

Spring Vacation Right Here April 16, 2002

By the time you read this we will be in the second week of our annual area two-week spring vacation. Like many others, I look forward to the welcome respite from winter's rigors. Along with the rewards of spring's awakenings, those of us who stay the course and choose not to travel experience a unique period.

It's a time of peace and tranquility seldom experienced in today's Old Forge lifestyle. In years past there were many such occasions before our tourist and recreation-based industry came into its own. Many residents take the opportunity to break away and avail themselves of the sights and sounds of other recreation-based areas.

We have been there and done that and can say there is a lot to be said for how the rest of the country lives. On the other hand, I have no interest in knowing how much further South of the Border or the myriad other tourist traps are ahead of me. I also have no interest in knowing how many cheap cigarettes, fireworks or pecan bargains I am passing up.

For a very long time my views on travel have been that the further the trip the bigger the disappointment. It's interesting how the most insignificant annoyances can leave a ner-forgotten blemish on an otherwise great trip.

A long awaited trip to the Chesapeake area was a perfect example. The quaint scenes and seafood dining we were led to believe from the colorful words and pictures in *National Geographic* failed to materialize. It was more like fried clams at Howard Johnson's and a motel at the confluence of two major highways.

A trip to Disney World in Florida with granddaughter Cindy, although fulfilling, was also eye opening. We ended up giving the last two days of the full-ticket package to newcomers at our motel. It was back to the motel by noon and time spent playing in the pool and sandbox play area with many other kids who had the same impression of the world's greatest tourist attraction. Who can figure?

All, along with watching some guys on 4 x 4 recreational vehicles, enjoyed the alligator and snake farms and dogs expertly herd a huge herd of beef cattle. A meal of chili, which consisted of kidney beans, hamburger and catsup, was the low point of the trip and it endures along with the high points.

I have learned that if one were to expend just half of the time and energy here in Upstate New York that they do on a mega-trip, they would be in for a pleasant surprise.

The highlight of my two-week hiatus is yet to happen. It will involve my four young grandsons, as does much of my pleasure today. I have been kept busy repairing bikes and drilling holes in bear's teeth for necklaces, for instance, and grandma has been baking cookies to go with the hot chocolate.

The real adventure is going to consist of grandpa and all four boys spending the day together. There will be a stop at Mercer's Dairy in Boonville and lunch at a fast food stop of their choosing, interspersed with tours of the countryside to look for wild turkeys. Who knows what wonders we will discover!