

## IRIS SANDERSON JONES

### Travel for tykes is company's mission

Rascals in Paradise. I love that name. I have occasionally threatened to send my kids to paradise during a summer vacation, sometimes to a hotter destination.

I called the toll-free number that goes with that great name and got one of the founders, Deborah Baratta, in San Francisco. Debbie and Theresa Detchemendy both worked in the tour wholesale business for a dozen years before they started traveling with kids of their own and learned the terrible truth.

Traveling with kids requires a little expertise. They combined their travel and parental experience when they decided that parents "need somebody to sort out the vast array of options available for families."

They produce guides, set up special weeks at certain resorts for families and organize exotic family tours. A safari in Kenya, for example.

"FAMILIES DON'T need us to plan a trip to Disney World or Club Med, because they can get that information at any travel agency. But if they want something different, we help them."

Who pays? Debbie and Theresa are regular travel agents earning commissions from resorts and hotels, so their services are free. However, they charge a consulting fee if you want them to research a house in France for a month or something else that is not commissionable.

They'll recommend a resort for families any time, but also arrange specific weeks at specific resorts as family weeks and send an escort along to organize children's activities. If it's in Mexico, for example, the kids can visit a tortilla factory or Mayan ruins.

Rascals in Paradise also produces free guides. Call for their free catalog or a guide on a specific destination or tour. They organize family reunions, grandparent trips, everything to do with families.

This is definitely not economy travel, but if you want to explore a 15-night African safari (\$2,495 per adult, \$1,725 per child 5-16 years old), or a cottage in the Abacos for \$500 and up, call (800) U-RASCALS and see what you get.

#### FAMILY FAIRE

Another tour group claiming family travel expertise opened last year in North Hollywood, Calif. Family Faire offers hotels and condominiums in California, Nevada and Hawaii, each selected on the basis of family needs. Get your Family Faire fun guide by calling toll-free (800) 677-4FUN.

#### GRANDTRAVEL

Grandparents love to spoil the kids and then send them home. If you'd rather spend some travel time with your grandchildren, explore a tour group called Grandtravel that offers trips ranging from a 15-day Alaska wilderness adventure (\$5,000 each) to a 10-day tour of California for half that price.

Grandtravel and Hilton Hotels also offer week-long trips to Manhattan for \$2,275 per person, double occupancy; July 7-14 for grandchildren 12-17; July 21-28 for kids 7-11.

#### MIDWEST KID NEWS

• A children's midjet auto was recently added to the Studebaker National Museum's

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## Kids get 'slimed' at Florida park

By Iris Sanderson Jones  
special writer

Can you eat the Gak on Double Dare? Can you name the dragon on Eureka's Castle? Have you ever been slimed?

If you can't answer these questions, you are more than 15 years old, have no children at home and don't watch the Nickelodeon cable network.

You can still tour the Nickelodeon Studios in Orlando, Fla., but only if you are accompanied by a child age 2-15. Adults can watch the shows being filmed and participate in the insanity of Game Lab, but only the kids can get slimed.

Nickelodeon celebrated its 12th birthday as a children's television network this year, which makes it about the same age as most of its viewers. The cable company's brief early attempt to uplift and educate children met with the scorn of kids nationwide, so now the program schedule is divided into three parts.

There is gentle fun for little kids; '60s sitcoms for kids to watch with their parents during "Nick at Nite" time; and berserk gross-out humor for the after-school crowd, kids who know all about Gak and love to be slimed.

If dad wants to know whose fault this is, tell him that Nickelodeon president Geraldine Laybourne, a former school teacher, has a round desk and lots of slime in her New York City office.

She taught at poor schools and rich schools before taking time off to raise her own two sons and found just how bad daytime television was. That's when she started developing original programs under state arts council grants.

When she joined Nickelodeon 11 years ago, nobody told her what to do so she tried everything, including "Things You Can't Do On Television," the name of one of Nick's favorite programs.

Gerry celebrated Nickelodeon's 10th birthday by opening a working studio on Universal Studios' grounds in Orlando, where they tape TV shows and issue daily television reports from the blue-and-orange studio building. The studio is easy to find, because of the giant Green Slime Geyser that sends "the planet's only known source of slime" up in a fountain 17 feet high and 25 feet wide.

