

I Used to Fly

By Marilyn Reeves

I used to fly. Not often, but upon occasion, back in the days when I was able to travel. Back when we used to fly out of the old Stapleton Airport. Remember that?

Soon after the airport was torn down it was gradually replaced by a new residential community, which adopted the name Stapleton. But nowadays there's a great hue and cry by the locals to change its name, as well as the names of all things called 'Stapleton' because people have discovered that the old Denver Mayor Benjamin Stapleton was a member of the KKK. Too bad the man wasn't denounced for his bigotry during the years he was in power. But thankfully, people's attitudes towards racism are beginning to change, and more change is on its way. Little by little, bit by bit, society is being made aware of the injustices that have been visited upon African Americans over the past few centuries, and are trying to turn things around.

But back when Stapleton was an airport, I used to go out there often enough that I knew my way around. It was much smaller than DIA, which I've only flown out of once – in 2006 when I took a trip to Vancouver. I haven't been out there since. I found the maze of access roads so intimidating that I nearly got lost trying to find my way in – and out – of the place! And the inside of the massive structure was equally overwhelming. Since it's been under renovation for the past several years, today's travelers also have to dodge around all that construction. Not for me!

I always pity the poor pilgrims stuck out at the airport during the snowstorms that occur almost annually over the Thanksgiving holiday. Most of them just want to come home and have dinner with their family, but instead find themselves trying to scout out a place on the floor to sleep – sometimes for several nights – until the weather finally clears and they're able to fly back to wherever they came from. No turkey dinner for those poor souls. No memorable family reunion. No skiing either, if that's what they've come for. I'm so glad I'm not one of them!

I wouldn't mind traveling if I could just wish myself to some exotic place without going through all that hassle at the airport. But lacking the where-with-all and the who-with-all to go places, my traveling days are now behind me. It makes me a bit sad, but at least I don't have to worry about standing in line – or sleeping on the floor at DIA.

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P.S. Does anyone remember passing under a tunnel on I-70? I believe it was located somewhere near Havana Street, and I think had something to do with the old Stapleton airport. Do you know why was it torn down, and when? I tried to research it on the Internet, but wasn't able to find anything about it. If anyone knows anything about that tunnel, please share!