



MICHIGAN'S PREMIER MOTORCOACH CONNECTION
BETWEEN EAST LANSING, ANN ARBOR,
BRIGHTON & DETROIT METRO AIRPORT



e-news

DECEMBER 2022



Robbyn Hoffman

Our 5th “Great Connections” Contest Winner Is ...

When we launched our latest contest back in February, 175 passengers submitted short stories about how Michigan Flyer connected them with a special person, place, or adventure. Five lucky entrants have now won a \$100 gift card as a runner-up prize. The top prize winner gets a \$500 gift card. (Note: Each winner is notified in the month when their entry is to be published.) We'll reveal the grand prize winner next month.

Reading about our contest sparked a memory for **Robbyn Rochelle Hoffman**. It involved a brief encounter she had with a fellow passenger while waiting for Michigan Flyer at Detroit Metro Airport. “I’d just had this experience a couple of months earlier, so I decided to write about it.”

Robbyn—who worked in various higher education positions for 10 years in Seattle, Wash., and 15 more in Spokane—recently moved back to the Lansing, Mich., area where she’s from. “My father passed away last February, and I wanted to be here for my mother,” she says. Having left her job as associate director of the Career Center at Eastern Washington University, she’ll be joining the University of Michigan in January as case manager and resource coach for the MHealthy program.

A graduate of Western Michigan University, Robbyn earned her master's degree in post-secondary counseling at Seattle University. She's been using Michigan Flyer for years now. "It's just a great way to travel between East Lansing and the airport. I'm a huge advocate of the service." And she keenly remembers her first trip: "I didn't know it was going to be this giant motorcoach, or that it would be so comfortable and have Wi-fi. I was really impressed."

Like other contest winners, Robbyn was surprised to get our call. "I'd forgotten about entering the contest, so I was very excited to learn I had a winning entry." She's still deciding what to do with her \$100 Amazon gift card. "I might buy myself a little present with part of it." Here's her story:

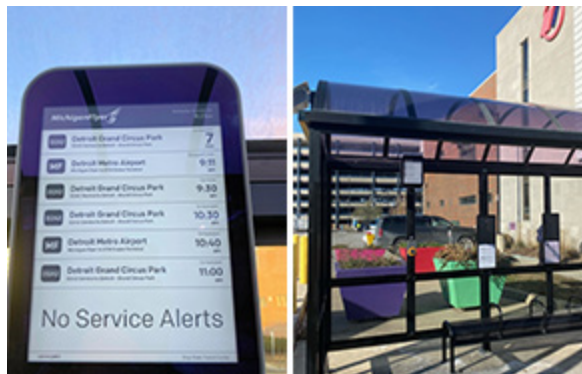


A Memorable Encounter

By Robbyn Rochelle Hoffman

"My great connection on the Michigan Flyer all began with missing my bus. I was tired and grumpy because I had to wait another hour for the next bus, and this meant my long day of travel was extended. I was sitting on a bench outside feeling forlorn when a stranger sat next to me and engaged me in a conversation. The young man commiserated with me about missing my bus, trying to get home for the holidays, and how I was feeling after a long day of travel. He told me he was an artist, and we chatted about his interest in breaking into the artistic community, what he's done already, and what he planned to do to 'get noticed.' I told him I was a career counselor by trade; I naturally put on my professional hat and gave him some advice. After a while he pulled out a sketchbook from his backpack and said he would love to sketch me if I agreed. As the next Michigan Flyer bus pulled up, he tore the sketch

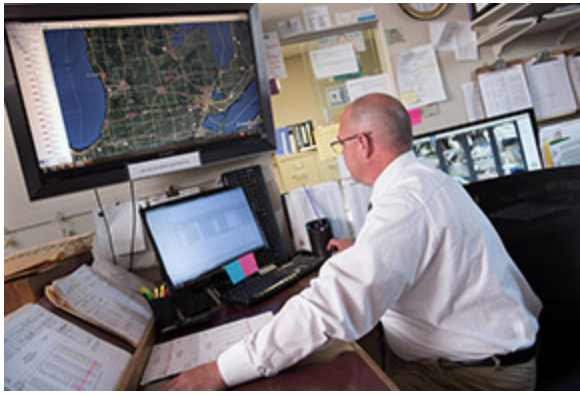
out of his book and handed it to me. This super sweet gesture totally changed my perspective; if I hadn't missed my bus, I would never have met this person, and certainly would not have a cool sketch to show my family! Sometimes "Great Connections" begin with a missed one."



