

SOLO

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LAW OFFICE INFORMATION FOR SOLO & SMALL FIRM PRACTITIONERS

GO NOW!

The Pitfalls of Putting Off Vacations

What a timely subject for your humble author! Let me tell you the story. My wife Gail and I had a significant anniversary this summer. So, in the fall of 2006, we began looking around for an appropriate trip to celebrate the event. We were cruise “virgins,” so we decided to look into that possibility. A friend recommended a specific

line with mid-sized ships offering excellent accommodations and interesting itineraries. Better yet, the line offered two-for-one fares and free air. We settled on the eastern Mediterranean area, looking at the Greek isles. Also we wanted to avoid the peak summer crowds in Europe and, of course, the 2007 football season was a consideration.

Chuck, the occasional procrastinator, got busy with other things like law practice and bar activities. When I refocused on the trip in early 2007, I contacted the travel agent who handles my son Charles’ entertainment clients. There



was bad news and good news. Our selected cruise was fully booked (bad), but our travel agent had arranged for us to be number one on the wait list (good). He suggested a \$1,000 deposit on each of two classes of cabins, including a penthouse.

Cruise lines require payment-in-full 90 days in advance of departure. This deadline for us was in May and I felt pretty good about our chances. Then we got

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editor/staff

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(continued from cover)

a call that a penthouse accommodation had opened up. Again, good news. But the bad news was that the price was more than the cost of the first house I bought. And, although the free air was still available, it would prove a difficult schedule. Plus, the two-for-one fares had almost disappeared.

Guess what we decided?

No cruise this year; instead we extended our stay in California to include a side trip to the Napa valley after the ABA's August Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

All of us have done something similar at one time or another—we let some pseudo-crisis delay a journey. (You know what I mean—maybe this case

will come up on a calendar or a big client will hire you.) Here are some lessons I learned from this situation:

- The old axiom of “never put off until tomorrow what you can do today” definitely applies to vacation travel.

- Plan early and make arrangements far in advance.
- The office will still

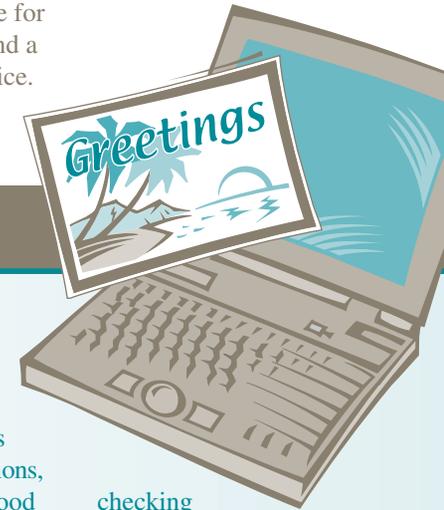
operate—even when you're gone.

- If this concept makes you nervous, arrange your communications in advance. There are Internet cafes everywhere.

- Arrange a set time for emails, if you must, and a set time to call the office.

Remember, you're on vacation!

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Have Tech, Will Travel

By jennifer j. rose

You just woke up at a quaint inn far from home, in a place where birds sing and wildflowers fill the hill-sides. Pyramids, a horseback ride to Paricutin's church mired in lava, and the falls of the Parque Eduardo Ruiz beckon. But first you need to call the office.

More options than ever are available, but picking and choosing which option can be an overwhelming proposition. Today's traveler has more tools available than the Apollo 11 crew took to the moon. What works in Mexico, though, may not be the solution in the backwoods of Maine or plains of Burkina Faso. Communications options bear as much preliminary research as hotel room rates and flight schedules. Let's look at some of

those options.

Your basic cell phone plan may not include roaming, and coverage can be limited, but the right plan can enable access to email, the Internet, applications, and more. Even Verizon's GlobalAccess (<http://tinyurl.com/38r4pf>) doesn't cover the entire planet.

Unlocking your phone and inserting a prepaid phone card may be one solution.

VOIP works for those who'd like to pretend they're in Austin, Texas, when they're off in Buenos Aires. For those who'd prefer not to lug around a VOIP adapter, Vonage offers a thumb drive-sized V-Phone with a detachable earpiece microphone (<http://vonage.com/device.php?type=VPHONE>).

Skype (www.skype.com) is another alternative, which John C. Treddenick, Jr., applauds at “Skype to the Rescue” in *Law Technology Today* (<http://tinyurl.com/2a7fsk>). These systems all require Internet access, which still isn't everywhere. And some may block the ports required by VOIP.

