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from the editor's desk

Everyone needs a vacation

My husband and I are having a tough time this year deciding whether to go on vacation. With all the grim economic news coming at us every day, it's hard to justify spending loads of money on a big, fancy trip. There are a lot of "what ifs" to consider — maybe we should just save our money.

The thing is, families need some special time together. Time when Mom's not wondering what to make for dinner or worrying about the ever-increasing mountain of laundry. Time when Dad's not thinking the lawn mower needs to be repaired and the van needs an oil change. Time to just have fun as a family.

Last year, more from lack of planning than money concerns, we went on a "vacation" to Boston. My husband, the self-proclaimed King of Priceline,

got a great deal on a really nice hotel downtown, and we lived it up for a few days. (Frankly, my kids just love being in a hotel — not sure if it's the little



soaps or the elevators or what — so our hotel could be in the middle of nowhere and they'd still be happy.) We visited the Children's Museum and the aquarium, splashed in the Frog Pond, explored an old fort on one of the Harbor Islands, ate ice cream *every day* and, yes, spent a fair amount of time in the hotel pool. Some things we'd done before, some were new experiences. It was just nice not to drag cranky kids back to the car and drive home sticky, dirty and tired.

Because we live in an area that is a vacation destination for thousands of other families every year, it's easy to take some things for granted. If we want to swim in the ocean, it's a short drive in just about any direction. To take in some culture or show the kids

where the events they're learning about in history actually *took place*, again, it's just a short ride.

So even if an elaborate vacation is not in the cards this year, you can still take the time to unwind as a family and take in all that this area has to offer. And if you try to have a child's appreciation of little things like hotel ice machines, you'll truly enjoy your "vacation."

For more tips on traveling on a budget, including some advice from a local Disney World "expert," see Page 11. And for advice on how to explain this tough economy to your kids, see Page 9. With school vacation approaching, check out the Calendar, starting on Page 5, for some fun, family-friendly activities.

This month, we thank our new sponsor, Coastal Orthopaedics.

Lynne

pk picks

Socket-Lockits

\$5.99

www.socketlockits.com

Finally, an alternative to those boring clear plastic outlet covers. Socket-Lockits are brand new stylish electrical outlet covers that come in several designs — including florals, argyle, stripes, monogrammed, animals and more. Custom styles also available by downloading a particular fabric pattern or design to match any room. Socket-Lockits not only protect baby from shocks, they complement your room décor at the same time.

Munchlers

\$10

www.builtny.com



Developed to incorporate whimsical fun with practicality, Built collaborated with award-winning children's book illustrator, Stephen Savage, to take on the project of creating zoo animals for the design of the lunchboxes.

Made from soft sided polypropylene, Munchlers unzip to a placemat (stores flat). They insulate food and beverage.

Life Learning Device

\$29.95

lifelearningdevices.com

Imagine if you could have a button that would allow you to hear knowledge and wisdom about your favorite hobbies and passions. The folks at Life Learning Device created a button that every day passes on a new tidbit of knowledge — 365 days of learning about your passion at the touch of a button. This LLD inspires and motivates you with quotes and mantras from some of history's great thinkers, achievers and motivators such as: Helen Keller, Mark Twain, Martin Luther King, Ralph Waldo Emerson and more.



Spring Fling Week!
April 20-24

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