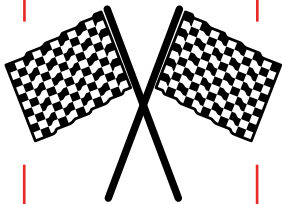


We might as well stay with the *Houston Chronicle* all the way. All jokes are plagiarized from it.



Question: What did the redneck with the broken leg say to his nurse?

Answer: I've got a crutch on you.



Members of Congress should be compelled to wear uniforms just like NASCAR drivers, so we could identify their corporate sponsors.



I'm always late. My ancestors arrived on the June Flower.

After a funeral, the pallbearers carrying the casket out of the church accidentally bumped into a wall. From inside the coffin they heard a faint moan. Opening the lid they found the man inside alive! He leaped out, performed a little jig and lived another ten years before eventually keeling over.



Once again, a ceremony was conducted, and at the end the pallbearers carried out the casket. As they neared the doors of the church, the wife of the deceased jumped to her feet and shouted, "Watch the wall!"



After a rainstorm filled all the potholes in the streets, a mother watched her two boys playing in the puddles. The older one, a five year old, grabbed his sibling by the back of his head and shoved his face into the water hole.

As the boy recovered and stood laughing and dripping, the mother ran to the yard in a panic. "Why on earth did you do that to your little brother?" She asked.

"We were just playing 'church,' Mommy," he said. "I was just baptizing him ... in the name of the Father, the Son and in the hole -- he -- goes."

An overweight man decided to go on a diet to shed some excess pounds. One morning, however, he arrived at work carrying a gigantic coffee cake.



He told his co-workers, "I drove by the bakery this morning, and there in the window was a host of goodies. So I prayed, lord if you want me to have one of those delicious coffee cakes, let me have a parking place directly in front of the bakery. And sure enough," he continued, "the eighth time around the block, there it was!"

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FEEES GALORE WHEN FLYING IN THE FUTURE



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Following is a reprint of a business column by Loren Steffy (a very good business columnist) of the *Houston Chronicle* (a very good newspaper).

Note that we reprint this column with permission. It appeared within the last year.

Alex Chisholm

"I board the airline of the future and swipe my debit card through the card reader at the door. It prints out a receipt for the \$5 boarding fee. 'Welcome aboard FutureAir,' the smiling flight attendant says, holding out her hand. I fumble for a dollar bill and place it in her hand – cabin crew courtesy fee. I make my way to my seat, as a growing sense of dread washes over me. Traveler's remorse. Why didn't I pay the extra \$50 to board first? I fear my fellow passengers will have bought up all the overhead bin space. As I approach my row, the guy on the aisle stands and pats the bin door. 'Too late. But I'll sublet the front corner for \$25,' he says. It's airway robbery, of course. He only paid \$35 for the whole bin, but it's cheaper than paying for early boarding. I fancy myself the master of frugal travel. I slip him two twenties and tell him to keep the change. Keep your bin lords happy, that's my motto. He opens the door and clears a spot for my bag.

'Now we ask that you sit back, relax and enjoy your flight, all for the nominal relaxation and enjoyment fee of just \$25.'

SEAT BELT FEE

I squeeze into the middle seat – no aisle or window premium for me – and drop a quarter into the armrest to pay for the seat belt. I fasten the buckle, then extend my arms and press my elbows together, drawing in my shoulders in the traditional Egyptian mummy position of middle-seat travelers. I swipe my debit card on the seat-back reader, and it brings up the host of options for the flight. I select one hour of the reading light, air for the whole flight, two cups of coffee, a cookie and – what the heck, I'll splurge – a pillow made of 'eco-friendly, recycled material.' It prints out the receipt: \$37. Folded over, it becomes the pillow.

PRESSURIZE AND PAY

The flight attendant closes the door and the cabin pressurizes: \$28. 'Good afternoon, I'd like to give you a short safety briefing, sponsored by Taco Bell.' She refers us to the cards in our seat-back pockets, but I didn't pay the pocket fee. It doesn't matter. I always waive the emergency exit and flotation device charges (\$3.50 waiver processing fee). 'Should there be a loss of cabin pressure,' the flight attendant was saying, 'an oxygen mask will drop from above your seat. Pull the mask toward you to start the flow of oxygen. Once you have your mask securely fastened, be sure to swipe your credit, debit or FuturAir Frequent Buyer card to ensure oxygen continues flowing. Otherwise, the plastic bag will inflate, and you'll have to make do with that. Please remember that should we lose cabin pressure, your pressurization fee will not be refunded. As a reminder,' she continued, 'the use of portable electronic devices is prohibited unless, of course, you'd like to rent them from us at an hourly rate. A list of leasable electronic devices and their prices are printed in the back of your in-flight magazine, which is available for \$7.50 per copy. Now we ask that you sit back, relax and enjoy your flight, all for the nominal relaxation and enjoyment fee of just \$25.' The screen on my seat back registered the charge. We came to the end of the taxiway, and it blipped again. '\$15 – air traffic control fee.' The plane began to zip down the runway, and soon we were airborne. '\$20 – successful takeoff fee.' Altitude charges, maybe. In a few moments, the intercom crackled. 'Good afternoon, this is the captain speaking, brought to you by Merrill Lynch. Using our AccuWeather forecast, we predict good weather for our trip to New York, which is sponsored by Home Depot. We'll soon be at our cruising altitude of 30,000 feet – some altitude and turbulence avoidance surcharges may apply – and we expect to arrive at the gate in time for you to pay your arrival charges without incurring any additional late fee.'

ANNOYANCE CHARGES

Fortunately, the flight was uneventful. I dozed, and I must have snored. There were minor annoyance charges on the screen when I awoke. As we pulled to the gate, I paid my landing fee, deplaning fee, 'buh-bye' fee. I added a tip for the captain and co-pilot. I knew they'd been working without a contract for 6 ½ years. I'm frugal, but I'm not heartless. I waited patiently to exit, careful to avoid any BPFs – belligerent passenger fees. As I walked up to the jet way, I looked at my receipt: \$2,000 for the flight reservation, and I kept the in-flight fees to less than \$250, including the side deal for the overhead bin. Not bad."

