

'Almost-free' trip ends up costing plenty

I talked to a couple who recently received the same type of offer I did from tour operators in Florida who offered a Mexican adventure and cruise.

This operation is at the top of the Better Business Bureau's beware list every year.

The couple had taken a similar offer to go to Las Vegas and enjoyed the trip, but said there is no question it's all about selling time-shares.

They accepted the trip to Florida as well and said to be careful — this one is bad.

We went over their costs after they paid for the "almost-free" trip:

- Every night, the taxes on their hotel room were \$28;
- It cost \$27 a day to park their car;
- Port fees and taxes \$200 each;
- \$200 each to fly to Cancun;
- \$35 a day for insurance on their "free" rental car.

All the above was in U.S. funds.

I appreciate the couple discussing it with me. They estimate the trip cost them \$4,000 US for their 12 nights and 13 days.

The cruise ship, by the way, was incredibly bad. Dirty would be a better way to say it

There are rumours a Winnipeg high-tech organization is interested in a Kelowna site, either as a branch or the location for the entire operation.

I can't find out what's going on yet, but they have someone moving this way March 1

I was thinking about those new machines to check shoes at the airports since the shoe explosives scare.

Do you remember when we were younger and went to buy shoes at Eaton's and the shoe salesperson took you to a big brown box? You stuck both feet into slots, and then your mother was asked to look on a screen to see if the shoes fit correctly.



JOHN
THOMSON
REPORT

What was that machine? That was in the 1940s and '50s, or maybe before. Someone was ahead of the times

This is the time of year when just about all of us say we are going to lose some weight.

Some mean it; others pretend. A modest five or 10 per cent weight loss can result in significant health benefits, but most overweight dieters would consider such a small loss worse than disappointing.

Some dieters work against themselves by setting unrealistic weight-loss goals

Jetlog Corp. has just released the ultimate for business executives trying to get that power nap.

My dad was good at that. Ten minutes and he was ready to go again.

Jetlog has a handspring visor it says will improve the effectiveness of naps by preventing excessively deep or prolonged sleep. It limits sleep to 40 minutes, at which time an alarm with increasing volume blasts out of the visor's built-in headphones. It sells for \$100.

I'm pretty good with that 15-minute stuff myself, but I'd like to try one

Here's another story from the grocery industry. If you're an ex-Albertan, you know the successes and failures of the Co-op grocery stores.

Now the chain is on a ride to the top, and with record profits. Retail consultants are predicting it would be a perfect buy for the Pattison Group, which could take advantage of Co-op's presence in Calgary.

Pattison took his Save-On Foods format to Edmonton a number of years ago with much success. Now there are 12 Save-On Foods — nine in Edmonton and one each in Red Deer, Fort McMurray and Grand Prairie, but none in Calgary.

Pattison also has one Urban Fair store in the Alberta capital, with a second being built.

Co-op has 17 stores, with another on the way and 396,000 members. The stores have been remodelled and are doing business.

The main reason for speculation on a Co-op buy is because it would get the Save-On banner into the marketplace quickly and efficiently. The cost of raw land and the availability has to be a concern in Calgary. This will be an interesting development.

• John Thomson's column also appears in The Okanagan Saturday and Wednesdays in The Daily Courier. Listen to him Friday afternoons on Sun-FM 99.9. If you would like to leave a message, phone

470-0700 and enter John's phone extension, 455, when prompted. Send your faxes to 764-8255 or e-mail to john.thomson@ok.bc.ca.

Short story - Send to a Friend