

Mrs. Herald busted for trying to take a knife on the plane!

We spent New Year's in our Homeland, the Twin Cities area and northern Wisconsin, with our daughter and son-in-law and three of our nearly perfect grandchildren. We have five in all.

While the weather was late-December, early-January typical for that part of the country, one day of rain was a bit unusual. The temperature that day stayed at 38° so the rain didn't freeze and create havoc on the two-lane roads we both took - in separate directions with different destinations - in rural northern Wisconsin.

The youngest of those Minnesota grandchildren is 12 and Christmas isn't what it was a few years ago. So, they agreed to wait to open gifts from us (and we would open their gifts to us) until we could gain a quorum of the two older kids who worked and our son-in-law who agreed to work the holidays for a nice pay premium. He works for 3M so you can imagine what that premium was.

Finally, about five days into our week-long stay, we had all three of the grandchildren and our daughter together one evening so decided to open the exchanged gifts. With great excitement as thousands of dollars in cash and prizes changed hands, my wife came to the gift from a younger sister. They exchange gifts. We don't do similar with all other sibling. There were just too many of them. I had eight sibling (three are now deceased) and she has six. With marriages, that is a lot of gifts.

I didn't pay attention to the gift her sister had given. It was probably offered to me but I was too busy with my own bounty - I couldn't be bothered with some household trinket that was intended just for her. So I had no idea what the gift was.

Until. Until we went through airport security at the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport on our return to Cheyenne.

Which brings up an interesting tidbit of information. There are two major airport terminals in Minneapolis/St. Paul (actually Bloomington, Minnesota). There

has long been the main terminal, the Charles Lindbergh Terminal (because Lindbergh spent much of his childhood in Little Falls, Minnesota) and there is the second terminal, the Hubert H. Humphrey Terminal, which is used for charter flights and Southwest Airlines, among other users. They are on opposite sides of the same runways. When I went to the rental car counter on arrival, the guy told me that, upon return, to watch for the signs for "Terminal 1." That is what the former Lindbergh terminal is now called. He told me the Lindbergh estate didn't allow use of his name any longer. To be consistent, because Minnesota realizes there are a lot of visitors from the Dakotas and Nebraska, the Humphrey Terminal was changed to, drum roll please, "Terminal 2". Clever.

Now, back to this story. The delay in the screening line was lengthy because United is no factor in the Cities and they and TSA have no employees to do check-ins or security screening. I went through the regular routine - emptied coins, comb, shoes, coat, belt, etc., into totes to travel through the x-ray machine. Computers have to be removed from the bag and placed flat in a tote. No problem. I went through without setting off any alarms (in spite of not removing a ballpoint pen and reading glasses from my shirt pocket which was under my sweater - this was Minnesota, friends! Layers.). I cleared the other end and re-dressed and looked around for my wife. She was off to the side with a German prison camp guard, appearing to be answering questions. I walked over and asked what was happening. What was happening is the gift given her by her sister was the knife shown below with a cutting board. Not being a real terrorist or plane hijacker, my wife didn't think to put it into a checked bag (at \$23 each). Eventually, the camp matron walked Mrs. Herald to a bank office in the terminal where they graciously mailed the weapon to us in Cheyenne. No charge.

I often nap on the plane. Not this flight. I was trapped in a window seat next to a woman who had tried to smuggle an 8" serrated blade knife aboard our flight.

The mayor has the right to be wrong

At least, he has the authority.

To be wrong.

Voters are often surprised to learn that the person they chose for an elective office makes decisions far differently than they expected when they voted for him/her. Or that the judgment of one elected tends not to conform to what they thought would be exhibited. That's politics.

They've seen this mayor delay enforcement of a cell phone ban that the governing body had approved, with him voting in favor, longer than is allowed by city code or state statute. His attorney, who also has been a major disappointment, believes the mayor has the authority to make all decisions affecting the City. All. Even to the point of overriding legislative action taken by the city council and himself acting as the governing body.

Voters also watched as the mayor, who many believed was a compassionate and fair fellow, terminated a number of City employees even though employees as a group had offered to take unpaid furlough days to avoid the termination of their fellow employees.

His latest action, involving the trees on the east side of Lions Park between the tiny body of water called a "lake" in this area and Central Avenue, took an interminable time to make a decision. It was a decision the city council should have been involved in but they chose to abdicate their positions to the mayor to avoid public confrontation and criticism.

So, the mayor was left on an island of what was bound to be public opposition and, in spite of the WANG and the airport manager offering "affidavits" as to how the trees affected air operations in and out of Cheyenne and posed a great danger to any man, woman and child wanting to utilize the new, temporary air service

provided by the nomad carrier, American Eagle, Rick just could not decide the fate of those 46 trees. He went sleepless.

Month after agonizing month, the ANG C-130s and AE's Embraer ERJ-140's flew in and out of Cheyenne without incident. During the hottest days of summer, from July 15 through the end of August, AE flew the passengers who wanted to take their single route path to Dallas / Fort Worth.

The mayor just couldn't decide. Should the trees stay, as many residents wanted, or should they be cut down, as the Chamber-types demanded? Residents provided enough information to dispute the contentions of the ANG and American Eagle but the Chamber-types are the ones Rick had lunch with for years when he was with Cheyenne Light and those he wants to continue to dine with as mayor.

Did he ask the following questions of the WANG? How long have those trees presented an operational problem for pilots of the departing C-130s and why didn't you bring this to the attention of the Airport Board or City government a long time ago? How much public money did you waste by flying with light fuel loads because of the trees? Didn't you think you had a responsibility, a duty, to ask for those trees to be removed a long time ago if you really could not leave Cheyenne with a full fuel load and the maximum cargo load the plane would then carry?

Those who opposed destruction of one of Cheyenne's most precious natural resources, mature trees, could not accept the fact that a mayor could not be persuaded by the facts against cutting the trees. They were new to this game. This game of politics. They couldn't wrap their arms around the "it's who takes the position, not what the position is, that matters." The heavily fined American Eagle will continue their flights for how long? An office pool starting point might be Fall.

