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Fun on the sand...

By Kent Warneke

Orlando, Fort Lauderdale and Miami are the tourist spots for vacationers during the Christmas break, but space on airlines and accommodations are almost nonexistent, four Lincoln travel agencies said.

Hal Mischnick, Lincoln Tour and Travel, said Orlando offers one of the nation's premiere attractions in Disney World, but that Orlando's temperature fluctuates more than other tourist areas.

"You could still probably estimate that five out of seven days will be swimming-type weather," Mischnick said. "And besides Disney World, there is also Cyprus Gardens and Sea World for tourists."

Fort Lauderdale offers the best beaches and water facilities, Al Peters of Via Van Bloom said. Miami offers a great deal, he said, but an older crowd frequents Miami while younger people head to Fort Lauderdale and Orlando.

However, no matter how attractive the tourist havens are, the availability of air flights and hotel accommodations is limited.

"If arrangements aren't made by now, the chances are going to be slim to be able to arrange a trip," Peters said.

Trips during the immediate Christmas season are almost all booked, and only after January 10th is any sizeable amount available, Mischnick said.

"The only possibility right now would be to be put on a waiting list and hope for cancellations," Mischnick said.

Jon Van Bloom of Nebraska Travel said that if a person is going to Florida, he will

find a large amount of tourists, many of which are from the East Coast.

"You'd be surprised at how many people vacation in Florida from New York City, Philadelphia and even Montreal," Van Bloom said. "It's just so easy to get down there for them, one easy flight."

A lot of families with children in high school also vacation in Florida during Christmas in lieu of Christmas presents and because it is often the only time that everyone in the family can take time off, Van Bloom said.

Steve Cuddy, Travel Unlimited, said that vacationers will find higher prices during the vacation season because businessmen know people will pay the higher prices.

"We usually estimate \$45 to \$150 a day for hotel, depending on the quality and \$25 per person per day for meals," Cuddy said.

Airfare will cost anywhere from \$220 to \$330 a round trip. Souvenirs and drinks will increase the total price of a vacation, Cuddy said.

"There are higher prices, no question about it," Peters said. "But by the same token you can spend whatever you feel you can afford to spend."

Peters said that although there are many expensive restaurants, there is always McDonald's, too.

It is all a matter of individual preference, he said.

"The warmth, the beaches, the water and all of the unusual tourist attractions make Florida an attractive spot, but the prices and the large crowds of other tourists are also there," Peters said.

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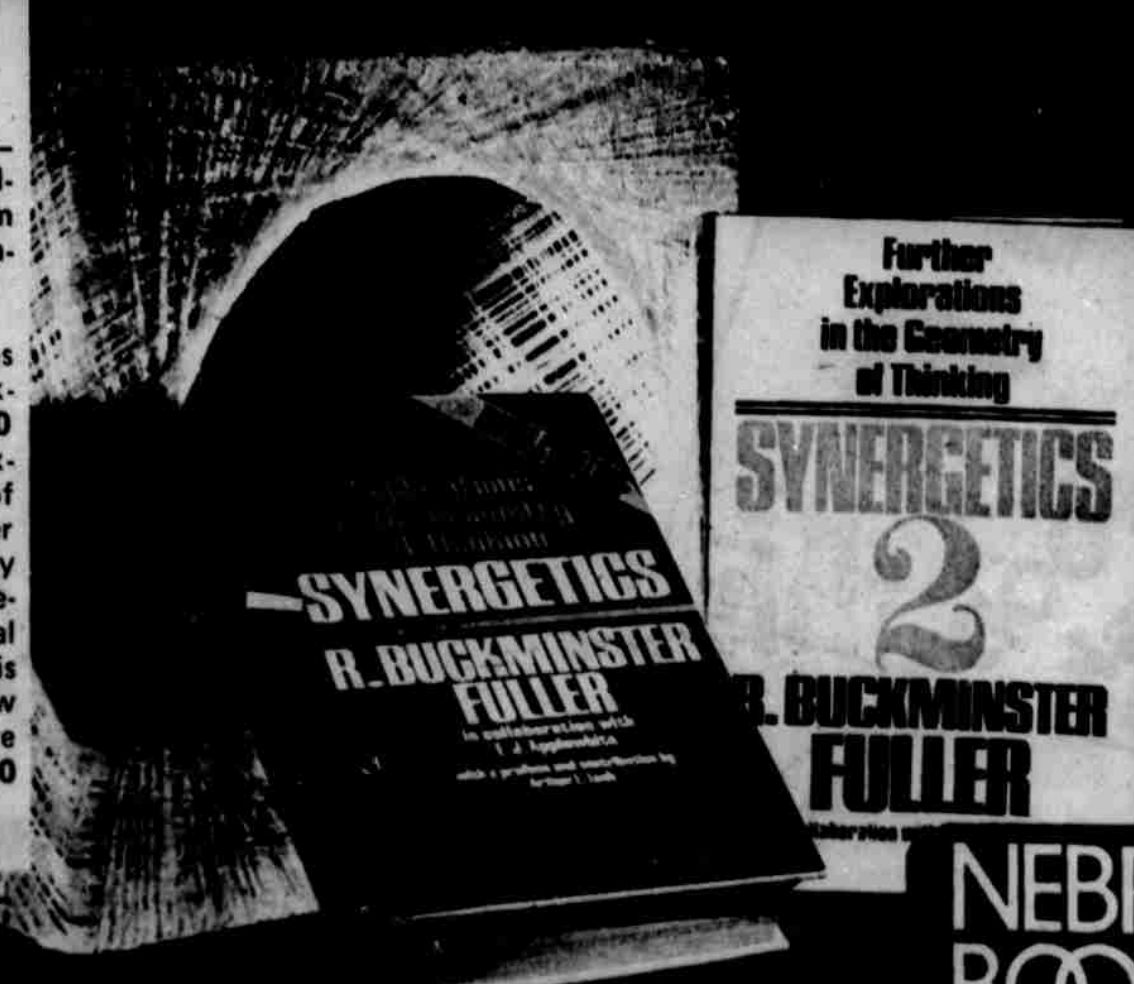


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