A New Way to Track Your Bus in Real Time

We're proud to announce that Michigan Flyer-AirRide is rolling out electronic signs at some of our stops to provide passengers with real-time alerts about the expected arrival times of their buses. One such sign is already up and running inside the bus shelter at the Blake Transit Center in Ann Arbor (with info on both Michigan Flyer and D2A2 buses). Next, we'll install them at our stops in East Lansing and Brighton.

These solar- and battery-powered "e-paper" displays provide continuously updated information about whether or not your bus is on time or delayed, as well as service alerts. The data is beamed to the signs by



WiFi. It comes from satellite-based GPS systems and computers on board each of our motorcoaches, which monitor bus location and speed, and then transmit it through the cellular network to a secure data center.

This also enables our Dispatch Center to watch the progress of every Michigan Flyer, D2A2, and Indian Trails bus on the road as the data is arrayed on Google Maps and displayed on a computer screen.

PLEASE NOTE that the same data is the backbone of our smartphone application—the [Indian Trails Bus](#)

[Tracker](#)—which is available for free download by passengers, their family members and friends. Developed by Saucon Technologies, it's available for both Apple and Android phones.

"Knowing where your bus is can take some stress out of travel, plus give you the confidence to stay sheltered from the weather until the bus is nearly at your stop," says Chad Cushman, president of Indian Trails. "Our free bus tracker app puts that power of knowing in the palm of your hand."

"It can also be helpful for friends and family members who are waiting at our bus stops to give passengers a ride home."



Travel Alerts

Michigan Flyer's Reduced Schedule for Christmas

On Saturday, Dec. 24, we will not operate Eastbound runs #8016, 8018, or 8020, nor Westbound runs #8017, 8019, or 8021. On Sunday, Dec. 25, we will not operate Eastbound run #8002 or Westbound #8003. (See our schedule [here](#).) Please check the "Book a Trip" feature on [our website](#) to see which buses will operate on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

Holiday Downtimes for D2A2 Express Bus

The [D2A2 Express Bus](#) between Detroit and Ann Arbor will not operate during the Christmas and New Year holidays (Dec. 24, 25, 31, and Jan. 1). On normal weekdays, the luxury motorcoaches of D2A2 offer 16 eco-friendly roundtrips between Detroit's Grand Circus Park (1508 Park Ave.) and Ann Arbor's Blake Transit Center (328 S. Fifth St.), plus eight roundtrips on weekends. [See the schedule here](#). The D2A2 service was created by the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan in partnership with the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority, and is operated by Michigan Flyer.

Book Michigan Flyer NOW for Travel in Early January

With Michigan State University and University of Michigan students returning from winter break, the first couple weeks of January will be another peak demand period for us. U-M students resume classes for spring semester on Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2023, and MSU students on Monday, Jan. 9. To guarantee that we have a seat for you, make reservations without delay at [MichiganFlyer.com](#).

Your Best Chance to Visit Iceland is Coming Soon

If you've ever day-dreamed about visiting Iceland's black-sand beaches, geothermal spas, and glacier-fed

waterfalls, or gazing at the Northern Lights, you're now in luck. After four years without any direct flights from DTW to Reykjavik, two airlines are going head-to-head to offer them: Icelandair and Delta.

Both carriers plan to offer four nonstop flights weekly to Iceland's capital city from May through October 2023. Due to the competition, roundtrip fares are as low as \$550. Once in Reykjavik, if so inclined, you could also get connections to more than 25 destinations in Iceland, Greenland, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia and continental Europe.



