

Humor Me

By Ronald P. Culberson

September 2006

(Originally appeared in the *Herndon Observer*)

“I Know What You Did This Summer”

‘Twas the night before vacation and all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring – except Dad who was measuring the suitcases, determined to fit them IN the car, to avoid a replay of the Samsonite Highway Incident of 1997.

The suitcases sat by the door with great care,
In hopes that by packing the night before and sleeping in our clothes, we wouldn’t lose valuable highway time and could be on the road by some ungodly pre-dawn hour.

Then out in the hallway there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to find Dad wearing green shorts, a plaid shirt and black socks telling us it was time to get up or we’d miss seeing the sunrise over I-95.

Up Billy, Up Sally, Up Mary and Sam,
We herded to the car while Dad handed out Pop Tarts, juice boxes, brown apples, water and a small tin “relief” can thus assuring our 15-hour trip would be free of “unnecessary” stops.

As the car left the driveway I heard our house exclaim,
Happy Vacation to all and to all, you forgot Billy’s swimsuit, the cat’s locked in the closet, the iron was left on and no one remembered to stop the mail.

Sound familiar? We’ve all been there, done that and got the sand in our shorts to prove it. Vacations are like that. And while packing a perfectly fitted trunk sends testosterone surging through my veins, I have another “issue” when it comes to vacations. I’d rather not go.

Now, don’t get me wrong. I love my family and I enjoy vacations – but only in the purest sense of the word. To get away. In fact, getting away is Nirvana to me. But that’s not how real vacations work. Vacations aren’t really about getting away. They’re about packing “everything”, stuffing it into a large (but never large enough) four-wheel drive vehicle and relocating it to the same place where everyone else brought four-wheel drive vehicles stuffed full of their everything. So rather than getting away, it’s like getting *in* the way of everyone else who, by the way, wants to do everything you do every day you’re there.

In May, my wife and I celebrated twenty years of marriage. That’s forty if you add them up. We went to Bermuda – the same Bermuda where we spent our honeymoon. But

we didn't take a lot and we didn't do a lot. Instead, we ate. We read. We leisurely scooted around on our Vespa. And oh yeah, the first night, my wife surprised me with a short sexy nightgown. It didn't fit me but it's the thought that counts.

Now fast forward to summer. The family vacation was spent trying to answer that never ending question, "What do you want to do next?" And that's the problem. I don't want to do *anything* next. I do "anythings" all the time. My life is one big "anything." On vacation, I want to do nothings. Like reading, napping, sipping lattes, reclining, slouching and watching *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* for the thirty-seventh time – the nothings that can be accomplished within the perimeter of the bed, chair or couch and require no energy, no cerebrality and no things.

The rest of the family, however, wants to do things. And if they're not doing things constantly, they must find things to do. That conversation usually sounds like this:

My wife: "What do you want to do next?"

Me: "Nothing."

Kids: "That's boring. Let's do *something*."

Me: "Like what?"

My wife: "I don't care. What do you want to do?"

Me: "Nothing."

Kids: "Let's do *something*."

Wife: "You decide."

Me: "OK, how about I lock you all in the closet until I finish reading my book?"

Then, while I'm trying to convince my wife it was just a joke, the kids decide what to do.

So, we end up doing the beach, the pool, the bowling alley, mini golf, jet skis, shell collecting, sand castle building and demolition, sun burning, buying a new hermit crab that will die before Thanksgiving and never once doing nothing. And that was just the first day.

What's worse is that my wife didn't even bring the sexy nightgown. So much for my new camouflage thong. (Author's note: I've found my wearing a thong *will* lead to...nothing)

Next year, I'm considering a vacation from vacation. I'll feign an intestinal virus the day before we leave and when the family is on their way to the beach, I'll have the whole house to myself.

I wonder what I'll do?

Until next time, just humor me.

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Ron Culberson, MSW, CSP, CPAE is a speaker, humorist, and author of four books including Do it Well. Make it Fun. The Key to Success in Life, Death, and Almost Everything in Between. His mission is to change the workplace culture so that organizations are more productive and staff are more content. He shows people how to have more FUN while preserving the integrity of the work they do and the lives they lead. For more information, visit www.RonCulberson.com.