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GRAB YOUR SUITCASE, IT'S VACATION TIME!

Dear Friend:

It may be true that there's no place like home, but everyone needs a little getaway now and then. Experts in performance psychology tell us that taking time away from work for rest and recovery will boost overall productivity. Nevertheless, it's reported that one-third (33%) of employed U.S. adults do not take all of their vacation days—and that's a slight increase from 31% reported in 2005.¹

To help to encourage your thought processes on the recreational side, this month's mailing focuses on vacations and how you can stay happy and healthy while enjoying your time off from work. You'll find details about funding and planning your vacation away from home, securing a passport and traveling stress-free.

This month we have a wealth of Web addresses for you, where you can find airfare comparisons, service providers, travel articles... even airplane floor plans. Also, discover what's hot this year with our list of travel trends, and learn which Caribbean Islands TripAdvisor.com has named as the top ten travel destinations for 2007.

Vacation is an excellent time to explore far-flung destinations, reconnect with family or simply unwind from the stresses of your daily life. Whether a short jaunt or an epic journey, may your travels this year be safe and relaxing.

Sincerely,

PS. Please check out the reverse side of this letter for some additional tidbits of information

Enhancing the trend of excellent service... if you know of someone who would appreciate the level of service I provide, please call me with their name and business number and I'll be happy to follow up and take great care of them.

¹ According to Expedia.com Annual "Vacation Deprivation Survey," http://www.vacationdeprivation.com/survey_results.pdf

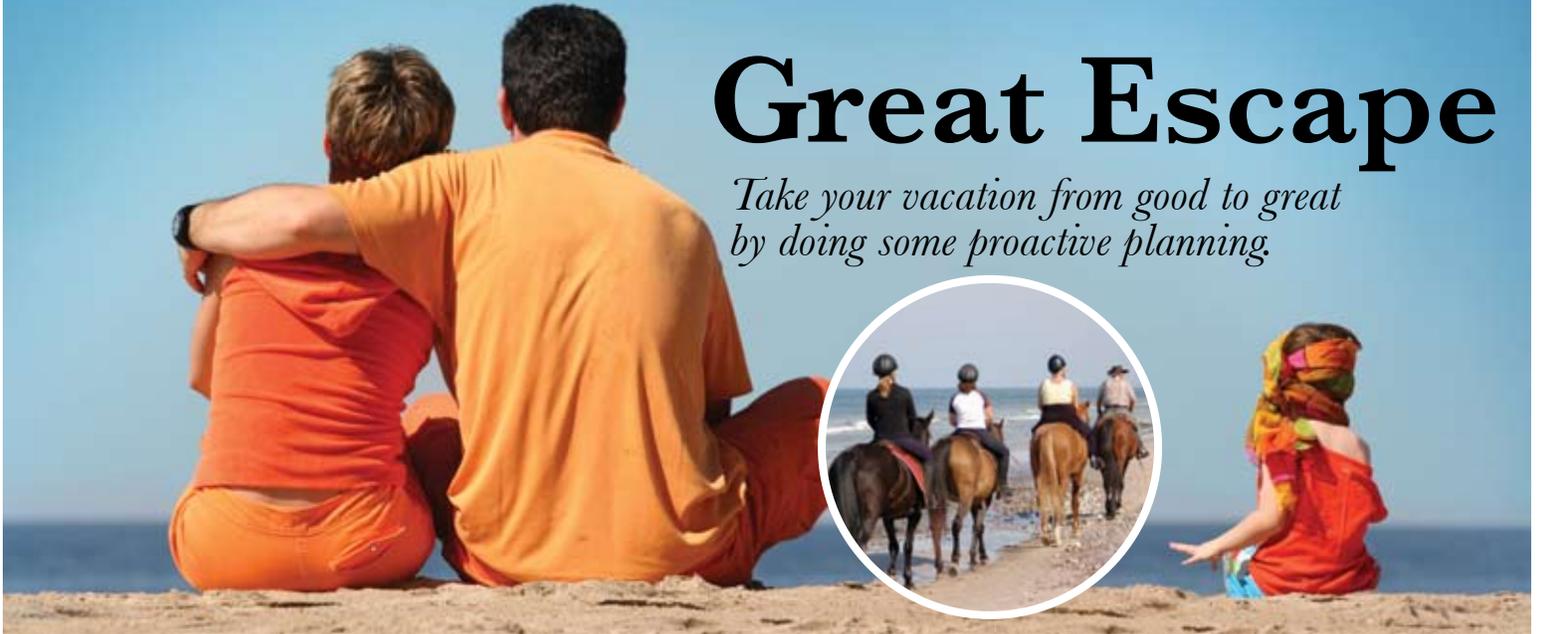
Parade Magazine in the March 25, 2007 edition had a short article about Avoiding Identity Theft. A recent study found that, taken together, there is more fraud involving phone bills, utilities and bank accounts than credit-card fraud. You'll find the Federal Citizen Information Center at <http://pueblo.gsa.gov>. There's an incredible amount of information on all kinds of topics. I did a site search on "ID Theft" to get to a free booklet that describes what to be aware of and what to do to avoid problems.

And here's a 'who knew?' item for you, this time from the digs section of Saturday's Seattle Times, page 15 (and they reprinted from RealSimple). Subliminal scents can trick your mind into a different direction...

