

## *Travel via the Moon*

Hard to believe, but the airlines have found something else to charge more fees for....how about a charge to board the plane with first class (no...you can't go before them) passengers. And then you get to sit and wait until the pilot decides it's time to go! Or how about paying \$30 extra so you don't have to wait at the baggage-waiting area for your bags....you just spent hours on the plane and now you can't wait another 10-15 minutes for your luggage???....and yes, now you can spend alittle more and you can be in a shorter line to go thru "security". Makes you want to rush off to your hometown airport just to take advantage of these neat new rules/fees. Yea, right! A recent survey of 2000 passengers found that uncomfortable seats, insufficient leg-room, flight delays and obnoxious passengers were at the head of the list of complaints along with the worst fees including checked baggage, carry-on bag fees (how about, insufficient room for carry-on bags) and upgrades for better seats. You can call it a "fee", but, how about the charges for food (not a big variety offered) you get on the plane....and remember, no more "cash" to pay for that tiny sandwich, or cheese&crackers – only credit cards. Makes you wander....are we "progressing" over the last decade?!?

But this column is about *travel* and if we want to travel and get there quick, we have to fly (it's hard to drive to Europe/Asia) so we have to put up with some of these "inconveniences". You can make it alittle more comfortable though if you turn *left* when you get on the plane and sit up front....no baggage charge for one or even two or more bags, seats are quite comfortable and on many airlines those seats become beds for overnite flights with your own TV and/or DVD going, not to mention the free drinks and some really outstanding meals, including an unbelievable breakfast...and best of all, you don't have to pay "extra fees" for these neat things. That non-stop from LAX to LHR (London Heathrow) in first-class is just alittle over \$6000 one way (vs: \$1200 for the folks sitting in the back of the plane), so you can see, it's worth it! Of course, you may run out of money and can't leave the terminal area to see any of Europe, or may not have enough to buy a ticket back home, but don't worry about the nickel-dime stuff.

We've mentioned this before....**call your credit card company BEFORE leaving** (the 800 number on the back of your card) and *tell them the dates and countries you will be going to* if you're planning to use the ATM's (the best exchange-rates) for foreign cash and also for charging. If you don't call them, you may find they **stopped** your card and it won't work until you make a long-distance call to talk to them. Additionally, *some cell-phones* may also get shut off if they see phone calls coming from foreign countries....like credit cards, call them too and tell them about your up-coming trip.

And on this *St.Paddy's Day* this is being written, what better place to talk about than *Dublin*. Some of us have to suffer and go to **Ireland** to play softball with the US team. After 4-5 trips you find that it is always an interesting country to visit. Of course on this day, everyone is *Irish*, so looking up where relatives came from or just playing tourist, it makes for a really memorable trip that you will be telling relatives, neighbors and friends about for years to come. If you like walking, driving, museums, interesting buildings and cities/towns....they're all here. *Don't* plan on a lot of freeways or 4-6 lane highways...except for Dublin, there are none! Want to see crystal made? Don't miss the *Waterford* factory in down-town **Waterford**. And you will never see an advertisement in your local papers, but **don't miss going to a pub** at night to hear the "locals" sitting, singing and listening to Irish music. It's probably hard to believe, but the Irish are like **sailors**....they do *NOT* drink. They're in the local pubs just to hear music.

Airline prices are at their highest of the year **now**, so hold off on buying those tickets until Sept-Oct; but in the meantime, start planning that vacation trip for fall....planning is ½ the fun! You deserve it.....*enjoy!*