If you're not toting a laptop or if access isn't available from a hotel room, many countries have Internet cafes on practically every block. If the keyboard happens to be in Gujarti or Lithuanian, a keyboard emulator at <http://www.gate2home.com/> will make you feel right at home, typing away in English.

Your arsenal of electronic gear is worthless if

you can't connect. Sometimes it's just easier and cheaper to have the office call you at designated times with updates and questions, just as we did in the good old days. Familiarize yourself with the time zones, and instruct the office how to call you, on a landline, on a cell phone, and on the VOIP. Calling procedures, particularly with cell phones, vary from country to country. Arm your staff and yourself with all phone numbers and contact information before leaving home. Give each option a trial run, and have a backup plan.

You don't have to call the office every day. Remember, you're on vacation. When you're at home, you think twice before

checking in during a three-day weekend. Please forgo the modern version of the “Wish you were here” postcard. There's really no need to bore others with photos of your adventure and descriptions of the artisan markets, museums, and shimmering forests you're exploring.

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PLAN AHEAD ON THE WEB

Thanks to the Internet, today the world is literally at your fingertips. It provides a wonderful tool for planning a trip, either business or pleasure. You can scope out locations, hotels, local transportation, community activities, and nearby attractions while sitting in front of your home computer in your jammies. You may even find an unexpected online bargain. Here are a few interesting sites.

www.abanet.org/travel

This is through Travelocity® business; there are discounts—check out the travel news section too.

www.venere.com

Find hotels, bed and breakfasts, and apartments worldwide—great rating system.

www.nationalgeographic.com

Features exotic trips; expensive, but very cool!

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>

A great reference and summary of every foreign country; it's nerdy, but a great resource.

www.luxurylink.com

Unbelievable value; online auction and

fixed trips both within and outside the United States.

www.ricksteves.com

Based on the popular PBS series, it provides a good source for European vacations and beyond; includes podcasts.

www.lonelyplanet.com

So much information; a worldwide source; check out the BLUELIST, especially the popular ones.

<http://travel.discovery.com/destinations/destinations.html>

The Web site companion to the Travel Channel; some good ideas and great discussion groups.

www.cheapotravel.com

Camp and useful info; check out the free stuff in Vegas.

www.airgorilla.com

Internet resource for local and international travel at a discount.

www.budgettravelonline.com

Loaded with information from finding secret hotels in Italy to six “cool” attractions opening this year. Click on the “Trip Ideas” tab to find family-friendly destinations. Lots of added-value tips.

Overseas Travel

The Smart Traveler's Checklist

By Jeffery A. Mentel and Kevin J. Guss

Globetrotting can be fun, but there are some key details to consider. Transportation Security Agency packing guidelines, the right power plug adaptor for your laptop, a foreign language phrase book, and a copy of your passport are all on your mental to-do list. Each of these items is the sort of personal risk management tool that a seasoned traveler would always remember. But you could be overlooking some important items. As vacation and conference season approaches, you may want to add these items to your checklist.

Health Insurance Check-Up

Your health insurer may not provide coverage outside the United States. Call your insurer to inquire about the status of your coverage overseas. If coverage is extended, ask for guide-

health insurer's claims reimbursement-based policy and could put a big hole in your travel budget. If your destination country operates on a “pay first” system, check into a travel accident policy with your insurance broker.

Travel Accident Insurance
Travel accident insurance may provide accident and sickness benefits, medical evacuation, repatriation of remains, emergency translation services, and physician consultation. It's surprisingly inexpensive and designed to be modular—you'll buy only the benefits you need, for only the amount of time you're traveling.

When purchasing travel accident coverage through a carrier such as Wallach & Co., or Chubb, you'll be provided with a card that explains the benefits, along with a toll-free number. When in need,

Other Risks

If you're overseas in a potentially dangerous city, you're already aware of the risks. Although a kidnap/ransom policy isn't specific to overseas travel, it's something to consider. This type of policy is used to pay and negotiate release, regardless of the location. If you feel it's necessary, ask for more information on this coverage.

Finally, call your auto insurer to ask about driving overseas. Consider buying the insurance that the rental car company offers and chalk is up as a hassle-factor reduction charge.

