

Harbinger's column

Several timely travel tips to halt holiday headaches

Vacation time is here, and lots of people are heading for sunny places, or snowy places, or home to Mom and Dad. A little preparation goes a long way towards making sure you don't end up spending time and money on health needs.

If you wear glasses, take your extra pair with you, in case your regular pair gets lost or stolen. Also, get a copy of your current prescription from your eye doctor, just in case the second pair gets incapacitated too.

If you regularly take prescription drugs, get your doctor to prescribe enough for the length of your trip. Get a letter from your doctor on his stationary explaining why you are taking medication. This can help at the border, and will provide basic information for another doctor in case you need any other treatment while you're away. It's especially important if you're young and carrying any narcotics.

Remember sun tan lotion, and take at least one kind that has a

good sun blocking agent. There wasn't much sun in Toronto all summer, and the intensity of burn you can get on ski slopes or in the beach is not to be underestimated, even though we've forgotten what it feels like.

Remember to figure in jet-lag when you plan activities. Air travel takes time to adjust to, and you'll need lots of loafing time when you get to your destination.

Try not to change your eating habits drastically during vacation, unless they need a complete upgrading. Forgetting to eat three balanced meals a day will increase your susceptibility to germs and viruses in your temporary environment. Check with a travel agent and guide books for information about water supplies. While bottled water may not be necessary for local residents, adjusting to the microorganisms any water supply contains may not be worth the effort for short visits.

Drug stores in the North American model are common in most cities and towns that cater to

tourists. This means you can buy basics like aspirin, Tampax and shampoo while you're away. If, however, you're completely dependent on a specific brand of shampoo, better take enough with you.

Many places which depend on tourist dollars (like most of the Caribbean islands) have special numbers set up where tourists can get help in emergencies (medical or others). Check with your travel agent before you leave, or the hotel manager or local chamber of Commerce once you get there. Familiarize yourself with the workings and limitations of the phone system, so you'll know what to expect.

And finally, if none of this means anything to you because you're staying home since no one and nothing is ever going to get you in a plane going anywhere, even if you really want to go to Vancouver all expenses paid to see great Aunt Bess, Take heart.

Sue Kaiser

Rhythm can get you "a little bit pregnant"

GUELPH (CUP) — "When men realize sex isn't a form of recreation, we may get a dent in the pregnancy rate," Dr. I.C. Pelletier told University of Guelph students recently.

"It takes two to get pregnant and two to practise birth control," she said.

In one of her studies, Pelletier discovered that 20 per cent of men were never informed of pregnancies for which they were responsible.

"That's tragic," she said, "some men never realize the problem they've generated."

Pelletier also chastised women who ignore birth control. If a woman feels guilty about her sexual encounters, she may decide not to use contraceptives as a way of "kind of denying her feelings."

"That attitude," the doctor noted, "can get you kind of pregnant."

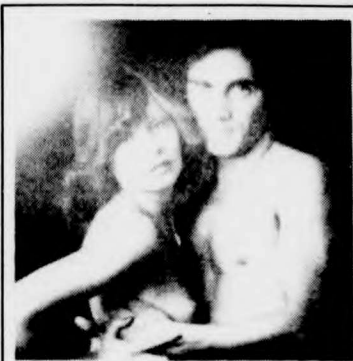
She blamed continued lack of education in elementary and high

schools for reinforcing the "it can't happen to me" attitude many young people have towards possible pregnancies.

According to Pelletier, at least 10 per cent of all university women will experience an unplanned pregnancy before they graduate.

Based on a series of studies and her own data, she said, the majority of female students will have sexual intercourse before they are 21 and that only half of them will use proper methods of birth control all the time. Thirty per cent will use contraceptives "sometimes" she said, and 20 per cent "never think of it."

Pelletier recommended the pill, intrauterine devices and "quality" condoms as the only safe contraceptives. Withdrawal and rhythm are ineffective, she said, noting that there is enough sperm in male lubricating fluid to cause pregnancy.

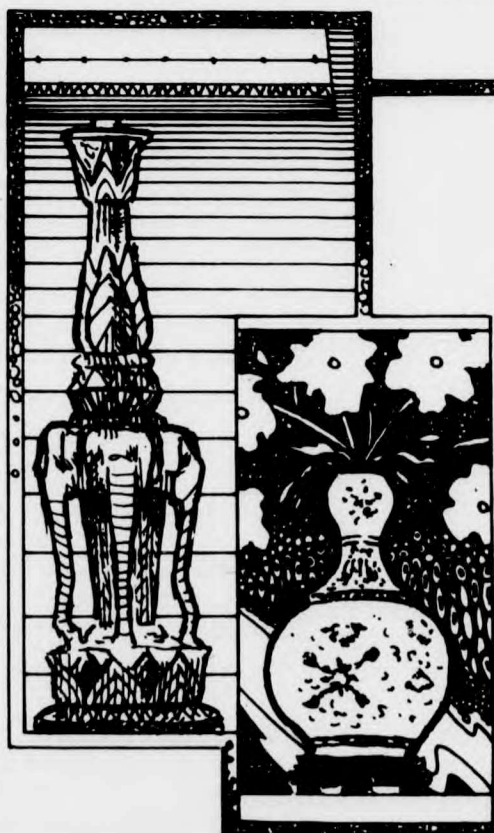


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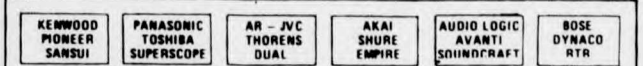
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