

View From the Right

CHAPTER 6, THE P. PHOGG AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 HOURS MEMORIAL TROPHY CUP DASH, AND WORLD RALLYE by Barry S. Berg

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I probably got the idea late at night in a hallucinogenic fit of indigestion consuming some very weird pizza. I am not sure. For weeks before, people on hearing my plan to circumnavigate the globe would ask me why? "Because it's there," while being somewhat a flip answer, is probably closer to the truth than I would care to estimate. When I was very young, and just starting to read real books on my own, my mother gave me a book to read. It was Royal Road to Romance by Richard Halliburton. I loved the book, and read it several times. Halliburton in the 1930's hitchhiked around the world. He later published an account of his travels in the aforementioned book. It was he who gave me my wanderlust. From the time I was seventeen, I have traveled as often as I could. I have crossed every continent but Antarctica, seen every ocean and sea. I have even sailed a few of them. I have been all over the world, but never around it. So you see, "...because it's there" is not too far off.

I have the good fortune to work for Northwest Airlines, a global air carrier, who in conjunction with KLM, Royal Dutch Airways, literally spans the globe. In the vernacular of a cheap mystery novel, I had the motive and the means. After I decided to take on this task, several things were happening, and my quirky sense of humor came into play. I read and contribute to a on-line newsletter on the inter-net (the information super highway) that concerns itself with the sport of automobile rallies. At the time the major topic of discussion was the realization that the list consisted of a truly international audience. At the same time Northwest announced that it was the number one airline for on time performance for the fourth year in a row. Now a rallye is a competitive event where the object is to arrive exactly on time, to the nearest six tenths of a second. I thus got the idea to make this little venture a rallye as well. As I said, a rallye is a competitive sport. Now anyone can buy a ticket, and sit on an airplane and travel around the world. As an airline employee, I travel on a space available basis. If there is an open seat, I may occupy it, under certain circumstances. You are, however, never absolutely sure you are going, until the aircraft backs away from the gate. This uncertainty, adds a significant challenge to the undertaking.

The image of Around the World in Eighty Days came to mind. Can I make it in 80 hours -- there's a challenge. Since Northwest had an excellent on time record, I needed something to make this more than going for a ride. To add a little spice, I decided to go at the peak travel time, when open seats should be hard to come by. I would have to "stay on my toes," if I was to make my target. I was now an active participant, having to evaluate the entire trip constantly, reacting to passenger loads, weather, and the thousand other things that can upset an airline traveler's plans.

I sometimes volunteer some spare time to help out at the Minneapolis/St. Paul (MSP) Terminal. Children between the ages of 5 and 16, who are traveling alone, for a small nominal charge can obtain an escort. These children are referred to as Unaccompanied Minors or UM's (pronounced uhmmzzz). UM's are always under the supervision of an adult. Most of the time, my volunteering is to pick up the child at the plane, and escort them, and settle them down on their connecting flight. We try to make the trip as pleasant for them as we can, and I like the kids(at least most of them). If however, their layover in MSP is longer than one hour, we have a small waiting room fitted out for the UM's, called naturally the UM Room. It's stocked with a TV and some videos, toys, and children's books, and magazines where they can occupy themselves under supervision. Literally, tens of thousands of UM's transit through MSP each year, and a large number use the UM Room. Needless to say the toys in the UM Room take a beating.

At Northwest, this escort service is performed by our Quality Service Agents (QSA) or Q's as they like to call themselves. By my volunteer work, I have gotten to know the Q's well, and as usual in these situations, familiarity breeds contempt, or at least good nature razzing. I was helping out over the Thanksgiving Holiday, when I mentioned to one of them that I needed to get a form to purchase my tickets for this journey as long as I was at the airport. By the next day, the word had spread, and I was being teased -- a lot. I decided to do something worthwhile, and so suggested we try to raise some funds for toys in the UM Room. It was heartily accepted, and so *The P. Phogg Around the World in Eighty Hours Memorial Trophy Cup Dash and World Rallye* was conceived. The Q's and the Managers at MSP all were willing to contribute \$0.10, \$0.25, \$0.50, or \$1.00 US for each 1,000 miles I completed in under 80 hours.

