

And they think using a cell phone when we drive is unsafe?

Boy, those Northwest Airlines pilots sure put things into perspective, didn't they?

Insistent that they hadn't been asleep but rather were playing on their laptops as they overflowed the Twin Cities airport by as much as 150 miles (more like 90 miles), they've presented a whole new electronic device to ban while driving.

The whole story is a bit bizarre. Flying between Denver and Minneapolis/St. Paul frequently, my wife and I have a pretty good idea what time we're supposed to land - in either direction.

And the flight attendants work the cabin like crazy when the plane is within about 20 minutes of landing. They pick up the plastic cups and empty pop cans and it's a pretty big and busy production. They know as well or better than passengers where they are in-flight and how long it should be until touchdown.

Much of the activity in the cabin is triggered by signals but clean-up prior to landing is done on timing. If the plane is going to be delayed in a holding pattern, they don't hassle you about emptying your cup or throwing away your pop can. Seat back and tray table warnings come from

signals. "Cleared for takeoff - landing."

The pilots had their license revoked but their union is appealing that decision. If they missed communications from the ground and other planes, would they have heard the radar going off when they flew into the path of another aircraft? It seems like having their licenses revoked is small penalty for such reckless behavior.

Minneapolis/St. Paul airport is one of the busiest in the U.S. It ain't Cheyenne. If the pilots were on auto pilot, the course should have taken them right over the Cities. That area is so busy that there are two airports - one for international flights, charters, etc., and the main terminal for domestic. Both use the same runways. When you fly over the Twin Cities in either daytime or at night, it is pretty obvious there's something very large below.

On the other hand, flying at 600 mph, it took only about nine minutes to get to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, which is where they were supposed to have realized what they had done. And because they didn't reduce speed for approach, the passengers were probably only minutes late to their landing - which they reached safely. But, the outcome could have been disastrous.

Where was this flight crew when I used to fly a lot?

How does Southwest do so well?

Having never flown on the general admission seating airline, it must be that their profitability is based solely on lower cost of operation - not on customer satisfaction and fuller loads.

When I used to fly quite frequently, one of the great annoyances on a flight was often a small child screeching or crying. Understanding that they have the same pressure build-up in their smaller heads but not knowing what they can do about it as an adult does - gum, finger, popping ears, etc., I'd just have to grin and bear it.

On a recent Southwest Airlines flight, a mother and son were removed from a flight because the 2 year-old was hollering "Go, Plane, Go!" and "I want Daddy!"

I guess the issue was that the kid could talk. He said words. Loudly. Had he just screamed incessantly without putting words to his misbehavior, the plane would have taken off, the lack of oxygen in the cabin would have knocked the little guy out and everyone would have gotten to San Jose a little sooner.

The little boy was an experienced flyer and his mother said he always settled down once the plane took off and she could feed him. Sounds reasonable. But this crew wasn't waiting. Like a stern school teacher, when they said "Silence!"

by God, they meant Silence!

In the Old Days, there were airplanes that I boarded and thought about screaming "I want Daddy!" myself. The commuter planes, like those in and out of Cheyenne, were particularly challenging. Once, on a commuter flight from Newark to Avoca (Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, PA), a little old lady was walking to the plane on the tarmac and, when she first laid eyes on the crop duster we were to board, asked, "Is that our plane?" I think I recall her screaming, "I want Daddy." Maybe not.

After pulling away from the gate and taxiing toward takeoff with the little boy hollering, the pilot returned to the gate and dumped the mother and son. The boy's father was awaiting their arrival in San Jose and didn't know they'd been discarded. The woman stayed another night in Amarillo (Amarillo, Texas, for heaven's sake!) and was without her luggage or necessities for the boy. Their luggage stayed on the plane and was not off-loaded when she and her son were evicted.

As barbaric as Southwest's action, I have to admit that when I was a frequent flier, I did suggest to a fellow passenger or two that they should have a smoking section, a nonsmoking section and a crying kid's section. I was only joking, though. Or was I? Airlines used to offer service. Seriously, they really did. And service was great. Now they pay damages.

Shoveling two feet of global warming

Every time there is a snowstorm or global warming conferences have to be cancelled because of a blizzard, I am reminded of how much money Al Gore has made from his professed belief that the climate changes (fluctuations) are man-made. It's been a profitable position.

After the recent snowstorm in Cheyenne, while I was shoveling all the global warming off my sidewalk and driveway, I wish I had had the doofus beside me, wielding another shovel with thirty pounds of global warming on it.

Within two days after the end of the snowfall, the sun had taken most of the evidence away. That must be the warming.

Actually, that is weather as we've known it for centuries. Cycles of hot and cold temperatures. Cycles of drought and flooding. Cycles of rain and no rain, snow and no snow.

Does a winter with little snowfall in Cheyenne mean the globe is warming and that is why there is no snow? And, when great amounts of snow fall, does that mean something different?

Those who desperately want to stay in the limelight, like Al Gore, using the subject of global warming as his hook, have an explanation for every weather condition - for every weather pattern.

The Nobel Prize he won a couple years back for something or other was pretty well put into perspective with Barack Obama winning the Nobel Peace Prize. The award no longer has any validity. Talking about doing something has transplanted into actually doing something. Both Gore and Obama have won what once was the ultimate prize by talking about accomplishing something, not actually accomplishing something.

Just like the brand new *Children's Health* magazine naming Cheyenne as the 8th best place in the country to raise a family, these recognition bestowers can name anybody to anything. That comes with their right to make fools of themselves.

Some would argue that warmer temperatures contribute to heavier snowfall. While that is true, the recent late-October snowstorm in Cheyenne wasn't aided by warm temperatures. It was very cold when this snow fell.

"Experts" differ on the issue of global warming. Some with credentials that do not include diploma mill degrees are convinced that deodorant aerosol cans have caused something bad to happen to the ozone level and that global warming has been caused by not having a binding policy on carbon sequestration, whatever that means.

How much of a factor are the additional zillion people that populate the earth? In 1950, there were about 2.6 billion people on earth. In 2010, there will be nearly three times that - about 6.85 billion.

In Minnesota, during the "real" energy crisis of thirty years ago, school district officials decided to close schools for a week in late February to conserve fuel. What they found out is that it took more fuel to heat empty buildings than it did ones with students. Bodies give off heat. Perhaps if Al Gore could roll back times to when his hair style was in vogue and the world's population was less than 3 billion, global warming would not be an issue. Or, issue roll-on deodorant sticks to do whatever that will do for the ozone layer.

How many more times will we all be shoveling global warming this winter? How many more global warming conferences will be cancelled because of blizzards?



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