Airfares to Warm, Romantic Places for Valentine's Day

Great news: Since our last spot check of airfares (which included Christmas in the dates of a sample trip), prices for flights out of Detroit Metro Airport (DTW) have generally dropped much lower—often by hundreds of dollars per ticket!

This time—again using [SkyScanner.com](https://www.skyscanner.com) to search prices—our sample trip includes Valentine's Day. We chose Friday, Feb. 10, for the departure from DTW, and

Saturday, Feb. 18, for the return. As usual, our search criteria required that the flights be non-stop in both directions, and had to arrive back at DTW in time for you to catch Michigan Flyer's last run at 8:15 p.m./8:30 p.m. to Ann Arbor, Brighton, and East Lansing.

We discovered plenty of warm and potentially romantic destinations. The following economy roundtrip fares include taxes but not necessarily baggage or other "extras":

Atlanta, GA (ATL) Frontier \$68

Houston TX (IAH) Spirit \$115

Tampa, FL (TPA) Frontier \$126

Las Vegas, NV (LAS) Frontier/Spirit \$135

Myrtle Beach, NC (MYR) Delta \$138

Orlando, FL (MCO) Spirit \$183

Fort Myers, FL (RSW) Spirit \$189

Los Angeles, CA (LAX) Spirit \$202

Seattle, WA (SEA) Delta \$248

San Antonio, TX (SAT) Delta \$298

Cancun, Mexico (CUN) Spirit \$404

West Palm Beach, FL (PBI) Delta \$498

Amsterdam, Netherlands (AMS) Delta \$724

Frankfort, Germany (FRA) Delta \$800

Paris, France (CDG) Delta or AirFrance \$899

London, England (LHR) Virgin Atlantic \$909

Honolulu, HI (HNL) Delta \$1,119

Directly Helping to Ease Pain in Ukraine

When Russia began its brutal invasion of Ukraine last February, Michigan Flyer VP Ody Norkin was appalled. In fact, he took it personally because his paternal grandparents had been murdered in the Odesa (Ukraine) Massacre of 1941. Today, millions of innocent civilians are again being devastated by bombs and bullets.

Through the Jewish Federation of Greater Lansing, Ody learned that Ukrainians desperately needed ambulances to transport elderly and infirm refugees out of harm's way. So, last March, he made it his personal mission to buy, refurbish, and deliver an ambulance to Odesa with his own funds. (See our [May E-News](#) and [June update](#)). But folks in his community had even bigger ideas. As word of his humanitarian mission spread,



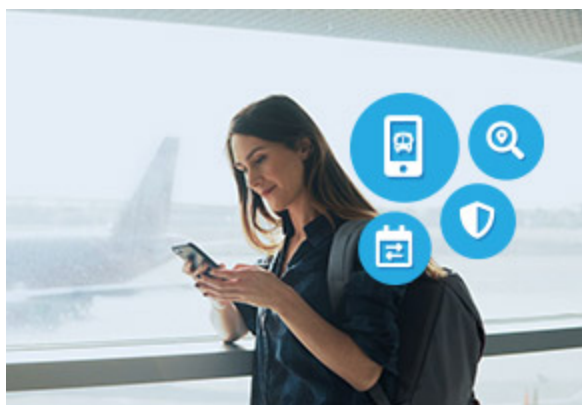
hundreds of people, businesses, and organizations locally, as well as overseas, began contributing to the cause.

For example, Saddleback BBQ in Okemos, Mich., set up a special [GoFundMe page](#) that has raised nearly \$7,000 for the mission so far. Rotary Club Foundations in the Lansing/East Lansing area donated \$9,000 and secured another \$15,000 from Amgen, the worldwide biotech company. Major Michigan health and hospital systems rallied to gather emergency medical equipment and supplies.

