

Terrorism? Not in this town

Terrorists of the world, take note. This isn't Beirut, Ahmed. Try something at Eugene's Mahlon Sweet Municipal Airport and, by damn, you'll get your comeuppance!

That's the word from the powers that be at Mahlon Sweet, remarking in a recent Register-Guard article that the airport is as secure from terrorism as any airport in the world. Considering airport security at places like Athens and Frankfurt, I find little comfort in that thought.

But my fears disappeared when I recently visited the airport and saw for myself its impenetrable bulwark of state-of-the-art security devices. My hives have since cleared up.

With its proximity to Prineville, Myrtle Creek, Junction City and other meccas of regional terrorism, Eugene is a prime target for hijackers and terrorists. It would take only the smallest gap in airport security for some dangerous fanatic from Islamic Jihad, Rajneeshpuram or Old Taylor's to hijack a Cascade Air flight to Scio.

Rest easy, friends. Mahlon Sweet's sole boarding area is encased by four sturdy walls, and oncoming passengers must pass through metal detectors powerful enough to be set off by tooth fillings. Similarly, carry-

on items must pass through an X-ray machine.

And not just any X-ray machine, by golly, but the incredible Linescan One — the scourge of air pirates everywhere! Way I hear it, a hijacker once tried to hide a gun in a teddy bear, and the Linescan One not only detected the gun, but the teddy bear died of cancer three weeks later.

Mahlon Sweet has not always been so secure. The gang at the liquor store tells me that the airport once didn't use security devices at all. But when local vagrants starting gathering at

Offbeat

the airport for strip-searches, the decision was made to modernize.

A plethora of federal regulations determine what passengers can and cannot bring onto airplanes. Explosives, flammable material, poisons and corrosives (not counting airline food), oxidizers and firearms are definite no-nos. The list does not include obnoxious children, although attempting to board with them should be grounds for summary execution.

People also are theoretically prohibited from carrying com-

pressed gasses onto airplanes. However, I once traveled to Seattle next to an old woman who was carrying compressed gasses. That's the last time I take a flight that serves baked beans for lunch. Talk about your acts of terrorism.

Secure as Mahlon Sweet supposedly is, a photographer and I walked uninterrogated in an area clearly off limits to all by legitimate cargo customers. Fortunately, I am not a terrorist, at least not recently, and the photographer presumably isn't either. But had we the slightest hostile intentions, it would have been pitifully simple to sabotage someone's luggage. It's just this kind of weakness terrorists can exploit.

Mahlon Sweet isn't the most bustling of airports. In fact, I encountered only two travelers, George Van't Zet and his son David who were leaving for George's native Amsterdam. Although bound overseas, neither of them seemed too concerned about international terrorism, and David provided what may be the best solution to the problem.

"Wherever there's turmoil in an area, you don't want to go there," he said. "They couldn't have picked a better place than Mahlon Sweet airport."

By Thomas Henderson

Don't abandon Donald Duck

There used to be a time when yellow and green were the only official school colors and a duck, which looked like a popular Walt Disney character, was the University's sole mascot. But no more.

The University now can claim every color from pale violet and neon pink to the dreaded orange and black as its own. And our duck, well, he has undergone so many transformations that the Walt Disney version no longer holds a monopoly here.

The change occurred slowly at first and has only picked up speed in the last few years, causing many not to really notice or give it much thought. I did not become fully aware of this change myself until last week when I stopped to look at the racks of T-shirts for sale outside the bookstore.

The racks contained every color and style of T-shirt imaginable, except for the traditional green and yellow model that clearly spelled out what university it was from.

Inside the bookstore, the story was the same. The bookstore carries about 250 to 300 different styles of T-shirts. And of all these shirts, only a few would pass for an accurate advertisement for the University.

This all seems relatively unimportant at first, until you consider that only a small portion of the 750,000 T-shirts sold annually at the bookstore go to those who know that orange and black are really the colors of the school up the road.

During the summer, tourists make up most of the bookstore's T-shirt sales. This

means that the short-sleeved purple shirt with "Oregon" swished across the front that I saw a woman buy last week is probably representing the school right now in some state where people have never heard of Eugene; let alone the University.

Even during the school year many of the T-shirts sold go to out-of-state relatives or friends who might wrongly assume that the "Hugga Duck" slogan, on one of the bookstore's more popular shirts, is a common saying around here, just like "Go Trojans" or "Kiss Me, I'm Irish" are at other schools.

One of the bookstore's newest styles that acts as a spokesman for the University is a shirt

Reporter's Notebook

that glows in the dark. This shirt, like the neon bright tank top introduced last spring, is doing well on its second order now and likely will be turning up in places like New York and California to spread the word about what poor lighting the school has.

Beverly Emery, the bookstore's T-shirt buyer, says that she follows the fashion trends of the clothing industry as well as what is popular at other universities when deciding what to buy.

About 75 percent of the shirts purchased, no matter what the design or color, will sell, says Bob Spencer, the bookstore's merchandising manager, who adds that fashion will continue to replace tradition in this area.

By Julie Freeman

Cheese and milk distribution set

FOOD for Lane County will distribute cheese and milk to low-income residents at the University on Wednesday between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

To be eligible, recipients must present a verification of address, such as a postmarked envelope with a name on it. No proof of income is necessary, but participants must meet income guidelines.

For information about additional sites or eligibility, contact FOOD for Lane County at 343-2822.



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