TRAVEL

Mental health week in Caribbean eases blahs



The winter of 1993-94 has left a lot of us traumatized for life. A week in the warm sun, warm warm waters of the

aribbean is now regarded more a a "mental health week" than a

tunury.

"I'm not really a beach person myself," admitted Kaye Britton owner of Kaye Britton Travel, Ltd. in Farmington Hills. "But a week in the Caribbean in February is a different matter. Seven days of sunshine and 80 degreesplus temperatures help me get through the rest of our Michigan winter."

winter."
Britton, who seems to have been almost everywhere on earth, has made dozens of trips to the Caribbean, and her aprox, which specializes in leisure travel, has sent thousands of vacationers on cruises to specific island destinations.

sent thousands of vacationers or cruises to specific island destina-tions.

Take a look at a map of the Caribbean and you'll wonder how anybody decides which island is his or her particular paradise.

"There are so many islands," said Britton. "Many people so come acquainted with he most popular destinations by taking a cruise, and some of these travelers like stopping at a different desti-nation every day so that they pre-er settle on just one favorite.

"Others, however, find their dream island and want to po back there and explore for their entire winter vacation. If a dream island is uninhabited, it is sometimes possible that a hotel will drop a

couple off with a food hamper and pick them up later the same day."
One of the best known is the U.S. Virgin Islands. St. Thomas is both exotic and American and as wonderful introduction to the Caribbean. On one side of the island is a beautiful, peaceful bay, and the other side is a shoppers paradise, where fine linens, gold jewelry and liquor are available at low prices.

Daytime temperstures January to March stay in the mid-90s and drop into the 70s at alght. There are many sugar-white public beaches, golf, horse-back riding, scuba diving, windusring and many more activities that take advantage of the perfect climate.

As in most Caribbean resort activative style entertainment.
Denise Schmalt, manager character, and the soft of the perfect climate. As in cost Caribbean resort antive-style entertainment.
Denise Schmalt, manager can the pristing surrounding of the pristing surrounding of the pristing surrounding of such a force of the pristing surrounding of St. John Island Almost the whole island is a national park, and it's truly an island paradise, including a rain forest.

"St. John lant all landscape.

truly an island paradise, including a rain forest.

"St. John isn't all landscape, though. There's a lively night life and wonderful dining. The water is crystal-clear, so lit's a voite place for snortelers."

Schmalz is a beach person, so when she says that Grand Cayman is her favorite, it's a real tribute.

ute.

"It's clean and safe and very British," said Schmalz. And it has some of the most beautiful white-sand beaches anywhere.

Tips for a sunnier trip

We go to the Caribbean because the warm sun and beach life make us feel better. Observing a few simple precautions will assure maximum enjoyment from the blue skies and white sand:

B Guard against the sun. The closer the equator, the more intense the sun's rsys. Avoid the sun during peak hours, 10 am.

10 3 p.m. Always use sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 15 or higher. Apply a thick cost an half-hour before going out and re-analytic resultaily. Propand white sand:

B Guard against the sun. The closer the equator, the more intense the sun's rays. Avoid the sun during peak hours, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Always use sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 15 or higher. Apply a thick coat an half-hour before going out and re-apply it regularly. Proper eye protection is essential. Wear sungleases that filter out at least 65 percent of the visible light. at least to ble light.

There may be a good reason why that beautiful beach is deserted: Dangerous tides, underwater perils or harmful algae blooms. When in doubt, ask at the hors!

Scube diving is fantastic, and, if you're not certified, there's the "Atlantic Submarine," which provides underwater trips 100 feet down. You can also rent a Moped and tour the island on your own. Black coral jewelry is a favorite tiem in the duty-free abopes. "Grand Cayman is so beautiful and so romantic, it's a favorite with honeymooners."

One more suggestion from Kayo Britton: "Aruba, a Dutch territory just off the Veneruelan coast, is a favorite destination of many clients. It's not pretty in a dramatic

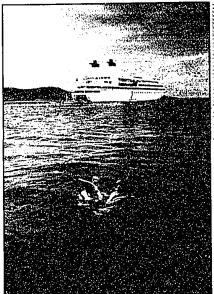
don't forget to cover your an-heles.

Before you go, call the U.S.
Centers for Diseass Control
and Prevention at (404)3324559 for a health and safety
update on your destination.
For island-specific informa-tion, call the Bureau of Consu-lar Affairs (202)647-5225.
These lines are very busy, so
give yourself plenty of time to
get through.

sense. There are no mountains, but the beaches are gorgeous. There are casinos and every hotel has a show, but what draws people are the water sports. And, it's out of the hurricane area."

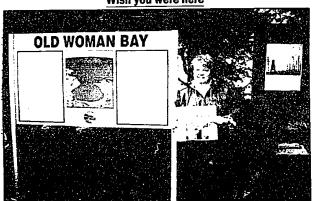
There's an (apocryphal) story about a couple who were so depressed last January that they flew to a Caribbean destination in the morning apent a few hours in

flew to a Caribbean destination in the morning, spent a few hours in 80-degree temperatures, and flew home that same evening. Maybe you'd never do that, but it's comforting to know that you can, isn't it?



Cruising: Royal Cruise Line's all-suite, 212-passenger Queen Odyssey, debuts in January 1995 on warm-weath-er itineraries featuring hideways in the Caribbean.





On vacation: Fran Johnson of Farmington has a sense of humor. Her family snapped this photo of her while they were vacationing on Lake Superior. This photo was taken at Provincial Park in Ontario, Canada. "The weather was cold and rainy, but the bay was gorgeous!

Great Escapes

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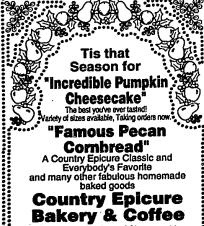
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