

Opinion

Yo, Delta! Stevie's going to shut you down

OK. That's it. I've had it. No more. I hereby announce that air travel anywhere near Christmas should be made illegal.

I don't just speak for myself on this one. This one is for the countless millions of people who clutter the skies for the last two weeks of December and the first two weeks of January every year.

The problem? Everybody wants on the same plane. The airlines, always in a hurry to make every dollar they can, overbook the flight.

Then, for whatever reason, the countless few who arrive late for whatever reason (traffic, parking, stupidity) mob the front desk begging for somebody else to be later than they were.

What's stupid about stand-bys? If you shell out \$200 or more for a non-refundable, non-transferable ticket to go

somewhere, are you going to be silly enough to not show up? These people hope so.

The best thing about stand-bys is that they make the plane late. Once all the normal, regularly booked passengers are on board, they have to make a head count to see if there's room. If there is, then the people on stand-by get on and try to put their carry-on baggage in the overhead compartment that has long since been filled.

Here begins a quest known as the Search For the Half-Empty (or Half-Full — some stand-bys are incurably optimistic) Overhead Baggage Compartment.

It goes like this: The first stand-by on the plane finds a seat, then goes down the aisle looking for a baggage compartment with little or no luggage in it. What

usually happens is that some decent, up-standing, non-tardy person has put their coat in the compartment.

Said coat, being soft and light, offers no resistance when the four foot by two

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Senior Staff Writer

foot soft-sided garment bag finds every little nook and cranny in the compartment. The result? A coat that a homeless person wouldn't be caught wearing.

After The Quest has ended, this person walks back to his or her seat, going against the flow of traffic of the other stand-bys who are still looking for their seats and have yet to start their own Quest.

Finally, everybody sits down and the

stewardesses give that awful example of safety devices. "Please don't forget to fasten your seatbelt. Our studies show that, should we be in a head-on collision, your seat belt will prevent you from running helter-skelter to the exit before we go below 10,000 feet."

They also offer this gem: "In the event of the loss of cabin pressure (a seemingly rare occurrence until recently) an air mask will drop down in front of you."

They should stop here, because if I couldn't breathe and anything remotely resembling an air mask appeared, I don't think I would have much trouble figuring it out.

The plane takes off, and they close the curtain to first class. They don't want the lower class to revolt when they see the niceties offered to first-class fliers.

I've heard rumors that with today's threats of terrorism, they have cyanide pills ready for first-class patrons in case they don't want to feel any pain when the plane hits the ground.

Then they feed you. Airline food redefines the "pot-luck" dinner. In this case, only two people show up with food, and one of them can't cook.

"Excuse me, sir? Would you like the Stewed Scandinavian Shrimp Tentacles or cold cereal?"

It's always amazed me how they can fit meals for over 100 people in that little cart although I can never find enough room to put my groceries in the refrigerator.

After eating, you sit and wonder about the nutritional values of shrimp tentacles. You slowly drift off to sleep with this happy thought.

You wake up with the Captain (probably Kangaroo) telling you how long the landing has been delayed.

Finally, you land. This is an anxious time for everybody. The stewardesses tell you to leave your seatbelt on until the plane has come to a complete stop

and Captain Kangaroo has turned off the "FASTEN SEAT BELTS" sign.

Yeah, right. The plane touches down and people are in the aisles getting their bags. Oops! Probably should have waited until we were through braking.

The best thing about carry-on bags is that you don't have to worry about the airline losing them. Anything you check in is fair game. But let's say you get your bags all right. What has happened? You're home (or hopefully wherever you wanted to be).

By outlawing Christmas air travel we could accomplish several things:

- Save a lot of money.
- Give the airlines time to check their planes over just a little more thoroughly.
- Put the terrorists out of business. They wouldn't even be able to get here without planes. If they are here, what are they going to do? Hijack taxis?
- "Take me to Cuba!"
- "You gotta be kiddin', Mac! Get outta here!"
- Allow flight crews to stay home and think of new recipes to serve in-flight.
- Allow everybody to stay home and watch more football and cologne commercials on television.
- Prevent more family fights by separating family members, thus making this a kinder, gentler nation.
- Send packages by mail so that inanimate objects would be late instead of humans. Maybe if everybody spent the money from plane tickets on stamps, the Postal Service wouldn't have to run commercials and there would be time for more of those cologne commercials.
- Prevent silly columns like this one from ever appearing again. (I knew this one would meet with your approval.)

Steve Masters is a senior journalism major, senior staff writer, and guest columnist for The Battalion.

SEE NO
Libyan
Chemical Weapons
Plant



HEAR NO
Libyan
Chemical Weapons
Plant



SMELL NO
Libyan
Chemical Weapons
Plant



MARGULIES
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Anyone need to use my automatic flosser?

Another Christmas, another bunch of gadget gifts from my relatives and friends.

I'm not certain why I always get gadgets for Christmas, but it might have to do with the fact that all my relatives and

Lewis Grizzard
Columnist

friends consider me to be a helpless person.

Otherwise, why would any person give me a device that is supposed to make flossing my teeth less complicated?

I'll admit I'm still not sure which fingers to wrap the floss around, but I eventually would have figured that one out.

However, I now have this thing that sort of looks like a slingshot, and you wrap the floss around it and there's a handle.

So, now I don't have to remember which fingers to use when I'm flossing, and if I ever needed to go out and kill a

squirrel for dinner, I suppose I could load up my flosser with a couple of rocks and go stalk around some trees until I have found some suitable prey.

And speaking of food, I suppose my friends and relatives think I don't know where any good seafood restaurants are either.

I got a pocket fisherman this year. I suppose if I can't kill any squirrels with my flosser, and if I happen to be passing any major bodies of water, I could park my car, take my pocket fisherman out of my pocket and try to cast for a few fried flounders or blackened redfish.

I almost forgot about the automatic toothbrush I got to go along with my flosser. You plug it into the wall, put it into your mouth, and the automatic toothbrush does just about everything else for you.

At first, I had a problem with my automatic toothbrush.

I'd put toothpaste on it, switch it on, and it made these violent motions that would spray the toothpaste all over the room.

I told the person who gave me the gift about the problem I was having with it.

"What you have to do is put the toothbrush in your mouth before you switch it on," she explained. "That way you don't spray the toothpaste all over the bathroom."

I would have figured that out eventually, too.

I also received a device that will give me hot lather with which to shave myself.

It sits there with my flosser and my automatic toothbrush, and I plug it into the wall and I have got some hot lather.

The neighbors will probably find out about this and will always be over asking, "May I borrow a cup of hot lather?" — especially the newlyweds across the street, who are really into reading the letters to Penthouse magazine.

I also received a radio for my shower this Christmas. So I can keep up on any late-breaking news while I'm washing between my toes.

I also received an electric shoehorn, another thing that follows me around to see where I put my car keys and then

tells me where they are when I forget where I put them, a mechanical banana peeler, a partridge in a pear tree that gives the time and can be used as a lamp, a security system that goes under my bed and sounds off if there's a three-eyed monster under there, and another beeper that goes off if I walk outside my house having neglected to zip my fly.

All I didn't get that I needed was a machine that's smart enough to figure out how the video tape player I bought works.

Maybe next year.

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BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

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The Battalion

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