice. It was the kind of evening that Robert Browning had in mind when he wrote "In a Gondola". We asked our oarsman to sing and he smiled back at us, huddled under a think blanket in the cool night air. Then he inserted a cassette tape of Mario Lanza singing O Solo Mio. "To sing", he explained, is very, very expensive.

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

Copyright 1999 Churchill & Turen Ltd.

www.traveltruth.com

1-800-445-7979

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

Nowadays, when they aren't striking, the gondoliers rarely sing. Instead, they converge in flotillas of eight or ten boats and share the cost of an accordionist and a local singer. The *baracoli* from the Katherine Hepburn movie *Summertime* are not to be found. And the romance that was Venetia, is now just another political "discorso"

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

Copyright 1999 Churchill & Turen Ltd.

www.traveltruth.com

1-800-445-7979