My routing was to go from Minneapolis (MSP) to Toronto (YYZ), Detroit (DTW), Boston (BOS), Amsterdam (AMS), Kuala Lumpur (KUL). Singapore (SIN), Tokyo (NRT), Chicago (ORD), to MSP. Now those who have gone for their maps will realize that to go from Minneapolis to Toronto and to Detroit is actually going backwards. Why? Well I have some friends in Toronto, and I wanted to see them, if only for a couple of hours. Why Kuala Lumpur? One of the people I correspond with on the internet lives near KL, and we have never met, this would be a fine opportunity to do so. The night before I left the flight to Toronto filled up, and so with some reluctance I had to drop that leg.

On Saturday, December 17th, 1994 I began my journey. The night before, and as I drove to the airport, I was filled with some apprehension. Would I make it? If I missed any of three key flights there would be no recovery possible, and I would exceed 80 hours easily. According to one scenario I would miss the target by about two days. The thought of about 45 hours in an airplane made me slightly nauseous. I was prepared however. I brought two [Michael Crichton](#) novels, two [Anne McCaffery](#) novels and one [Isaac Asimov](#) novel to read. I boarded the plane at gate 33 in MSP, and settled into my seat. The door was closed at 17 DEC 94 11:29 AM CST, and my adventure began.

The flight from Minneapolis to Detroit was a non-event. I had no problem boarding the airplane, and the breakfast was very good. I should explain, should my gentle readers doubt my gastric integrity that one of the advantages of space available is that any space that is available counts. This does include first class. The order of determining who gets a first class seat is somewhat complex, and I won't dwell on it here. The flight lasted about an hour and a half, and breakfast made up a major part of the time. Fortunately I had a window seat; this allowed me to spend the time not consuming breakfast to watching the scenery go by. I prefer to do my observations at a slightly lower altitude (between 5,000 and 12,000 feet) but even at 35,000 feet I never tire of the view.

From the juncture of the Minnesota and Mississippi River Valleys, and the rolling expanse starting the Great Plains, we turned east. This part of the country was part of the land-grant system, and as such was surveyed to microscopic precision. What this means is everything is laid out on a grid with the primary lines running due north-south, and east-west. Most roads are oriented this way, as are most of the farm plats. Even the cultivation follows this rather rhythmic pattern. It is truly like a patchwork quilt. This year has been a very mild winter, with little snow. The land formed a patchwork of fields. Some were golden tan, where the crop was still left to stand. Other places black with fertile peat soil, and others with a fresh covering of white snow. Small towns dot the landscape in a pattern best described as ordered chaos. The landscape to the east and north was scraped and gouged by glaciers. The countryside is hilly, with roads that curve and twist finding the easy path from one crest to the next. To the south and west the land was the bed of an ancient sea of millennia past, and stretches onward for thousands of miles, of rolling flat land forming the great agricultural heartland of the United States.

Our plane turned North and East. The landscape of Wisconsin flowed past. Here were roads designed for a spring day, and the happy throaty growl of an MG-B running them like a puppy at play. Ahead was Lake Michigan, and the great metropolitan complexes of Milwaukee and Chicago slipping under our wing like so much flotsam in the wake of a passing ship. The landscape below is buried beneath the overcast, and the land is split from the burning blue of this ocean of air I am traveling. On the other shore, the hidden path we tread becomes more urban. We transition to the industrial heart of the United States, or rather the rust belt as it has become known. Beginning our descent, we break out of the ragged coal dust colored cotton. The landscape begins to take on more character as the details become visible. Soon we are floating over the factories of Detroit. We are but seconds from touchdown. I am One Hour 42 Minutes into this adventure and have covered 514 miles.

The afternoon begins to wane, I have an aisle seat, and the ground is obscured. I pick up a book, and begin to read. I am reading Disclosure, by Michael Crichton. As usual he has researched his material well. Although this is a slight departure from his previous books, he characterizes Hi-Tech Development Companies very well. Having spent most of my career in them, I smile with familiarity at his characterizations. I have been here before. The book becomes so involving, that my concentration is broken only by the Flight Attendant requesting that I put my seat back upright for landing. Before I know it we are on the ground in Boston but three minutes late. I have now covered 1,136 Miles in 4 Hours and 28 Minutes.

