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Newest Vacation Idea—

Here's the novel way two families enjoyed a fabulous

By GEORGE J. JAFFE

WAYNE AND LEE Roush of Denver knew they faced a "now or maybe never" situation when it came to spending a long vacation with their children, Mike, 15, and Susan, 12.

"After all, when your children become teen-agers, there aren't many summers left to enjoy vacations together," Lee said.

"So when we learned my husband would have a rare, free summer from teaching history at Abraham Lincoln High School, we made up our minds to spend at least six weeks with the children seeing another part of America.

"But we had a problem: a six-week vacation for four seemed so costly!"

That was during the winter of 1962. At the same time, a similar budget problem was facing Miss "Tommy" Gotham, a schoolteacher who lived in Glendale, Calif., with her widowed mother.

ela, as well as from every state in the Union.

The club's director and guiding light, Mrs. Betty Ostroff, says the reason for the almost instant success of the group is simple:

"The essential ingredient of a satisfying vacation is to have a change in one's mode of living," she explains. "Many urban families relish farm vacations, while those from tranquil communities welcome visits to a bustling metropolis. Equally important is the fact that by exchanging homes, our members can enjoy a four- or six-week vacation for less than the cost of a two-week stay at an expensive resort hotel."

To bring its members together (yearly dues: \$5.00; no other charges), the club sends them an annual Vacation Exchange Directory which lists homes available for exchange (sometimes rental), plus periodic supplementary lists as needed. That's how the Roushes and Gothams learned of each other and began a correspondence which ended in an exchange of homes last summer.

"While Miss Gotham knew she wanted to come to Denver from the outset," explained Mrs. Roush, "our vacation plans were less fixed. We wrote to other club members in the West, too, but Mike and Susan were the ones who

Exchanging Homes!

summer holiday without straining their budgets at all

essentials for the next morning. You've no idea how much this helped us feel at home!

"Then there was the advantage of living in a private home, where we could relax, dress as we wanted, come and go as we pleased, and just be ourselves. We found it refreshing not to have the phone constantly jangling or appointments and meetings to pressure us. The lack of these pressures presented a family togetherness that sometimes gets lost at home—and a togetherness we could never have enjoyed vacationing in a hotel.

"Another thing we liked was being able to go sight-seeing as the spirit moved us. If one of us didn't feel like joining a day's excursion, he could stay around the house. And despite our nonhectic schedule, we saw many of the points of interest Miss Gotham had suggested."

Among the 28 tourist spots the Roushes visited in and around Los Angeles were the Huntington Art Gallery, the Greek Theater (tickets supplied by a friendly neighbor), Farmer's Market, Disneyland, and Forest Lawn Cemetery. Mike and Susan were so impressed by the stained-glass reproduction of Leonardo Da Vinci's "The Last Supper" at Forest Lawn that they borrowed library books on the Renaissance painter.

Miss Gotham felt the same way. "Mother and I liked knowing a nice family was caring for our place, too. I guess we had had some qualms at first—we'd never left our place to strangers before. We carefully put away our china collection and antiques. But the instant we met the Roushes, we realized how unnecessary that had been!"

During their five weeks in Denver, the Gothams also did a giant share of Colorado sight-seeing. Of the 47 places the Roushes suggested they see, the Gothams got to "at least 40."

"The Denver area thrilled us," says Miss Gotham, "as did Colorado Springs, Rocky Mountain National Park, and the Garden of the Gods. Shopping was excellent in Denver, too, which is something Mother and I love to do whenever we visit strange cities."

The exchange of homes caused only one mix-up. "Both families put the gas and electric accounts in their own names while occupying each other's places," Miss Gotham reported. "It was weeks before the companies sent the right bill to the right party."

"I guess their computing machines aren't geared for exchange vacations yet, though they probably would be wise to consider it."



The Roush family voted to swap Denver for Glendale, California. Son Mike especially relished a trip to Catalina Island and swimming in the Pacific.

"I wondered how Mother and I could afford two months in Colorado while I attended summer sessions at Denver University," said Miss Gotham. "Living in a hotel or motel for that length of time—what with tipping, eating out, and so forth—would have been terribly expensive!"

Fortunately, the Gothams and the Roushes heard, almost simultaneously, about a newly formed organization, the Vacation Exchange Club. This bit of luck not only solved their vacation-budget problem but led to the best summer either family had ever spent.

The Vacation Exchange Club was founded three years ago by a group of teachers as a service to their colleagues seeking inexpensive vacations. But the idea was so popular that the club soon had many nonteachers in its ranks.

Today, its 500 enthusiastic members include families from such faraway places as West Germany and Venezu-

finally decided us on seeing Southern California.

"My husband and I happily agreed. By making Glendale our destination, we would get a chance to use the camping equipment we'd been buying for two years. If we camped one week on the way down and one week back, that would give us four weeks to see Southern California."

On July 19, the Roushes piled into their car and headed southwestward. For a week they camped overnight at such spots as Oak Creek Canyon, Glen Canyon Dam, and Bryce Canyon National Park. They loved it—but they found the four weeks at the Gothams' in Glendale an equally satisfying experience.

"There are many advantages in an 'exchange home' vacation," Lee Roush pointed out. "For example, the Saturday night we reached our destination—at 10:30 p.m. and tired!—a neighbor lady rushed to greet us with breakfast



One of the sight-seeing thrills for the Gothams was Rocky Mountain National Park.



Mrs. Gotham and daughter "Tommy" chose Denver for its university.

But good-looking Mike Roush, who is on the swimming team of Denver's North High School, especially liked the boat ride to Catalina Island ("What a difference from living in Colorado!") and swimming in the Pacific.

Susan Roush especially liked the Los Angeles radio programs directed to teen-agers: "My transistor was on the whole four weeks!" Another exciting touch for Susan was finding a girl who had just moved to California from Denver. They met the first Sunday the Roushes attended services at the North Glendale Methodist Church. (Mike and Susan are active members of the Youth Fellowship of their Denver church.)

Their father, Wayne, enjoyed the exchange vacation with particular peace of mind: "It gave me a feeling of well-being knowing the Gothams were back there keeping an eye on our Denver homestead!"

"Exchanging homes is a grand idea! We plan to do it again this summer. We've kept in touch with the Roushes and might return to their place, though they want to exchange with someone in the East this year. We might work out a three-way exchange, since Mother and I would like another summer in Denver."

As Mrs. Roush said, "Exchanging homes is such a practical solution to financing family vacations, I wonder why someone didn't think of it sooner. It didn't take us long to realize that the comfort and convenience of our arrangement were just as advantageous as the sizable amount of money we saved."

Further details on the Vacation Exchange Club may be obtained by writing to the club's headquarters: Dept. FW, 554 Fifth Ave., New York 36, N.Y.

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