

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: More Musings

By Stephen Somerville

Before this column returns to the local themes of people, politics and public affairs, below are some additional unconnected, stream-of-conscious and (most likely) incoherent musings and observations regarding the late spring season in Aurora:

My son loves playing house league soccer in Aurora and is looking forward to playing in the local 'tournament' this weekend in Aurora. I put the quotes around the word 'tournament' because it is really a misnomer. My wife told me that the players younger than 12-years-old play two games on Saturday and have their pictures taken on Sunday.

I recall that in past years, the younger tykes could potentially play a semi-final and a final if they won their preliminary round games.

I wish that the play-off format was still in place. One year, Ryan's team squeaked out a win in the semi-final and played in the final where they lost in a close game but it was great. There were lot of fans watching and the kids seemed to be thoroughly enjoying themselves.

Aurora soccer officials should contemplate bringing this back for the younger ones. Since the children need to be here for both days on the weekend, why not?

There was a story in the business press this week about the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which represents 250 airlines around the world, trying to come up with optimal dimensions for carry-on bags.

Since most every airline now charge checked bag fees, people are trying to carry on even more luggage which results in jammed overhead bins and many passengers (such as yours truly) having no room for their carry-one.

A couple of weeks ago I was travelling back from Calgary. The flight itself takes just under four hours. It was a packed flight. Although my seat was only about half way back in the plane, my ticket showed 'Zone 5' for boarding, Zone 5 being the highest designated zone.

I would therefore be one of the last passengers to board the flight.

Prior to boarding, the Air Canada service representative made it clear that the flight was fully booked and that the Air Canada workers would be strictly enforcing the edict regarding the size and number of carry-on luggage.

The Air Canada employee also stated a number of times over the intercom that they would offer to tag luggage right there, and you could get it upon your arrival. In this way, passengers would not be inconvenienced by having to go all the way back to security to check their bags. A few people took advantage of this service.

Your columnist always tries to reserve an aisle seat as my legs get stiff sitting for an extended duration. I was not able to do this as I booked this flight on short notice. So, I had a window seat.

I was one of the last people to board and there was absolutely no room for me to store my carry-on, which consisted of a slim suit garment bag and a computer bag. I had to try and stuff this under the seat but it would not work.

So, there I was for four hours, with my carry on beside my legs, forcing me into an uncomfortable position.

Although I much prefer the aisle, I have no problem with sitting in the window seat or middle seat. I totally accept that this can happen if you book your flight close to the departure date.

What I am incredibly mad about it that I paid the same cold cash as my fellow travelers and I did not get treated in an equitable fashion.

The IATA has come up with, according to the newspaper report, 'optimal dimensions for carry-on bags, arguing it's time for universal rules.'

'The new size would be 55 cm tall by 35 cm wide by 20 cm deep, or 21.5 inches by 13.5 inches by 7.5 inches. The change means that theoretically everyone should have a chance to store their carry-on bags on board aircraft of 120 seats or larger.'

That is a good idea, but the real solution is a lot simpler, and it can be used to treat everyone fairly; whether you are the first person on the plane or the last.

Each seat should have a corresponding designation in the overhead compartment. The volume of space in this area is specifically for the seat holder, unless they want to let another passenger use it.

The airlines can insert plastic holders into the overhead to divide up the area between the requisite seat holders.

If a passenger brings too many carry-ons so that they do not fit into their overhead designated area, then they can try and stow them below their seat or sit uncomfortably for the duration of the flight.

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