At Boston, I check in for standby to Amsterdam. The agent Joanne, stops to make some pleasant conversation, and inquires how long I will be staying in Amsterdam. I inform her that I am just passing through. She then inquired as to where my destination was, and I informed her Minneapolis. After a slight double take and upon finding out about the fund raising effort she made a contribution of her own toward the UM Room.

Everything was going very well, I was told that I probably would get First Class, or World Business Class at least. Then my worst fears arose. There was that terrible empty feeling in my gut when I heard those fearsome words that are the bane of all travelers. "Attention ladies and gentlemen, for Northwest Flight" It seems that the 2nd Officer's (flight engineer's) seat track broke, and he could not lock it into the FAA required position for takeoff.

This meant that the aircraft would be in violation of FAA regulations if it was flown in this condition. The flight was placed on decision, which meant that unless another aircraft could be found to replace this one, or a part was flown in and installed properly, the flight would be canceled. Barely six hours into my journey, and it might all come to an abrupt end. After what seemed a long time, actually only 15 minutes, the decision was made to ferry in another 747 from Minneapolis, to take this one's place. A flight crew had to be found at the last minute, and the 747 readied for the flight to Boston.

When a 747 with about 350 passengers gets into a situation like this it's tough on the four or five agents working the flight. Still my training as a QSA Helper was as valid in Boston as in Minneapolis. I asked the supervisor if they needed a hand, and spent the next hour and a half somewhat busily handing out meal vouchers. Finally, things mellowed down, and I went off to find something to eat myself. There wasn't much left by then, as the vendors at Boston Airport did not plan on dinner for 350.

So after a tough piece of cold pizza, I went back to the gate. Remember I am still standby, and there is still no guarantee I will get on this aircraft. Sure enough the call my name again, and onboard I go about 12:45 AM. I skipped the movie, and read for a while. It is getting harder to put the book down. Got about 4 hours sleep, and then up for breakfast. About 1 PM we turned south and east over Scotland towards Amsterdam. With one ocean behind me, I was getting to feel less apprehensive. So far, it was pretty easy. I clear Dutch Customs and Immigration, now having covered 4,585 miles 37 hours 25 minutes elapsed time.

By 2:30 PM I was on the train from Schipol Airport to Amsterdam. I had planned to spend the day in Amsterdam, a city I truly love. I was hoping there might be an afternoon concert at the Concertgebouw Concert Hall, or if not I would spend the day doing a little shopping, go to one of the Brownstones off Liedsepien, and spend some time at the Van Gogh Museum. Then maybe dinner at restaurant I know.

My other alternative is to go shopping in NeuwMarket, by some bread, and cheese, and go up to Rembrandtsplien, where the casinos are, or Museumplien and do some serious people watching.

This of course all falls by the wayside, as I don't get into town until 3:45. In addition it is cold and raining. Naturally the one thing I forget to pack is my umbrella. I walk the few blocks up DamRaacht to Dam Square where Amsterdam's major department store is located. The streets are bustling with Christmas Shoppers. After all Christmas is next week-end. The store is jammed. I find a reasonably priced umbrella, and leave, no small feat, as it's almost elbow to elbow. I have one other mission, to buy my niece a Hard Rock Cafe Tee shirt there. About 30 minutes later, tee shirt in hand, I decide I better eat, since I plan on sleeping for most of the next leg, if I am lucky. All of a sudden this wave overcomes me and I decide that I must have an Appfel Pannakoecken (Apple Pancake), and hot chocolate.

