

## POSTCARDS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### Midnight Arrival and a Pre-Dawn Departure

by Robert Alan Black, Ph.D., CSP

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia is a very contemporary, beautiful river city. It went through a wondrous revival in the 1990s after a World's Fair. Parallel rows of contemporary high-rise buildings run along both sides of the river for miles.

My last night in Brisbane, I was the guest of the Queensland Chapter of the NSAA. President Iain Duguid had asked me to be their speaker. The Aussie spirit was in true form that night from the introductions to the closing. While eating or standing or leaning on the dinner table, Ruth B., wine glass in hand, came up and began asking me questions about my Around the World Creativity Tour.

I had been traveling six weeks, a little more than halfway through the trip. I had gotten used to people asking a variety of journey questions or sharing some of their own stories. It was her last question that caught me off-guard.

"Are you still going to Sri Lanka?"

I was surprised by the question. "Why do you ask?"

"Aren't you afraid to go there since the rebels blew up more than half of their airline yesterday?"

Not being one to read newspapers or pay attention to news normally, I had missed that "news bite." Yes, the rebels had destroyed six or seven airplanes.

Shortly after the meeting, I rushed off to send an e-mail to Renuka, my client in Colombo, Sri Lanka. No message had arrived by the next morning. My flight from Brisbane to Kuala Lumpur was uneventful except for my thinking about what might I do about the Sri Lanka part of my journey, watching three or four movies, drawing cartoons for a Kuala Lumpur client.

After a short night's sleep, I searched the fashionably modern six-level mall attached to my hotel seeking an e-mail café. No luck. Returning to the hotel, I asked the desk clerk where I might find Internet access. He immediately gestured towards the hotel's

Business Office that I had walked past three or four times, blindly missing it. It opened at 10:00, so I went to the dining room and had a wonderful, exotic eastern-style with American or English undertones breakfast.

At 10:01, I was on the Internet reading Renuka's response. "Yes planes destroyed. Things tense. Program scheduled and will happen if you come."

Not a high-risk-taker, bungee jumper, sky diver, sheer cliff mountain climber, I had to decide if I would fly into a country at war.

My plan was Kuala Lumpur a few days, meet with clients and give a presentation, train to Singapore for the weekend, fly back to KL to give a presentation and meetings, along with some shopping. Then fly to Singapore for meetings and a presentation before flying to Colombo, Sri Lanka, post-airplane bombing e-mail.

"People on streets, Parks filled with families enjoying weekend. International Soccer Tournament stadiums filled with cheering fans. You come we do the program. Will make sure you are safe and will fly to Chennai, India if not on schedule after weekend at beautiful resort north of Colombo."

As I was flying from Singapore to Colombo, I was almost hoping that I would not be able to leave as planned. The Indian Ocean resort sounded great.

Not only did I go, my program was well-attended and a success. I was treated royally by my extremely kind hosts, even with all the police and military stopping us at every intersection to look at us and inspect our car.

Ethics means integrity, honesty, dependability and flexibility with the focus to achieve the committed and promised results.

