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Europe still popular

Vacationers seek deals for summer ventures

By MARY GNIEWEK

Farmington area residents are packing their suitcases and heading for vacationland despite the current recession and travel agencies don't expect the trend to change for awhile.

Winter holiday getaways in 1980 were at an even keel with previous years. Spring and summer vacation plans are expected to keep pace, several travel agents report.

"Europe will be as good as last year," said Jerry Wilcox, manager of the Farmington Travel Service.

"People who made their plans will go ahead with them. Next year, it may be a different story."

Agents say the American dollar is still strong in Spain, Greece and Great Britain, but warn travelers to steer clear of expensive Germany and Scandinavia.

Tourists are going more to package deals now to save on exchange rates abroad.

"We're preparing hotel and car rentals whereas on their own, tourists might end up paying \$100 more a week for auto rental," said Phillips McGraw, owner of McGraw Travel, Inc. of Farmington Hills.

England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales are considered excellent buys and Farmington area tourists are shelling out the money to pay for them.

WITH CREDIT CARDS accounting for half of all personal and commercial vacation spending, the federal government's recently recommended curtailment of credit buying is something tour agents plan to monitor.

"We have no idea what will happen with those who usually use Carte Blanche, American Express, Visa or Master Charge to pay for vacations," McGraw said.

"If there's a curtailment of credit, people will put their priority spending in food and shelter. Travel falls down the list somewhere after clothing."

More travelers are turning to air travel and less to road travel because of gasoline prices.

"I think fly/drive deals will become less popular," predicts Wilcox. "Winter

business to Florida indicated people are apprehensive about the availability of gas for rental cars.

"They're going more to one destination and staying put."

Where that isn't the case seems to be with Europe-bound travelers.

"Many take the lowest price charter

flight and go on from there," said Helen Laird, manager of Windward Travel, Inc. of Farmington Hills.

Despite that, Windward is still waiting to book its first Detroit to Brussels, Belgium supersaver airfare of \$333 — available through May 31.

LAIRD BELIEVES it hasn't happened yet because Brussels hasn't been

a tourist attraction like other European cities and would-be travelers are being more careful with their money.

The spring and summer brigade are expected to put their money on Florida and California, all-year vacation hotspots according to agents, and other domestic destinations.

While Arizona, Colorado and Mexico also continue to be big attractions, Ha-

waii has become less popular because of the rising cost of airfares.

"Whether Hawaii was underpriced for a long time and now is priced about right is hard to say," says Wilcox. "It was popular the last four or five years. Now we see less people going there."

Laird says airfares have risen from \$400 to \$600 roundtrip from Detroit to Hawaii in the past two years.



Skating

Heidi Meissner of Farmington Hills, will be delighting the public when she performs at the Southfield Sports Arena, 26000 Evergreen beginning March 23. Tickets be purchased beginning Jan 21 at the arena to see this six-year veteran perform along with a host of other acts. (Staff photos By Mindy)

All clear given in radiation exposure case

By MARY GNIEWEK

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has ruled out any serious threat to the health of 20 employees who were exposed to radiation leaks from a Farmington Hills x-ray company between 1977 and 1979.

According to the NRC, workers in two shops which adjoined American X-Ray and Inspection, Inc. at 2400 Haggerty Road, were not exposed to levels of radiation that would be considered damaging to their health.

The NRC considers more than two millirems of radiation an hour exces-

sive exposure for the public, but allows workers who deal with radioactive material to be exposed to higher levels.

An investigation into the possibility of overexposure was triggered by the NRC after it revoked American X-Ray's license Feb. 28 for not following regulations while doing industrial radiography work at its Farmington Industrial Center site.

"We've gotten far enough into the investigation to know there's no serious threat to employees," said Jan Strassman, an NRC spokesman in Chicago.

Strassman wouldn't comment further about the findings.

"We'll meet with these employees before we release that information," he said.

It probably will be another month

before the NRC meets with employees, he said.

OWNERS OF THE two businesses, MEG Inc., a stamping plant at 24008

Haggerty, and McDonald Enterprises, a tool and die shop at 24004 Haggerty, provided NRC investigators with information about workers employed be-

tween February 1977 and July 1979 — the time American X-Ray did radiography work in a garage that has a common wall with the two businesses.