You might have to stand in line an hour for the tour, or any other popular attraction at Universal Studios on a busy day in high season, but at least you line up in the shade. It's hot in Florida in the summer, so wear your coolest clothes and prepare to walk a lot.

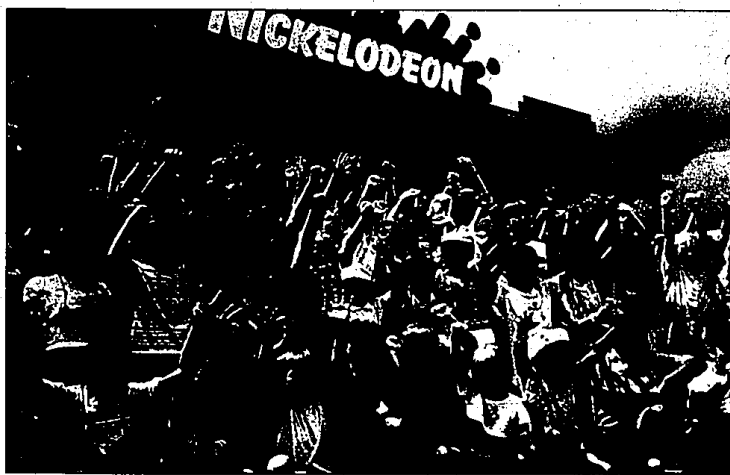
A Nickelodeon guide takes you up the stairs and along corridors called "tubes," where you can look down through glass to the sets of your favorite shows. They tape shows like "Eureka's Castle, Welcome Freshman, Make the Grade, Family Double Dare" and "Think Fast."

If you want to participate in Game Labs, or be in the studio audience for any of the shows, ask about Nickelodeon tickets at the theme park entrance; sometimes Nick employ-

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Small fry visitors to Nickelodeon Studios in Florida will find themselves facing the business end of a slime-filled bucket (above). If they're among the chosen few attending the event called Game Lab, at left, kids mug for the camera outside the main gate to Nick's studios.



## Flight attendant offers tips on family travel

Joyce Baker of Farmington Hills is a Northwest Airlines flight attendant who occasionally shares her travel expertise with us.

By Joyce Baker  
special writer

The popular movie "Home Alone" features a young boy whose parents accidentally left him at home when they went on vacation. That may be a parent's nightmare and a child's fantasy (or is it vice versa?), but it requires a stretch of the imagination to be believable. It was, however, an amusing concept.

You may never go that far, but there are some things many parents leave behind, things that could help make the traveling part of your trip easier for you and more fun for the children.

Whether you are visiting grandma or Mickey Mouse, traveling with children requires more than packing bags and leaving. There are four stages to any trip: Planning, preparation, traveling and coming home.

#### PLANNING

What are the specifics of the trip? Weather, location (beach, mountains, etc.), length of stay, accommodation needs (hotel, cabin, time-share apartment) are a few examples. Consider possible activities for the children.

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## Reunion, 40th anniversary combined on cruise ship

Luba and Allan Grundy of West Bloomfield were looking for a way to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary, as well as Allan's 60th birthday, with their children. They have four sons, two of them married, and five grandchildren. They chose a short cruise aboard the Fantasy. Here is their story:

By Luba Grundy  
special writer

We needed accommodations for 13 people, with something for everyone to enjoy and a restaurant where 13 people could sit together and find food to each one's liking. Our oldest son, wife and two children are strict vegetarians. We de-

cided the best for us was a cruise. After much research we decided on the Carnival Lines Fantasy for a four-day trip.

We made invitations and mailed them to our sons and families. When we all met on board, seeing each other, we knew we had made the right decision. We had four cabins close to one another.

Allan and I made bags of goodies for each cabin and topped them off with bags of confetti. As we sailed out of port we all threw confetti overboard and at each other. The good times began.

On the ship there was plenty to do. The younger ones, age 3, 7, 9, 9 and 11, loved the big pool and slide, the whirlpool, ping pong, sauna, shuffleboard and video games.

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Luba and Allan Grundy took a family reunion Caribbean cruise to celebrate their 40th anniversary. From left, son Leon Grundy, son Jeffrey Grundy, Allan Grundy, Luba Grundy, son Bruce Grundy and son-in-law Mukia Khalisa.