

ERIC WIEHARDT AWS·NWS

Thrills of Traveling

I would like to share with you the joys of traveling. The artist's life is glamour ridden, right?

My flight from Astoria to the Portland Airport the night before was uneventful other than I was the only one in the plane and the copilot had to go over all the safety instructions for me. I was tempted to ask him to repeat it for me, but thought better as my life was in his hands.

Once arriving in Portland, I snapped off the arm on my eyeglasses. I safely stored my glasses in my luggage to fix when I arrived in Florida. I woke up at 3:45 to catch my plane in Portland, OR. Our large plane was stuck with icing problems on the east coast, so they gave us a smaller plane. I was lucky to get on as I was one of the last they gave a seat to: in the very back next to the toilets where no reclining was possible. Sitting next a pilot hitching a ride home; I learned about his fascination with the screen that tells how fast we were going, temperature outside, barometric pressure, and our direction. I think watching Laverne and Shirley would be more interesting.

Since the airlines charge now for check-in luggage, more passengers are bringing carry-on, and consequently there is not a whole lot of overhead bin space, especially for the last ones on like me. So under the seat went my backpack. 4 1/2 hours with no leg space makes for a very long flight.

My personal luggage was sent to Monroe, Alabama. I guess the airlines felt that Monroe is a lot like Melbourne: both have gators. So with my crooked glasses on, I talked to the ticket agent about getting my luggage back. Luckily I brought my carry on art supplies and my portfolio made it.

Thankfully, the very sweet desk clerk at my hotel offered toiletry items, after I told her my dilemma. I gratefully accepted them and then she offered me a comb. Hmmm, I was a little afraid to look in the mirror thinking there must have been a reason for the offer. Was not sure about the women's deodorant but the desk clerk assured me that the fragrance was not Lilac but Fresh Scent.

Since I was in Florida, imagine my surprise to see snow on palm trees. Evidently they set all kinds of records during my time there. I wonder if they duck hunt down there.

My Demo went well with over 80 people there. It was a good enthusiastic crowd.

My students did very well, with great enthusiasm. A couple of them seemed to be a little distracted, though. I could see it in their eyes; I imagined they were wondering, "Now how long has he been wearing those clothes?" And "Why does he have his glasses strapped to his head with masking tape? Is this a Northwest fashion statement?" Can you believe anyone would think that way?

Happy ending to my trip, I was reunited with my luggage the next day. The workshop and the students were just wonderful, and when I arrived home in Washington, it was warmer than in Florida.

Professionally Yours,
Eric