

Year round school a vacationer's heaven

While education minister John Snobelen's recent decision to reconsider the issue of year round school will cause traditionalists to seethe, it comes with visions of palm fringed beaches at bargain prices for me.

That's because year round school also means year round holidays.

Instead of being restricted to July and August for those two soggy weeks spent taking shelter in a leaky tent, leaving schools open all year would bring with it the choice of crapping out in May, June and September as well. Kids and teachers will get the same amount of time off. It will just be spread out over the entire year, with all the children of the same family able to take off simultaneously.

Rather than being restricted to the expensive summer months for air travel across Canada, families could plan that trip out west for May, June, September or October.

For those with a few more dollars at the disposal, how about a tour of the Greek Islands in the early fall when the weather is still lovely and the hordes of back packing students from all over the world are gone, providing a much quieter back drop for travellers who prefer tranquility and less crowded beaches.

But for my school teacher wife Susan and I, the real beauty of year round school is that it would enable us to escape winter's seemingly endless grip from time to time at bargain prices.

It's no secret that tour operators jack up the prices of their sun packages during the Christmas holidays and at March Break, when all the kiddies are out of school.

Not to mention the hazards of queuing up at the airport or taking to the highways leading to Florida when everyone else in Canada seems to be doing the same thing at those times.

Meanwhile, people not tied to the school schedule are free to take advantage of the near giveaway travel packages offered on sale annually in November, early December and throughout January.

As we found out last year while my wife was on maternity leave, these prices can be so cheap as to make it almost more expensive to stay home. But the same trips that are drastically reduced during these off-times suddenly more than double in price during Christmas and March Break.

Sure there will always be those among us who associate summer with that age old rural tradition of giving kids the summer off as they can help with the farm chores. But with most families today consisting of two working parents or a working single mom or dad, the summer months become just another day care hassle.

Granted, there are teachers who would never want to give up their extended summer leaves, and they will fight tooth and nail with the traditionalists to retain the status quo. There will also be those who argue that year round school will spell the end of summer jobs for students.

I intend to sit back and watch the whole debate unfold, putting in my two cents worth in favor of year round school whenever given the chance. I may even get out there and lobby a little, taking with me all those Caribbean



From Where I Live

Bruce Stapley

beach posters I usually scatter throughout the house to help me survive winter each year.

I realize I'll risk taking a few tomatoes in the face from die hards looking to keep the summer holidays of their youth.

I may even be forced to sit in the corner when attending those teacher parties my wife's past and present work mates hold a few times each year.

But I'm sticking to my guns. After all, there's nothing like the call of a steel band, a turquoise ocean and cheap rum to spur a man on to have the courage of his convictions.

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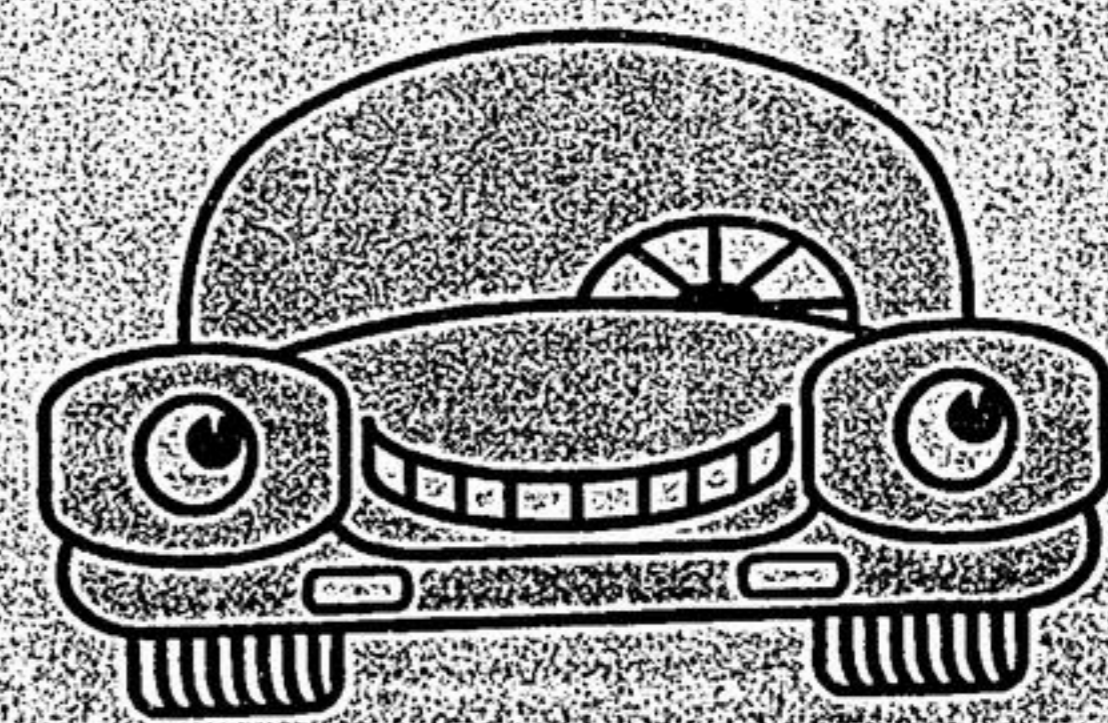
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