

When a Pig Flew

The attention of travelers along the Parkway in Sevierville, Tennessee – entering or leaving tourist-attracting Pigeon Forge – is nearly always drawn to a fanciful scene: four life-sized, modeled replicas of pigs flying in a circle around a 30-foot tower.

The winged pigs call attention to Old MacDonald's Farm Mini Golf, which is touted as a place where "pigs really do fly ... 54 amazing holes of interactive barnyard family fun."

The advertising appears to work; the venue always seems to be busy with fun-loving families.

"When pigs fly" is a familiar figure of speech so hyperbolic that it describes an impossibility. The implication of such a phrase is that the circumstances in question will never occur.

I'm reminded of an *Associated Press* story years ago when, yes, a pig really flew – and first class at that!

It flew U.S. Airways, and the company, embarrassed, said it's never going to let it happen again.

On October 17, 2000, the six-hour flight from Philadelphia to Seattle carried 201 passengers – 200 people and one hog, which sat on the floor in the first row of first class.



The pig was traveling with two women, who convinced the airline that the pig was a "therapeutic companion pet" – like a guide dog for the blind.

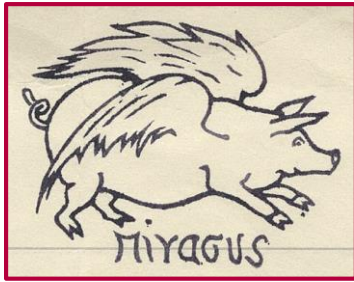
According to the airline's incident report, the animal became unruly as the plane taxied toward the Seattle terminal, running through the jet, squealing and trying to get into the cockpit.

"Many people on board the aircraft were quite upset that there was a large, uncontrollable pig on board, especially those in the first-class cabin," the report stated.

"We can confirm that the pig traveled, and we can confirm that it will never happen again," a U.S. Airways spokesman said, "Let me stress that. It will never happen again."

Over the course of my years on this earth, one lesson I have learned is to never say "never." In my youth, for example, I would not have believed that man would walk on the moon – and it happened in my lifetime. Neither would I have imagined that a small communication device carried in my pocket would connect me with someone on the other side of the world.

(more)



American literature author John Steinbeck was told by his professor that he would be an author when pigs flew. When he eventually became a novelist, he started to print every book he wrote with the insignia, *Ad astra per alas porci* (to the stars on the wings of a pig).

The lesson for us? Don't let someone's claim of the impossible snuff out your dream.

Jesus replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God" (Luke 18:27 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter