

November 27, 2010

Peggy, "we hardly knew ye"

It's 2:30 AM in Johannesburg. The last time we were here, I time adjusted very well. We came over from Atlanta on the fifteen-hour flight in the sleeper seats the same as last time, and I probably slept as much as I do at home, but I am lying in bed at my daughter's home, wide awake, Bose headset on, listening to romantic music on my iPod. We were in NYC last week with our Mississippi grandchildren, enjoying the Macy's parade, the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, etc. We arrived in ATL on Saturday, and noticed that business seats were available to JNB, so we changed winter clothes to summer, and here we are with our South African grandchildren.

I just finished reading Andrew Sorkin's Too Big To Fail a few minutes ago. He is a financial reporter for my least favorite newspaper, the New York Times. His book reads like a novel and is the best report of the meltdown that probably changed the US economy forever that I have read. I had read bits and pieces about the crisis as it unfolded in 2008. The failure of Lehman, and the bailouts of AIG, GM, and Chrysler were still fresh in my mind, but I didn't know exactly how (or why) the whole US banking business was rescued. I was particularly interested in the fact that Wachovia was only a few hours from being shut down when they suddenly became Wells Fargo. The book is hard to put down, but it's depressing, and then I checked my email to have messages from Travis Foster, Carole Lovelace, and the PCN that Peggy Yancey passed away on Thanksgiving Day. Now, I am more depressed.

"It is with great sadness that I tell you Peggy Yancey died Thursday, November 25th, in hospice in River Ridge. Being the very private person she was, no one, except a special friend, knew she was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer a few months ago"....

The only other information about her was her age (80), date of hire (1952), and her only survivor being a brother in New Mexico.

I was a reserve second officer, and lucky enough to be assigned a Caracas trip the first time I met Peggy. She was in a powder-blue uniform with a white blouse which curved in all the right places. She was very pretty, but there was a sadness about her. The copilot told me that she had been in love and was dumped for a Hollywood starlet. I don't know if that was true or not, but she never married. She was a very special lady. She was intelligent, sexy, dignified, and certainly not the least impressed with all the charm that I could muster, but she was always friendly and a pleasure to fly with.

I am surrounded by children and grandchildren in my old age, and reading about Peggy made me very sad. Peggy, "we hardly knew ye". But we will miss you.