This is neither gourmand, nor Epicurean to say the least but it is hearty. I walked the streets of Amsterdam's shopping district for about an hour or so, just people watching. Then meandered to a little restaurant I know that serves Pannakoecken, and ordered my dinner. Warmed physically by the food, and spiritually by the city, I made my way back towards the Centraal Station. On the way I decided to stop in at one of the bars just across the canal from the station. They are not the most attractive places, but I decided that I wanted a smoke filled room of good camaraderie around me. So I dropped in and ordered another hot chocolate. By now it was getting dark and late. Time to go back to the airport. I return in time to stop at the duty free shops and buy chocolate. I was warned on pain of terrible penalty to my person by the Q's that I must bring back something for them, preferably with chocolate on it.

After shopping for chocolate, I proceed to the gate area. When I check in at the gate I am informed that there is a seat for me, but they may not be able to issue it as the flight maybe weight and balance restricted. This will happen to long flight segments, especially if extra fuel has to be carried because of adverse winds. There is a bar at the back of the gate area. I wander back there and wait. I have one option, which is to fly to Bangkok, but that flight is overbooked. If I don't make this flight, I have to wait two days to get out. Still if I have to be stuck somewhere, at least its Holland. As consolation it is a bit of a dent in the 20,000 plus miles I was putting on, so the kids would get something. Three cups of Hot Chocolate later, did I mention I like Hot Chocolate, the waiting room was near empty, when finally they called my name. I get to the desk, and they hand me a boarding pass.

This was the only leg, I really sweated. Not because I would not have gotten on the flight, but that I would have timed barred, that is, taken longer than allowable time, and therefore be disqualified. This to me was a rally, and I hate to DNF.ⁱⁱ It must be my competitive nature. Once on board, I get comfortable. Fortunately there is no one in the center seat in our row of three. One nice thing about Northwest and KLM International 747's is that they have a flight information system. When the monitors are not showing a movie, they show altitude, heading, speed, outside air temp, and a map which shows the aircraft's location and orientation to the countryside. I was able to monitor our position despite it being pitch black outside. The route of flight took us directly over Berlin, and then on through Poland, heading directly for Moscow.

This is a first for me; since it is the first time I have been behind what used to be the Iron Curtain. When I left the Army, I was because of my security clearance told I could not travel to an Iron Curtain Country for 10 years. Long after that restriction was passed, I still never traveled to one, I am not sure why. I feel a kind of giddy joy, maybe like a kid stealing apples from the neighbor's tree. It rather surprises me. After that passes, another feeling overwhelms me. It's hard to describe, kind of like completion, for I have reversed, in one respect my ancestor's path to the new world. I have, so to speak, for the first time stepped on the land that gave my father's father, and his before him, life. Were it not for this place, I would not be.

Just north of Minsk, we turned south and east near the town of Kaluga. I watched the lights of Moscow, on the horizon. Passing over Tula, Moscow begins to drift behind us now. The vast expanse of Russia now opens up, and we wrap ourselves in the blackness of a moonless night. I read for an hour or so, and finish Disclosure. I then turn toward the window and sleep.

I awake at 10 AM Kuala Lumpur time. We are over Pakistan. The sun is rising in the first clear sky I have seen since I have left. The grey of winter is dispelled, as I watch the sun climb out from behind the Himalayan Mountains. I have a friend who at this moment is visiting family in Lahore Pakistan. I check the flight display, and our track will take us right over the city.

The Punjab below is rugged. We break out of a peninsula of the Himalayan Mountains stretching as far as the eyes can see to the North and East towards Nepal. In the distance I think I can see the ridge where the Indian Sub-Continent has pushed the living granite of the Asian Continent towards the sky. The name has always struck a romantic chord in my soul, "The roof of the world."

Somehow the world seems smaller now. Places have touched me for no other reason, than they bore and nurtured friends and family. I have swept past them. Yet I in some small way touched them, and they me. I am changed now, for having made this journey. This roadway in the sky from my favorite and familiar Holland, past Moscow and Lahore is not only marked in memory. We leave behind a golden road, our morning sun painted contrail to mark our way...My royal road to romance. To the north still lies my last great adventure. To visit, that magic mysterious garden, surrounded and protected by the roof of the world, my last place of mystery and adventure. Unseen, but close enough to feel and touch it.

