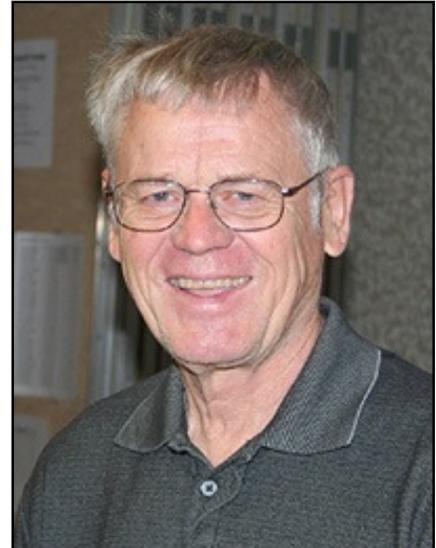


THE RED BARON SPEAKS

June 2011 – Larry Creakbaum

June started on May 28th with me heading for the airport to get a seat to Las Vegas. They closed the door on the only nonstop to PHX (Phoenix) until late afternoon and left me and a couple other nonrev's (that is a person like me trying to get a free ride) standing. I soon found out that US Air was grossly over booked and going anywhere that day was going to be hard. I switched to plan B as my son also had a listing for me on Delta thru MSP (Minneapolis) with three available flights from there to Vegas. The first flight was close to full but with two more available in should be an easy trip. At the gate in MSP for the flights to Vegas there was one frazzled counter agent yelling "there will be no nonrev's to Vegas today". I found a counter agent at another gate that was not busy and asked her what was going on. She explained that Delta had made an equipment change on the first flight to Vegas and replaced a 174 seat airplane with a 150 seat airplane and left 20 revenue (the paying type) passengers scrambling for a seat. I asked what she would do if she were me and she suggested going to Orange County (John Wayne Airport in Santa Ana, CA.) I was again left at the gate but I was at least in competition with other nonrev's so I was gaining. My next option was to go to Los Angeles and back to Vegas. I was soon winging toward LA and arrived in time to watch the next flight to Vegas leave. I at least had an alternate event to go to if I could find some phone numbers, but first I wanted to concentrate on the next flight to Vegas. I got on the flight and arrived at the Casino around 8:00 Saturday night only to find there was a mix up in my room reservation and my reservation did not start till Sunday. I found a player who had an extra bed in his room that he did not need until later and he gave a place for Saturday night. I checked in early Sunday, and spent the day in hibernation resting my weary legs which had pushed my luggage up and down many ramps, onto moving walkways, and transferring to golf carts, that they could barely go any more.



I finally arrived at the shuffleboard room and traded handshakes and hugs all around and Monday morning the AB draw event began. All the events started pretty much on time except on Thursday a no division handicap AB draw was added as the team event ended earlier than expected. I attribute this to the 4 out of 7 in lieu of 5 out of 9 which I like better. This gives the players with the larger rating numbers a chance to affect the outcome which I think this event is primarily for.

At this point I intended to recap all the events held on Memorial week end with a chart of the players by rating and the sponsor sales but my request went out to late or not at all and I only have the info on two events. I may still do it next month if the sponsor sale sheets arrive. If any event directors or players have access to the sheets, they may fax them to 317 745 6961.

We were a part of the VNEA group, and I never have found out what that stands for. When I called for my room reservation, the clerk had never heard of the name or pool or shuffleboard and when I mentioned air hockey, she said there it is. I guess "A" is at the top of the alphabet.

All the pool, air hockey, foosball, and shuffleboard tables were two dollars a game and in the first three games the event holders do not have provide wax or powder at seventy five to one hundred dollars a bucket. Also the games last an average of seven to ten minutes where shuffleboard at a minimum is twenty minutes and most games go thirty minutes to an hour. I can see major changes ahead in shuffleboard.

On the positive side they had two demonstration tables set up with the other games so players could sample each game. The tables were constructed to spit in the middle of the playing surface and I assume each half would be light enough to be moved without removing the climatizers' which should reduce set up and tear down time. I threw a couple of weights across the split and did not see it would be a problem.

I asked my age old question "what rules are we using?" and got the standard "my rules" answer. Thank goodness the TSA rules committee is working on the issue. Each location than needs to post these and if they want to make some changes do it by addendum such as baseball having ground rules which apply to different parks.

At last check I found one location in January, three each in February, March and April, that have a flyer posted but do not have published results. When I wrote my 50 years of shuffleboard article I relied on my personal records until 1985 when I for some reason stopped keeping records. The board talk which was published from '84 to 2004 (approximate) was invaluable for me to finish. Someone in the future will need the information so bring it up to date. Also some players want to know who placed now. If you had time to submit a flyer to advertise you should have time to submit the results.

My return trip to IND (Indianapolis) was uneventful until the last two hours. I got on an airplane to ATL (Atlanta) and transferred to a flight to IND and everything was fine. About thirty minutes from the IND airport the captain announced that an aircraft had declared a missed approach and he did not know why as the weather

was well above minimums. Later he announced we were on the approach and we could expect some turbulence. We completed the approach and landed and I did not think the turbulence was bad but it might have been for a white knuckler (nervous flyer). With lightning flashing all around, the captain announced that we could not approach a gate for unloading because of safety concerns for the ground crew. Then, I noticed we were the only aircraft which had been moving. Later I checked with my friends at the airport and found out there is a lightning detection system at the airport that automatically turns on purple exterior lights which is a warning to ground personnel and they are to immediately to go inside the building. After landing the aircraft did not have fuel to go elsewhere and the ground crew could not add any fuel. The aircraft that missed only needed alternate fuel where since we were on the ground we needed fuel for first airport plus another alternate.

After more than an hour had elapsed, I went to the flight attendants and asked if the three hour rule applied. Now for those of you whom have never heard of the three hour rule, it is a rule made by FAA, after threats by Congress to make one after the fiasco's in New York and Detroit where passengers were kept on aircraft over six and seven hours, the toilets overflowed and they ran of food and water, and the rule subjects the airline with heavy fines and penalties for noncompliance. I was told no because this was not Delta's fault but weather related. I did not say anything but wondered what else but weather caused the rule. The captain came on and said he had phone call into the dispatcher to find and answer. The captain then announced that the ground crew chief said the first wave had passed and we could unload before the next wave came by. We fired up and moved to the gate and unloaded as the captain said his radar had not shown the first wave had passed. Elapsed time from touchdown to jet way was close to two hours. My wife drove us home surrounded by heavy, bright lightning.

The second week of June the Indiana hall of fame event was held in Bourbon, IN and by the attendance it appears the economy and gas prices have caught up to shuffleboard. I checked another event and noticed players did not come from very far.

The next week there was an open singles at Anderson and I went up Friday night to a draw partner, but I did not return on Saturday as I cannot compete in and open. The last week if June has nothing in this area and the first day of July I will point my van west on I-70 for the trip to Del City.