

Planning Ahead
(a true story)

By Loweta Kimball

Plan your work then work your plan: a motto for success in any venture. An idea is not a plan. The idea must be discussed with those involved to make a plan. For example: a family vacation. If it is to be a family vacation, then the family needs to be a part of the planning.

One memorable event I recall was the fishing trip from you know where under the pretense of a family vacation. First presented to me in April of that year to begin around the first of June when the children were out of school. That's all Mister said. No destination and no return date. Response to my where and when questions were, "Don't know yet."

Yes, I was annoyed at the short, seemingly noncommittal responses but not yet worried, after all, it was spring of the year and he was a basketball coach for a championship high school team that was playing in the finals, and he did say after school was out. To me that meant June. So, I had something to go on. Two months to organize a vacation for four children and three adults, unless Grandma preferred to stay home.

My immediate plans were to identify a kennel for the dog, but for when and for how long? Next, check the lawn watering schedule to determine how my prize-winning plants and grape vines could be cared for while I was away. But for how long? How would we travel? The questions kept coming. He said I was beginning to nag!

By the first of May I put notes around the house that read: Family vacation: begin date; end date; destination; accommodations; how traveling; what activities? Please fill in the blanks, I'm desperate! The children and I found the note-writing effective when he seemed overly occupied. I also think he enjoyed the writing as from his students. His responses were:

Begin date: June 3

End date: August 30

Destination: Kansas, Louisiana, Texas

Travelling: by car

Accommodations: camper

What activities: fishing

Because one of the destination spots was Kansas, I immediately notified my parents and began organizing with renewed vigor. But, wait a minute! We don't have a camper. I panicked and called him at his office. He said, "Don't worry, we'll buy one." "When?" I asked, "and what does it have in it?" The response was, "We'll buy it together." Finally, a word I could handle, 'together'. *Communication between principle parties is essential for any plan to work.*

The days passed so quickly with all our year-end school events, I believe I was on automatic pilot. The children with school events and playing with their new fishing rods, I scarcely needed to tuck them in at night. Their excitement made me ashamed of my anger early on in this

venture.

I hadn't budgeted for some of the supplies but from the information listed in travel brochures about fishing in Louisiana and Texas, I felt they were needed: rubber boots because bugs and insects don't cling to rubber; and plastic bins for all the food and clothing to keep out bugs, insects and to keep the food dry.

By the last week of May I was finished with all I could do in advance and we still didn't have a camper. So, I went to a camper store, by myself, and had the salesman show me three campers that could accommodate a family of seven; left a note for Mister and told him to pick one! My temperature was rising again!

On May 30th at nearly 4:00 pm, he drove up in the front of the house with a camper on the back of our SUV. Not one from my list, mind you. A bigger one. As he jumps out of the SUV, the children now screaming with excitement, he shows me a road map with red markings through Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana and Texas, then says, "Our first family fishing trip begins in the morning."

After I've gained my composure from writing this piece, I'll tell you about the trip.