

## ***The Washington Post***

### **“When You Least Expect It”**

By CoGo

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CoGo recently opened a letter from Southwest Airlines and out fluttered a free round-trip ticket anywhere the airline flies, and an offering of “our heartfelt apologies for the untimely circumstances that affected your flight from Providence.”

Mea culpas are so rare in the airline industry today that the incident seemed like news to CoGo. So here’s the scoop.

Bad weather had scrambled Southwest flights at little T.F. Green Airport in Providence that morning, and the plane was hit with equipment snafus and crew-scheduling mixups. Passengers sat on the plane so long that a student violinist treated them to an impromptu concert. CoGo gorged on Wheat Thins and pretzels as all hope for connections in Baltimore vanished.

AS the plane was finally ready to take off, a flight attendant sheepishly announced that a hat had flown into the engine and the plane was returning to the gate. The flight, scheduled for a 3 p.m., took off near 10. **Frederick T. Taylor** of Southwest’s executive office says that while all delayed flights don’t merit such treatment, he mailed tickets to passengers on Flight 1635 because of the “snowball effect” of problems. “We are sorry and we accept some responsibility on these things...We don’t like to leave our customers out in the cold.”