

Weekender

Comment

Safety a prime concern

As summer holidays wind down, thousands of local youngsters will be heading back to school this coming Tuesday. That means school buses on the roads and youngsters walking or on bicycles traversing busy roadways.

And these children in the carefree innocence of youth often don't look where they're going. That puts the onus on mature motorists to be just a little more watchful when approaching youngsters walking or cycling.

Although something of a nuisance, especially on two-lane country roads, school buses require a special kind of vigilance on the part of motorists.

Firstly, it takes a great deal of patience to keep ones cool when following a school bus from stop to stop along its route. However, patience is exactly what's needed. After all, the safety of youngsters getting on and off buses is at stake.

Secondly, motorists should exercise extra vigilance in order to obey a school bus's flashing red lights. On busy highways it is vital that the flashing lights be respected. A vigilant driver can stop in time.

Let's have a safe and happy school year.



Southern climes are very enticing

Standing on the dock with my friend Lorna recently, marvelling at the stunning Lake Simcoe sunset, I began to sense summer's coming demise, and it made me think of the south.

(If I ever write a novel, I'm definitely using that as my opening sentence!)

Ah, the south. The islands of the Caribbean. The mountains that roll right down into the sea in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. The surf washing multi-colored shells onto white sand beaches. And those ocean sunsets that set the sky on fire, just like last Monday at Simcoe.

As blessed as we have been with sunshine and warmth this summer, (oh, come on now, what's a little rain?) it won't be easy to bid the season farewell. But when we do, it will be time once again to go down to the travel office and check out the latest fun in the sun brochures. These glossy little come-ons can rival the thrill of



actually flying south.

Each year, the tour operators compete to see whose printed material can best combine beer commercial "good life" propaganda with Playboy style seductiveness.

Personally, all I care about are the pictures showing the beach, those wind blown palm trees, the size of the waves, layout of the hotel, and, of course, the sunset shots.

Which is not to say, mind you, that I don't have any appreciation at all for the other types of scenery featured in the travel

brochures. It's just that too much "good living" on a trip south tends to bring you home needing a week's rest to recover from your holiday.

Now I know that some "south freaks" are not turned on by 747s and all inclusive Caribbean resorts. There are those who, like myself, hear the song "Ventura Highway" on the radio one cool late autumn morning and immediately begin fantasizing a four-wheeled winter escape, because, as the tune goes, "This town don't look good in snow."

Everybody should give in to this

urge at least once. I speak from experience here, having spent the winter of '72-'73 with the bride of six months, touring Mexico in a van on \$13 a day.

Best to do this while you are young, however. A constant exposure to budget Mexican fare would be sure to offend the more mature palate.

The most appealing thing about a winter holiday down south is that it lasts so long. Not the trip itself, but the two or three months before you go, as you study the brochures, and pump everyone you know who has been to where you are going, in order to get the complete run down of do's and don'ts.

The slides you bring home from your holiday will always be there so you can relive you trip in living color at any time.

And most people bitten by the southern sun and sand bug start planning next year's getaway the minute they arrive home, so it

makes for a great hobby, especially when you use all the video materials now available on the sun spots, for home viewers.

Sure it may be a little early to give up on summer and start plotting a winter getaway. But it takes times to coordinate these things, to convince your spouse or friends or relatives of the benefits of a week or two of relief from winter's icy grip. Like the man says "I love it when a plan comes together!"

Besides, I have friends in the travel business, and after the long season they have just suffered through with the European scares, they can use a little advance promotion for the winter ahead. Just trying to help out.

So we'll see you in the Dominican Republic in February. You'll thank me for it then.

And don't forget to bring your snappiest bathing suit. You just might end up in next year's brochure.

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