

## VACATIONS

03-30-2015 by Harry Zirkelbach

Grandpa, did you take many vacations?

Yes, Geoff. And each differed.

Ask Barbara and she will tell that I took lots of vacations, as monthly week-ends with the Navy Reserve removed me from family chores. Then yearly, two consecutive weeks, usually summer, where me and the boys trained in Navy Aviation duties, then shared exaggerated tales, ate, drank, laughed all the other hours.

But as youth Geoff, my family never had a vacation. Only once in their married life did my parents vacation together; a trip to Montreal in the 1930s. Then four years after our marriage, I picked them up in Erie in 1955, drove them to Denver for a week with Barbara, the three boys, and myself. It would be memorable for Mom, who died two years later.

When young, vacations for Barbara and me were all adventures; because we tried to take all the children.

Probably the most memorable, the last as family, in 1968. I had two weeks vacation, took two additional weeks for Navy training. We drove a VW bus to Erie. Barbara and the children stayed with those relatives, while I went to Quonset Point Rhode Island for Training. At that conclusion, June 8, Barbara drove to Albany, New York to meet me. We drove to Washington D.C. spending another week with her relatives.

Meantime, Bobby Kennedy was assassinated, dying June 6, the funeral Mass held at St Patrick's Cathedral New York on June 8. Four of the 44 Presidents have been assassinated. Of the estimated 3000 who have been Senators, Bob Kennedy was the second so killed.

On Monday June 10, we and our McLain relatives attended 8:00 am Mass at their parish, St Luke's. We were surprised to find Ethyl Kennedy and her older children in the front row. Songs during those private moments were sung by Andy Williams, the family friend, who repeated "Battle Hymn of the Republic" as performed nationally the day before.

Then our relatives took us to all the sights and restaurants of the nation's Capitol.  
Afterward we meandered to Colorado, taking as many back roads as possible.  
An historic, memorable time with our children.

On retirement, the children out of the house, we vacationed in Hawaii six times,  
twice in Japan, once in Australia; twice in Italy and Spain, three times in England,  
four times in Belgium and France, five times in Germany, once in Israel.

We began each alone, joined an a small army of new friends everywhere. Each trip  
required at least four weeks. None were a waste. Photo and Scrap Books followed  
each adventure. All those days secure in memory.

Now, an adventure in going to any Colorado mountain town for a few days, with  
one of the children.

#### Memorable moments?

...Walking through a Shinto shrine in Kyoto Japan, having another tourist call out  
our name.

...The last leg of a flight to Australia, the military flight crew is introduced over the  
P.A., and we learn the Air Force Major is the son of a sorority sister to Barbara.

...On the first trip to London, we take the city tour; in the morning we learn of  
the locations destroyed, rebuilt, because of German bombs; after lunch the tour is  
augmented by German tourists,. WW II no longer exist.

Now Geoff, it's your turn to travel.  
Then tell us your stories.