- Try peppermint scent in the kitchen to curb your urge to munch. Apparently, banana will do the same thing
- Buttered popcorn is the scent to turn to if you want an energy boost while exercising; strawberries work too (and would be far less distracting for me!)
- Here's the one I really love – outfit your office with a bouquet. Alan Hirsch, founder and neurological director of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research foundation in Chicago claims "We found a mixed floral smell increases learning speed."

Great Escape

Take your vacation from good to great by doing some proactive planning.



It really pays to plan ahead.

When it comes to vacation, some people like the idea of spontaneity. The truth of the matter is, if you plan ahead, you have a chance to save a lot of money on airfare, hotel, car rental and even passport applications. That way, when you're on vacation, you'll have the peace of mind to really enjoy yourself, knowing everything is taken care of and paid in full.

Plan to save.

Most financial planners would agree that it is a foolish financial decision to take out a loan to pay for a vacation. So take some time to save for your vacation. When saving for a vacation, sock away funds incrementally—consider having your employer make a direct deposit out of each paycheck into a savings account, certificate of deposit or money-market account.

How much money will you need?

You'll want to construct your budget by making informed cost estimates of big items such as airfare, hotels, car rentals and dining. Don't forget to estimate small or unexpected expenses, such as tipping, souvenirs, snacks, shopping, host gifts and parking. Not accounting for these simple cash expenditures is where budgets often fall apart. Travel resources (such as the websites in this article, magazines or books), travel email lists and travel agents can help you pinpoint costs specific to locations.

Any special needs.

Are you traveling with kids? With grandparents? With the family dog? The earlier you plan, the more likely you'll be able to select seats behind the bulkhead (a good place for kids due to the extra space) or that hotel room at the end of the hall (quiet for grandparents.) Sometimes, the little things can make all the difference in the comfort of your trip.

The art of the passport.

If you're traveling abroad, you'll need a passport. It can take up to eight weeks to receive your passport during busy summer months, so you'll want to apply for your passport long before your departure date. There are different criteria for applying via mail or in person.

You can renew by mail if:

1. You can submit your most recent passport AND
2. You were at least 16 years old when your most recent passport was issued AND
3. You were issued your recent passport in the last 15 years AND
4. You use the same name as on your most recent passport or since your passport was issued, *OR* you have had your name changed by marriage or court order and can submit proper documentation to reflect your name-change.

If you answered "yes" to all four criteria, download form DS-82 and follow the instructions.

Source: http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/renew/renew_833.html

You must apply in person if:

1. You have never had a U.S. passport OR
2. You are under age 16 OR
3. Your most recent passport was issued more than 15 years ago OR
4. Your most recent passport was lost or stolen. (If you are applying because your most recent, valid passport was lost or stolen, you will also need to submit Form DS-64.)

If any of these apply to your situation, download form DS-11 and follow the instructions.

Source: http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html

Applications and instructions are available on the State Department's website at <http://travel.state.gov/passport>

How to get a passport in a hurry.

Yes, there is a way to beat the bureaucracy. You can expedite your passport application for a \$60 fee. Two-way, overnight delivery is strongly suggested. You should also clearly mark "Expedited" on the envelope. You should receive your passport in about two weeks.



Virtual Traveler

According to the Travel Industry Association, 79 million Americans (or 78% of online travel consumers) used the internet for some or all of their travel information in 2005, and that number continues to increase. Thanks to the power of the Internet, armchair traveling, bargain hunting and price comparing, finding help with budgets is easier than ever before.

Here are some websites to try:



www.farecast.com

To buy or not to buy? By entering your origin, destination and travel dates, the site provides you with fare predictions, fare histories and links to sites where you can purchase airline tickets.

www.kayak.com

A highly ranked search engine for all things travel, Kayak.com provides you with lists of the lowest or timeliest trip results, and then links you directly to the service providers so that you can purchase your flights, car rentals, and so on.

www.budgettravel.about.com

About.com's Budget Travel library includes articles on current travel info and planning tools, as well as links to message boards for live "chats".

www.seatguru.com or www.lovemysseat.com

Look up reviews of floor plans and information on about any configuration of airplanes you can imagine.

www.aaa.com

The American Automobile Association's best planning features are reserved for members, but some tools—notably, the Daily Fuel Gauge Report on gas prices nationwide and the Fuel Cost Calculator—are available for free.

www.tsa.gov

Given today's unpredictable travel climate, it's always a good idea to review the list featured on TSA's site for current prohibited and allowed travel items.



Travel Trends

What's hot this year? Here are the current top travel trends, according to Randall Travel Marketing:

Taking Fido on the road

More and more pet owners than ever are toting along their four-legged friends on their vacations.

Goin' to the game

Parents are increasingly budgeting travel around their children's sporting events, competitions or tournaments.

Keeping connected

Usually held in the summer, nearly eight million people travel to their family reunions every year.

Cross-generational travel

Four out of ten travelers are grandparents who are accompanying their grandchildren or extended family on vacation.

Getting into the environment

Nature and eco-tourism is an ever-increasing trend, generating approximately 7% of all international travel expenditures.

Ahhh, relax

Spas have been a popular destination for years, but nowadays, men are increasingly likely to be traveling to a spa as well as women.

Get out of dodge

Always popular among jet-setters, travel to the Caribbean is increasing in popularity, with TripAdvisor.com naming the following as the top 10 destinations for 2007:

- Anguilla
- Antigua
- Nevis
- Curacao
- Tortola
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Virgin Gorda
- Bonaire
- Dominica
- St. Vincent