Two NRC investigators from the Chicago regional office simulated radiation experiments to test levels of exposure. The team had to figure out how much radiation leaked, who was employed during those hours, and what shielding the employees had.

The Michigan Department of Public Health will receive copies of the findings. A spokesman for the health department said overexposure can lead to cell damage and cancer.

The NRC suspended American X-Rays license citing three violations: not making adequate survey of the area around the facility, not controlling access to areas where radiation levels exceeded the danger level to public health, and improper transfer of license to Gorsira X-Ray Inc., operating at the same address as American X-Ray.

The probe was initiated following a tip from a former employee who alleged violations were occurring at the plant. Investigators conducted their work in January.

Industrial radiography involves making X-rays of heavy metal objects to detect flaws and test adequacy levels.

Pets galore

Kids show off friends

One brave cat stood fast against the curious stares of several much larger dogs while a guinea pig named Rosie discovered it hated to be seen in crowds.

The occasion which prompted the young owners, their mothers and 16 household animals to come together at the Farmington Library Thursday afternoon was a pet show in honor of National Library Week.

Pets came in all types and sizes, disproving the adage that dogs alone are man's best friend.

The smallest pet was a ladybug captured by an enthusiastic library-goer on the way to the show. One of the largest was Max, a 2 1/2-year-old dog who flaunted his mixed bovier des Flandres and German shepherd strains.

As Max strained at his leash wanting to join the other dogs and Rusty the cat, owners Carole Racini and daughter Michelle, 2 1/2, tried to dissuade him.

"He doesn't always listen to me," said Mrs. Racini. "He listens to my husband who has a deep resonant voice."

But Max turned out to be a great pal for Michelle who tries to convert him into a horse — much to her mother's dismay.

"You never know with an animal. It could still turn on you," she fretted.

AS IF to belie Mrs. Racini's motherly fears, Max appeared to be as friendly as he was large.

But like all the dogs waiting for their moment in the pet show spotlight, Max kept an eye on the cat.

Rusty, the lone feline in the group, was firmly entrenched next to his owner, Michele Rhoton and her son, Craig, 4.

Asked why her cat exhibited few signs of fear in such a situation, Mrs. Rhoton replied matter-of-factly, "It could be that dumb."

As each animal and young owner had a chance to bask in the attentions of the entire pet show, the gathering had a chance to view the talents of Misty, a Highland terrier who is an obedience school graduate.

"Here, Misty, here," coaxed owner Abby Pook of Farmington Hills.

Misty dutifully approached.

"Sit, Misty, sit."

Misty, aware of all the attention she was receiving, didn't dutifully plop herself down on the sidewalk.

But Misty earned a round of admiration for herself, anyway.

The 10-year-old dog took obedience classes "a long time ago," Mrs. Pook explained.

Nichols says he's staying

Farmington Hills Police Chief John Nichols quashed rumors Thursday that he is being considered for the top police job in Ann Arbor.

A report on Ann Arbor radio station WPAG-AM last week stated that Nichols, a former police chief and mayor contender in Detroit, was one of four persons being considered to fill the post of retiring Police Chief Walter Krasny.

Krasny is expected to leave June 1 after 41 years with the department.

Krasny denied that Nichols is a candidate for the job.

"He didn't apply," Krasny said. Nichols said he is happy with his present job and called the report "nothing more than a rumor."

WPAG News Director Ted Hausel said the report came from a reporter who covers city hall news for the station.

MISTY WAS accompanied also by Lesley Pook, 3 1/2.

The cats and dogs were joined by goldfish, carefully carried in their bowls by their owners. Two white mice frolicked in a shoe box unaware of the hungry stares belonging to Rusty, the cat.

Rosie, the shy guinea pig, hid in her paper bag.

But each owner and pet received a ribbon and a small toy in acknowledgment of their performance at the show. To top it off, the show's unscheduled grand finale was several minutes of play on the library lawn for the youngsters and their pets.

And nobody fought like cats and dogs.

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a brand new column in **Shopping Cart**

Ask the Chef
by Ben Pearlman

who has a solution for couples who find it hard to cook dinner after working all day.



A furry buddy is good company for Aubrey Ducker, 4, in her furry coat which she wore during the pet show at the Farmington Library. Her furry friend, by the way, is a guinea pig. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)