Now the broad flat of the Indian Subcontinent stretches below. It is reminiscent at this great height of my own Midwestern plains, but missing the patchwork quilt of farm fields. It seems more reminiscent of the western reaches of the Great Plains. I am halfway around the world, and for all the sense of connections I feel with these lands, they themselves carry me back to my native land, and in that thought I feel complete and anchored.

I begin to drift, and sleep. I awake as we turn south along the Malay Peninsula, I watch as the deep blue of the Bay of Bengal turns to the flaming blue of the sky, and then to the bright turquoise of the tropic seas. As we glide down the peninsula, the rugged backbone of the mountains, almost spine like separates one ocean from the other, and is alive in greenery.

We approach Kuala Lumpur, in the mist of the afternoon rain; I am reminded of sights and sounds I have not thought of in many years. I remember the thunderous roar of rain drops on a metal roof, and the damp smell of the afternoon, the air washed clean, and the bright warmth of the sunshine that follows a Monsoon. Those rains that you could almost set your watch by they were so regular. That was another time and another place, not to distant from where I am now.

Kuala Lumpur is much larger than I imagined. Modern skyscrapers reach out across the broad expanse composing the city. The fingers of the mountains that compose the backbone of the Malay Peninsula gives an undulating character to the city. Interlaced with the lush green of the tropics, are barren areas showing the red soil I remember from what was the Republic of Vietnam. Here and there high in the cool misty hills are the homes of the wealthy. They are easily distinguished by their large defined tracts, and swimming pools. A remnant of Malaysia's Colonial Heritage, I suppose.

The contoured tea farms sculpted into the mountains give an almost topographic look to the hills, as if a cartographer carved the lines of elevation into the real earth. The banana groves look as if the mountains were covered with some prickly moss spread out as a verdant carpet. Outside the airport staff is working in short sleeve shirts. A few hours ago, I was shivering in the winter rains of Europe, and now the tropic sun beckons. I was starting to breath easier now, only one more critical flight, from Singapore. I could recover from most anything else. I am just over halfway having covered 10,918 miles in 61 hours 40 minutes elapsed time.

There at the Airport I am met by Paul Russell his wife Yvonne and their son James. I had never met Paul, but corresponded with him thorough the Internet. How were we to recognize each other, well I have this jacket with patches I have collected over twenty some odd years of motor sports. In fact the jacket is rapidly becoming more patches than jacket. I informed Paul that I would be wearing it. They spotted me, about the same time I saw them, and we connected. Paul and Yvonne were very hospitable to me and I can not thank them enough for the time and effort they expended on my behalf.

First we drove around the city. We stopped at a Chinese Temple that overlooks the city, called the Thien Hou Temple. I was given an orientation from its roof top. The view was spectacular. Kuala Lumpur is a modern city that nestles against the ridge mountains that form the backbone of the Malay Peninsula. It is a sweeping panorama of modern skyscrapers, colonial style buildings with tile roofs, mosques, and the dense and intensely green one finds in the tropics of Asia. Malaysia is a major off shore producer for many hi tech companies, and the prosperity of this industrial bounty reflects in the condition of its citizens and real estate. In addition to being industrialized, Malaysia is also a major international agricultural exporter. Principle exports are palm oil and rubber, however, fruit, and tea are also major exports. We were discussing this fact at the temple, and I was asking what some of the fruit I had never seen except by picture was. Paul took the opportunity to discuss one particular fruit known as Durian, and his dislike for it. More about Durian later.

We then drove around the city, and out of it, towards Shah Alam, where Paul lives some 30 Kilometers out of Kuala Lumpur. Paul, Yvonne, and James drove me around Shah Alam, and we stopped at the main Mosque. It is a spectacular structure, modern with a classic middle eastern feel about it in brilliant white marble and deep blue tile. Nearby, major government buildings soar about 10 stories above the ground in concrete and tile roofed, while giving a modern clean line flavor to design resembling a typical Indonesian, House with upswept pitched roof at each end. I have since learned that this architecture is really identified with Northern Sumatra, the area directly across the Straights of Melaka, which is called "minangkabu". Paul and Yvonne invited me to their home to freshen up. They kindly offered me the use of their shower, and I was able to clean up and change clothes. We also signed onto the net, and I was able to send a message to the rally mailing list I belong to.