As a result, three trauma-ready ambulances have already been delivered directly to war-torn Ukraine. And now a fourth is in the works—along with a whole shipping container full of medical supplies.

“It costs roughly \$40,000 to buy, equip, and deliver each ambulance,” says Ody. “The next purchase will happen mid-January. After that, I’ll be heading to Ukraine again to help deliver it.”

“These ambulances are intended to help people of any faith or no faith at all,” he adds. “They are there to help our fellow human beings.” Amid the massive, ongoing humanitarian crisis, even small donations can make a world of difference. If you’d like to pitch in, you can do so online here: <https://bit.ly/3YzIPsQ>.



Tips for Smarter Travel

[Change Your Reservations Online in Two Quick Steps](#)

[Know How to Find Us at DTW’s McNamara Terminal](#)

[Invest in Travel Insurance for Peace of Mind](#)

[Download Our Free App to Track Your Bus in Real Time](#)

Top Coming Events—We Can Get You There!

East Lansing

[MSU Men’s Basketball vs. University of Michigan](#)

This year, as last, the MSU Spartans have been in and out of the AP Top 25 rankings. Yet with Hall of Fame Coach Tom Izzo leading the way, another Final Four appearance is always possible. Meanwhile, the U-M Wolverines, led by Coach Juwan Howard, cruised through most non-conference games and won their first BIG10 contest. Catch the next great in-state rivalry game at 2:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 7, at Breslin Student Events Center, 534 Birch Rd., Michigan State University, East Lansing. [Tickets \\$126-\\$899](#).

Check out more local coming events with the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar: <http://www.lansing.org/events>.



Ann Arbor

Ann Arbor and its neighboring communities in Washtenaw County offer numerous events, attractions, celebrations and performances for visitors young and old. To discover what's happening in and around A2 that might appeal to you and/or your family, check the Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar of coming events: <https://www.annarbor.org/events/>



Brighton

[Laith Al-Saadi from "The Voice"](#)

In 2016, Laith Al-Saadi won America's hearts and a spot in the finale of NBC's "The Voice". For over 25 years, he's been bringing his authentic blend of blues, soul, and classic rock to audiences around the nation and the world—and now Brighton! "The best show of musicianship I've ever seen on The Voice," Adam Levine called it. Al-Saadi will perform at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 14, at the Brighton Center for the Performing Arts, 7878 Brighton Rd., Brighton. [Tickets \\$45-\\$55.](#)

Brighton, like other communities in Livingston County, offers a multitude of events to delight visitors of all ages. Explore them with the Livingston County Convention & Visitors Bureau events calendar: <https://visitlivingstoncounty.com/events/>.



Detroit

[Aida in Concert](#)

Few operas offer as many musical thrills as Aida—from the epic "Triumphal March" to the intimate passion expressed between secret lovers from rival kingdoms. This special one-night-only performance of Verdi's masterpiece [features a stellar cast](#): Detroit Opera's own Christine Goerke and soprano Angel Blue both make role debuts under the baton of Jonathon Heyward, one of the most exciting young conductors on the international scene. Experience the world-famous opera on at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 30, at the Detroit

Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Performed in Italian with English titles, runtime is 2 ½ hours including intermission. [Tickets \\$39-\\$159.](#)

PLEASE NOTE: The D2A2 Express Bus from Ann Arbor's Blake Transit Center (BTC) to Detroit's Grand Circus Park can get Ann Arbor-area residents to and from this event. The Opera House is within a five-minute walk of D2A2's stop in Detroit (at 1508 Park Ave. in Grand Circus Park).

To learn more about what's happening in Detroit, check out the Detroit Convention & Visitors Bureau calendar of coming events: <https://visitdetroit.com/events/>.

Please, Help Others by Reviewing Us Online

Can you spare a moment to help others understand how our service might improve their travels? If so, please visit any of the websites below to submit a brief review about your personal experience with Michigan Flyer-AirRide. Thank you!



Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Kwanzaa & New Year!



Why Drive?

Booking is easy, [click here](#) to view schedules on



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