Jim's Perspective…

Summer Vacation

It is hard to believe that summer is already more than half over. Within about three to four weeks, kids will be returning to school. For me, this has been a very refreshing summer. We have been able to live and experience life more like we used to do prior to the pandemic. Wonderful! I hope all of you have been able to go somewhere "on vacation" or have something scheduled soon. Janie and I took the kids and grandkids to a rental home in Breckenridge, Colorado for a six-night vacation. The grandkids loved playing in the hot tub. They enjoyed riding horses and riding in a pontoon boat on Dillon Reservoir. Papa even let each grandkid drive the pontoon boat for a short distance! One day we went hiking in an area where two small lakes are located. About a dozen mountain goats descended from a steep hill and mingled with folks on the trail. They walked up to about three feet away from the grandkids. The little kids were in awe. It was fun to get away and make more memories that we can share together. I am sure we can all sit back and reminisce about some fond times with family, friends or relatives on vacation together. That's one of the neat things about a vacation.

It is the Spring of 1968. Janie and I are about to graduate from Pius X High School. She gets a call from her older sister, Kathleen, who invites both of us to visit them that summer at their rental house at Lake Okoboji, Iowa. I don't remember the exact time of the trip, but we decided to spend a weekend at the cabin that summer with her sister Kathleen, her husband Bill and their two kids. This would be our very first vacation trip together. We arrived at Lake Okoboji sometime on Friday. They had a boat, so we went out on the lake for a while and eventually returned to the cabin for dinner. Finally, it was late at night and time for bed. Kathleen directed me to come with her. I followed her outside. She opened the rear door of their 1960's Volkswagen van and said I could sleep in the back of the van. Her little sister, Janie, would sleep in a bed in a spare bedroom of the cabin. Needless to say, I was surprised that I had to sleep in the rear of a vehicle. I did OK sleeping in the van. They had placed a small mattress inside. The next day I entered the cabin and they were all up. I mentioned that I did OK in the van, but it wasn't easy using a spare tire as a pillow. They all burst into laughter. I mentioned too, that as a result of using a tire for a pillow, I now had the word "Goodyear" indented into my forehead. They laughed some more. Everyone walked out to the van to look for the pillow. It was there, and I used it, but I just thought it would be fun to use the spare tire story. To this day, the spare tire story comes up from time to time when we see each other and are reminiscing about past vacations together.

Don't misunderstand. Kathleen and Bill are absolutely wonderful people. When Janie and I had three young kids, we went to Chicago where Kathleen and Bill lived in Long Grove, a village in the northwest metropolitan area of Chicago. In those days, Janie was a "stay at home mom." We did not have much money for a vacation. Kathleen and Bill graciously hosted us at their house for many summers. Their house backed up to a small lake. Our kids played on the sandy beach of the lake while Kathleen, Bill, Janie and I sat in inner tubes in the early evening and drank cocktails. After a drink or two we of course started laughing about various things that had occurred during the Chicago trip. As we laughed, we started referring to ourselves as the

"floating laughers." Also, Kathleen let me sleep in her house when Janie and I arrived with the kids! But of course, on occasion, I would ask whether I had to sleep in the garage in a car. We all laughed.

Like many things that transpire between people, there is a wonderful little story that explains Kathleen's plan that I sleep in the van. Kathleen is twelve years older than Janie. Janie's other sister, Mary Lee, is ten years older. And so, Janie was a surprise wonderful gift to the Hendry family of four. Kathleen was so much older, that she simply loved this new little girl, and she became a "second mom" to little Janie. So when we showed up at the cabin, Kathleen, the mom, wasn't about to let any shenanigans unfold under her watch. Her little sister was going to be hermetically sealed inside the cabin while the young man remains outside in a vehicle! Ha Ha! This too is another point of view that we all laugh about to this day. Of course all of this is part of what makes vacations special. Fond remembrances of what we all did and experienced.

Happy Travels to all of you! This song, *Theme From A Summer Place*, by Percy Faith And His Orchestra, reminds me so much of summer vacations in the 1960's

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSsiS-v6_6M

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