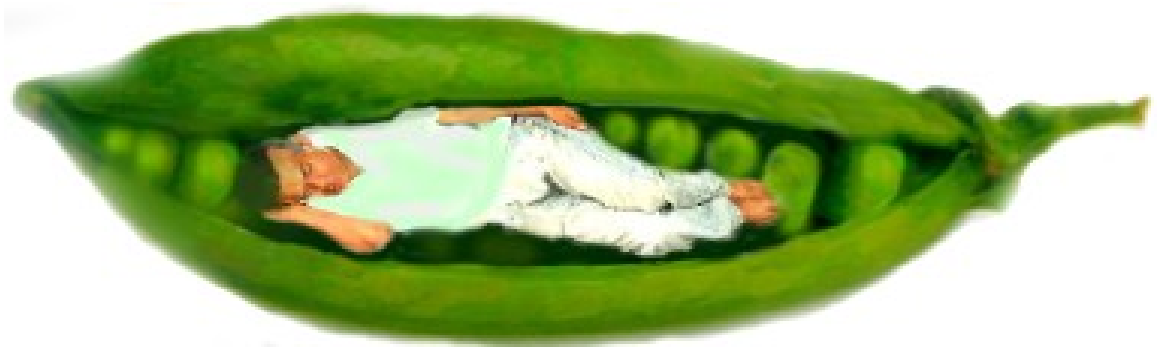

On a recent trip through Tokyo's Narita Airport, we noted rows of shiny metal structures near the parking area. They looked like up-and-down washer-dryers in a do-it-yourself laundry.

They're actually sleep pods, bringing back memories of serving aboard a Navy transport. Our troop compartments had similarly jammed-in bunks, four to six high, and they were about as comfy as being stuffed into a hospital MRI tube. There are communal bathrooms near the pod compartments, but seniors who need frequent usage must find sliding in and out challenging. Airport pods have been around for awhile, mostly in the Far East. ninehours.co.jp/en is one of several companies that have sleeping units at airports and hotels. Recent prices of pods are about $40 for nine hours, or $15 if rented by each hour.

They're bargains when a teeny hotel room in Tokyo can be $150 a night. Similar ones in London, Paris and New York go for $300 and more. However, in Las Vegas, you can still get a full-size hotel room with private bath at less than $40 for a 24-hour stay. Of course, you're expected to spend most of those hours in the downstairs casino, gambling away your grandkids' inheritance.