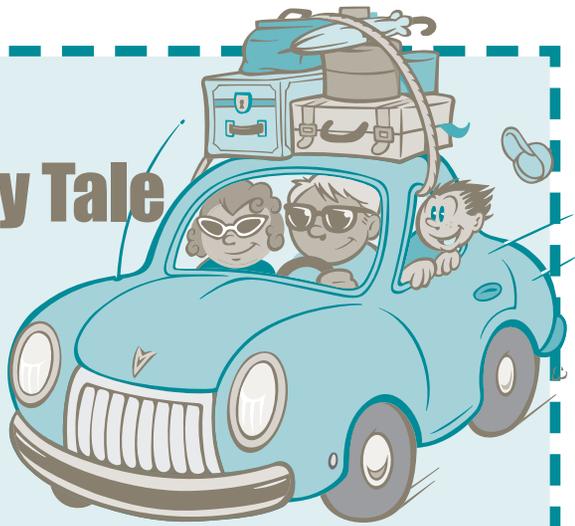
Summing It Up

Any time you're headed overseas, make it a habit to check with your experts



A Cautionary Tale

Traveling with Family on Business



By Joan M. Swartz

As editor of this edition of *SOLO* newsletter I attempted to get someone else to write this article. I found out quickly that few lawyers enjoy traveling with their families on business trips. I decided, based on my discussions with colleagues across the country, that my impressions were universal—traveling with family on business is not a favorite way to travel. But based on time constraints, the demands of practicing law, and perennial over-commitment with law-related organizations, I find myself traveling with family to a number of bar events and some client matters. Many lawyers find themselves in this position out of necessity. In making the decision whether to include family as part of a business trip, I map out

some positives and negatives and some tips from my own experiences.

The Pros Are Few

- There is some tax advantage to combining business with pleasure. My accountant recently advised me to plan every family vacation around a business purpose (tells you what a fun guy he really is!) You should consult your tax advisor on this issue, but you can deduct at least some portion of a trip that includes business. For client-related matters, you may have the ability to be reimbursed a portion of the expenses for the trips.

- Because so many lawyers are pressed for time and limited by how many days they can be out of the office, combining a family vacation with business can allow you to spend some

time with family while also accomplishing some work.

The Cons Are Many

- You may feel like you are doing everyone—the client, bar association, and your family—a disservice. You can't be in two places at once, so inevitably your spouse/significant other may feel you are spending more time with your client or with bar association colleagues than with him/her. If children are along, you have the added problem that your spouse is with your children and you are not, causing even more pressure to spend less time or energy on the business purpose. Children magnify this issue.

- Your spouse or children may not mix well with the client or members of the organization—the greatest danger in my opinion.

lines on claims procedures for reimbursement. Some will simply require an invoice, while others may require English translation for a bill or request a statement of medical necessity from the doctor. Eliminate potential hassles and find out in advance about your insurance rights and responsibilities.

Another point to ponder is that some countries require payment in full at the time of treatment. This may conflict with your

you call their 24-hour hotline and they'll manage the details of payment, evacuation, or repatriation. Most overseas travel accident providers also make their hotlines available for locating emergency medical services, tapping local legal advice, and negotiating short-notice travel arrangements in high-risk regions. Benefit options, such as trip cancellation coverage and trip curtailment coverage, may also be purchased.

on the personal risks and exposures you may face abroad. Every trip is different and every risk is exceptional, so plan ahead and make sure your insurance is built for the trip.

Jeff Mentel, a lawyer, and Kevin Guss are brokers for the BAMSL Insurance Desk at The Daniel & Henry Co. in St. Louis, MO. Contact the authors at BAMSLins@danielandhenry.com.

are, what activities are available, or if it has childcare available.

- Talk to your family. Make sure they know what your commitments are so you can keep them and see your family as well. Realistic expectations can avoid some problems. I always gave my spouse a schedule of the meetings I had to attend.

- Take a couple of days with the family either before or after the business begins. Many times this adds the "vacation feel" and will address the feeling that you are not spending enough time with your family.

- Choose wisely. If the venue is great for kids, i.e. Disney World or a great resort, then by all means include the kids and bring your checkbook.

In my experience, it's been much easier to travel with your spouse/significant other on business trips as the spouse understands your limits, client needs, and your obligations. Including the children can be trickier and requires more advanced planning. There are, however, several resorts that my children only visited because a bar meeting was held there and they still speak fondly of them—years later. So it can be done, but plan ahead and use caution.

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- The venue may be unfriendly. For example, you have children along but you find the hotel is not kid-friendly or the part of town you are in does not have desirable kid activities.

- Many of the places designated for bar meetings and trade associations are quite expensive. You may find the family vacation costs more than you would normally spend due to the venue.

Tips

- Plan ahead. Know your venue. Get familiar with the hotel and make sure it's kid-friendly, i.e. swimming pool, activities for kids: daycare programs for single parents are a must. Practically every resort/hotel can be found on the Internet. Before you travel, take a look at the location, see what the pool hours

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