Everything went so smoothly, except for one faux pas. I inadvertently left a video tape of the 1994 Rallye Baie Des Challuers, and a bottle of Rye whiskey, that I had carried with me some place, but I cannot remember where. It seems that in Malaysia they don't have rallye videos and you can't find any Canadian Whiskey (Did I mention that Paul is an ex-pat Canadian?) Even if you could it's like \$50 a liter. I hope that whoever found my lost items certainly appreciated them.

Paul and Yvonne took me to a floating restaurant for dinner. It was beautiful looking out at the pond, and watching the tropical evening fall. As the evening sky darkened, the Mosque was lit and the white marble and azure glowed like a jewel in the night. The meal was excellent, even if I don't know what most of the food was called, since it was ordered in Malay. After dinner, we headed back to the airport.

I was scheduled to take a Malaysia Airlines Flight, but since I was standby, and they were overbooked, my chances were next to impossible. I went over to Singapore Airways, and they honored my ticket, but the next flight left one hour later than I had planned. I get on that flight, and bid farewell and thanked Paul, Yvonne, and James for their hospitality. James presented me with an original rendition he drew of the Mosque. It is prominently displayed on my refrigerator where all true artwork should be displayed. The flight from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore is a short one. I had barely gotten into the next book I was reading, when we were beginning our approach to Singapore. I have covered 11,126 miles in 68 hours 25 minutes elapsed time.

Paul had arranged for a friend of his, who I did not know to meet me in Singapore. Otto Rodusek was, I am sure, probably questioning the sanity of meeting some weird stranger at 10 PM. He had just come from working out at his club, and so we drove to his place. While he cleaned up I played with his cats, and watched CNN International to try and figure out what was happening in the world. We then drove down to Raffles Hotel. Raffles is an old British Colonial Hotel that I wanted to visit. It seems I came there about four years too late; they tore the place down, and rebuilt it. It still has the Colonial Style, and is as elegant as it ever was, but it is not the original Raffles.

Where I wanted to go was the writers bar, and the long bar. In the long bar a tiger was shot, and killed. I guess the British were stuffy about who they let drink at their bars. The reason I wanted to have a drink there was this was also the hangout and watering hole of such luminaries as Rudyard Kipling, Somerset Maughm, and other notable authors. I have been to the Ritz Bar, where Hemmingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and others of the lost generation hung out, and so I felt I needed to make a pilgrimage here as well. Finally they decided to close the bar and threw us out. Afterwards, Otto drove me

around all around Singapore. We tried to do some bar hopping, but everything was closed by then since it was after 1 AM on a Monday Night. Otto has invited me back on a Thursday or Friday Night when the place jumps till the wee hours I am told.

Singapore is a very modern large and very clean and ordered city. It does not have the character of Kuala Lumpur, but it looks like an extremely nice place to live. While we were driving around, Otto found a fruit stand selling Durian. He asked if I knew what it was, and I explained that Paul had told me about it, and not very complementary. But what the heck, we bought one, and sat at the road side, and ate it. Durian is a large fruit about the size of a small watermelon. Inside it is very fibrous, with large seeds. The seed pits which are about date size are surrounded by a creamy substance. This is what you eat. Basically you put the seed pod in your mouth, and suck out the filling, and spit out the pit. It has a very pungent smell, and kind of a smoky taste, but wasn't bad. Otto informed me that you shouldn't consume Durian with alcohol since it contains a trace amount of arsenic, which could be fatal. While the Durian was okay, I also tried a fruit called mangosteen. This stuff I really liked. It is a very sweet juicy fruit, and I clobbered about four of them by myself. We toured one end of Singapore to the other. I will long remember Otto's kindness and hospitality to me. Our touring done Otto dropped me off at the airport about 3 AM. I promised to make a return visit so we could bar hop, and I had made a new friend.

