

Travel should be more than just seeing sights

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Arthur Frommer doesn't think people's brains should stop functioning when they go on vacation.

"Travel should be a learning experience," said Frommer, author of "Europe on \$30 a Day." If that's not the case, travel isn't worth the effort and expense involved.

Frommer, a Yale University Law School graduate, practiced law for some time in New York and remains a member of the New York Bar. He served in Europe with U.S. Army Intelligence, having been drafted during the Korean War.

He wrote "The G.I.'s Guide to Travel in Europe" back then. Frommer got to thinking in the 1950s that he should write a similar guide for civilians.

"Europe on \$5 a Day" was published in 1957, and has been updated annually, now up to "Europe on \$30 a Day" (Prentice Hall). Frommer's also the author of "The New World

of Travel" (Prentice Hall), first published in 1958.

THE COMMERCIAL travel industry has debased the educational level of travel, Frommer said.

"We travel thousands of miles to gaze at the Eiffel Tower or the Golden Gate Bridge." That does little to enhance people's lives.

The success of Boston-based Elderhostel points to the increasing popularity of travel as a learning activity, Frommer said. That program provides older people with hundreds of low-cost study courses all over the world.

Elderhostel's so popular that it's spawned a competitor, Interhostel, based at the University of New Hampshire.

Younger adults also are seeking more substantive vacations, Frommer said. Some study at Oxford and Cambridge in England.

"Learning is studied for the love of learning."

Even cruises have been affected by the trend, he said. "Expedition

cruising" is part of the travel industry.

Smaller cruise ships, for example, visit the coast of Alaska, with naturalists and historians providing lectures. Winter trips to the Antarctic are also available.

Those who don't want to spend vacation time studying should at least seek a trip that's intimately associated with people, Frommer said. Travelers should stay in an area as residents, not as tourists.

VACATIONS BASED on home stays rather than hotel stays are increasingly popular. Staying in a private home with a family that doesn't make its living on that basis is one option.

The United States Service Committee, based in New York City, arranges such visits worldwide.

"I think it enlivens the vacation activity enormously," Frommer said.

Those who don't want to spend an entire vacation with a family should consider such a stay for two or three days.

"Health could be the purpose of a vacation." Some tour operators do nothing but spa tours. Not all U.S. spas are exceedingly expensive, and visiting European spas in the off-season is an option for some Americans.

Closer to home, the Seventh-day Adventist Church operates health facilities open to non-members. Some other facilities, such as yoga communities, emphasize mental health improvement.

If that sounds overly experimental, travelers may want to consider a vacation at summer camp. The Universalist-Unitarian Church is an excellent source of information on such camps, Frommer said. Those camps combine summer recreational activities for adults with classroom discussions and lectures.

Many colleges and universities make their facilities available to non-student learners in the summer. Cornell's Adult University in Ithaca, N.Y., has been a leader in that area.

SOME TRAVELERS make volun-

tary service their vacation focus. Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, volunteer their time with the Habitat for Humanity organization, working on refurbishing low-cost housing.

Thousands of Americans volunteer with the Israeli army, cooking, mowing lawns, sorting artillery parts and doing whatever else is needed. Political vacations are the choice of some who visit Third World islands and countries to inquire into the realities of life there.

Texas-based Global Awareness Through Experience is run by an order of nuns, and provides information on such trips. The Center for Global Education in Minneapolis, Minn., is another information source.

A less political variant includes tours run by feminist tour operators. Minneapolis-based Woodwoman provides wilderness activities for women travelers.

Frommer encourages travelers to consider new and more unusual destinations, such as the capitals and other cities of eastern Europe. The Soviet Union is also a more common travel destination for Americans, he said, as is Turkey.

Paris remains Frommer's favorite city. Part of the attraction is the anti-American attitude he's found there.

"To me, that's a reason for going there. That's the reason for travel." He enjoys talking with the French and finding out why some have that attitude.

Audience members enjoyed Frommer's presentation.

"We just thought travel was a real timely topic. He certainly had something to offer for everyone," said Nancy Quirk of Northville, Town Hall president. The Town Hall program is sponsored by Our Lady's League at Our Lady of Victory Church, Northville.

"I think he came up with a lot of things most people don't know about, a lot of new ideas," Quirk said. Her family visited Ireland in 1986 and



Arthur Frommer talks about travel as a learning activity and an experience that will enhance people's lives.

used one of Frommer's guides during that trip.

Betty Childs of Plymouth enjoyed the presentation.

"I couldn't agree more with him that travel is one of the best forms of education," Childs said. She and her husband have participated in Elderhostel programs. They recently visited Lake Superior State University in Michigan's Upper Peninsula through Elderhostel, and learned about the history of that area.

club circuit

PARENTS WITHOUT PARTNERS, Huron Valley Regional Council, hosts a Grande New Years Eve Celebration from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m. Dec. 31 in Plymouth Radisson, 14707 Northville Road. Admission is \$14 which includes food and favors. Cash bar. This event is open to guests.

SATURDAY NIGHT SINGLES, UPTOWN SINGLES, BIRMINGHAM, BLOOMFIELD, TROY SINGLES AND BBT-NORTHSIDE DANCE PARTIES join to host a New Year's Eve celebration party from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. in Roma's of Bloomfield, Telegraph north of Square Lake Road in Bloomfield Hills.

The event is open to all singles who are over 21 years.

Cost is \$30 in advance, by calling the Saturday Night Singles hotline, 652-7878, or \$40 at the door.

The pay-one-price package includes beverages, hot and cold hors d'oeuvres, entertainment, music for dancing by Eddie Rogers of LITE-FM, hats and noise makers, pizza snack, champagne at midnight, desert and fruit table, continental breakfast and a midnight countdown.

FARMINGTON FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP OF THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE ASSOCIATION

meets at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 2 in Farmington Nursing Home, 30405 Folsom Road. The support group is for caregivers, family members and friends of individuals afflicted by the disease.

Inquiries are taken by the nursing home, 477-7400.

LAMAZE CHILD/BIRTH EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF LIVONIA schedules the beginning of classes at four area locations in January. All classes begin at 7 p.m.

The series begins Wednesday, Jan. 3, in Novi High School, on Tuesdays beginning Jan. 9 in St. Valentine Church, Redford; on Mondays beginning Jan. 15 in Faith Community Church in Novi; and on Thursdays beginning Jan. 18 in Memorial

Church of Christ in Livonia.

Classes offer information about pregnancy, labor, delivery, a childbirth film, breathing techniques, relaxation exercises, and comfort measures.

Information and registration calls are taken by the association, 462-9850, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Mondays and Fridays, and from noon to 7 p.m. Tuesdays.

All club news and announcements for this column are to be addressed to: Club Circuit, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024. The information must arrive before noon on the Monday before Thursday publication.

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