**CHAPTER TRAVEL FORUM NOTES**

**By Dan Sockle and Terry Babin**

Notes from the November 17, 2022, Travel Forum

AIR TRAVEL:

* Space A:
  + Having “Facebook” definitely facilitates obtaining current information for Space A travel.
  + Flying out of NAS Whidbey Island, depending on destination, was cited as a good option.
* Commercial Airlines:
  + Costs continue to increase.
  + A small sampling was presented based on travel in 2022 that was compared to rates for the same travel at the same times in 2023 if booked in early November 2022.
    - International fares were up between 30% (Icelandair) and 54% (British Air).
    - Domestic fare for Alaska Airlines was up 24%.

CRUISES:

* When shopping for cruises and deals, AAA was again recommended.
* Problems with Royal Caribbean, and its sister company Celebrity, were again discussed:
  + Failure by both cruise lines to address passenger concerns or reimburse, let alone at least apologize, for the lines’ own service and operational failures.
  + Concerns and complaints are ignored.

TRAVEL:

* Egypt tour highlights:
  + Toured with Overseas Adventure Travel (OAT) for 17 days (includes early arrival).
  + 12 persons in the tour group; OAT specializes in small group tours.
  + OAT representative met the travelers as they off-boarded the aircraft in Cairo and facilitated Visa and Customs clearance.
  + Hotels and all arrangements including meals, transportation, porter, and other services were exceptional.
  + Pacing was well-planned, and allowed time/opportunity for personal exploration and relaxation.
  + 5-day Nile cruise and being a guest in Egyptian homes for meals were among the highlights.
  + Tour Guide was professional, knowledgeable (degrees in Egyptology and Ancient Religions), a very flexible in accommodating special interests and requests.
* TAUC was again touted as providing exceptional service and overall value for tours they offer.
* Car rentals in both the U.S. and Europe remain very expensive—many double or more the price than during the pandemic period.

OTHER ITEMS FROM THE FORUM:

* A reminder about free parking at the Portland International Airport Economy Paring Lot if you can show you Veterans Administration issued “Service Connected” card.
* Mike Tyrell from MOAA Travel will be invited as the subject matter expert for the January Travel Forum to talk about commercial airline travel in 2023.
* Lee Golden will hopefully be able to present his trip report on travel to/in Spain.
* Also, possible travel updates on Hawaii and the Caribbean and other travel by Chapter members.

**Next Forum Zoom meeting will be in January 2023—date and time to be announced later.**