I had to hang around the front of the airport until about 6 AM, when I could get my boarding pass, and get through security. I got on my flight, I put my headphones on, turned up the music, pulled a blanket and pillow around me, and went to sleep. I was awakened for a snack about 45 minutes out of Tokyo. I had managed to get about 5 hours of real sleep. Now the time zones would be working to my advantage. I was actually going backwards in time. I landed in Tokyo 59 hours and 50 minutes elapsed time, and covered 14,437 miles.

I was originally going to try to get from Tokyo to Chicago, but the flight had filled up at the last minute. My best bet was to stay on the flight I had taken from Singapore to Seattle. However it looked grim out of Seattle. I re-boarded Northwest Flight 8, and we departed Tokyo for Seattle. I mostly read some and slept across catching up for what I had missed. It was now Tuesday, and I left on Saturday. With the datelines assistance I landed in Seattle 19,213 miles from where I had started, and 69 hours 30 minutes elapsed time.

I got through US Customs rapidly. This was surprising since they asked, "Where are you coming from?" "Singapore", I answered. How long have you been gone?" "Three days." I replied. That was it --- welcome to the USA! I thought I would have raised an eyebrow or something. I almost did not make the flight from Seattle since it was seriously overbooked. Still there was one seat open, and since I was on the original flight I got it.

The last three hours were going smoothly. I knew that I had finished this quest. I sat back, and watched the first movie I had seen on my entire journey. And then they got me. As we were approaching Minneapolis, the Captain got on the PA and made an announcement. My friends the Q's had sent a message to the plane enroute between Seattle and Minneapolis. The Captain announced what I had done. I was embarrassed.

To add insult to injury I was met by the Q's with a banner that I will treasure, and a silver platter with towels and soap. They all were wearing cloths pins on their noses. Do you think they were trying to tell me something? Well the final numbers were 20,608 miles traveled in 74 Hours and 9 minutes. We raised almost \$600 for the UM Room, and I finished the rally with a score of 156.

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Epilogue:

My serendipitous gift and best surprise and was that I arrived at gate 33, the exact gate I departed from. So this ends my tale. What did I learn from my adventure?

What I knew at the beginning of it.

- *That this world is a tiny beautiful place.*
- *There is no place and no one that is far away.*
- *That physical distance between friends is never important.*
- *That making a new friend is an important part of living.*
- *That humor is the best way to travel through life.*
- *That the journey is never as bad as you fear it will be.*
- *Lastly and most important of all, anything is possible if you just commit yourself and do it.*

The Score Box					
From	To	Total Miles	Elapsed Time	Score	Total
Minneapolis	Detroit	514	1 Hr. 42 Min.	0	0
Detroit	Boston	1,136	4 Hr. 28 Min.	3	3
Boston	Amsterdam	4,585	37 Hr. 25 Min.	100 ⁱⁱⁱ	103
Amsterdam	Kuala Lumpur	10,918	61 Hr. 40 Min.	7	110
Kuala Lumpur	Singapore	11,126	68 Hr. 25 Min.	46 ^{iv}	156
Singapore	Tokyo	14,437	59 Hr. 50 Min.	0	156
Tokyo	Seattle	19,213	69 Hr. 30 Min.	0	156
Seattle	Minneapolis	20,608	74 Hr. 09 Min.	0	156

ⁱ In a rally you are scored by how accurately you arrive at the checkpoint. You are awarded one point for each time unit you are early or late. Normally this is 0.6 seconds. In my case, I was using minutes so that the official FAA time regarding on time arrival could be used, which is to the nearest minute. We also decided to award no points for being early since it was more practical.

ⁱⁱ In the Rally world DNF stands for Did Not Finish. It usually means that the entrants were either disqualified, exceeded their allowable time to return to the end point (Time Barred), or could not complete the course (i.e. due to a crash).

ⁱⁱⁱ 100 Points is the maximum awarded. With the current level of competition the first 6 places of most rallies is under 100 points. Thus 100 points seriously put one out of competition. Higher scores do nothing else, so there is usually a maximum score awarded per checkpoint.

^{iv} I took a 46 here, not because the Singapore flight was late, but because I arrived 46 minutes late from the flight I had planned to take.

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