



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Vacationland U.S.A.

For those of you who have moved to Florida in the last few years I have some good news and some bad news.

First the good news.

You no longer have to visit your relatives and friends in Kansas or Nebraska.

Now for the bad news.

Since you now live in the happy vacationland of Florida, they'll all come see you.

That's not too bad, unless they all come at once. Or unless they come and stay too long.

We enjoy visitors, and there has been a steady stream through our home all summer. True, our food bill has skyrocketed and the washing machine has worked night and day handling the changes of sheets and towels. But having friends drop by has been pleasant.

The problem is: all these folks are on vacation, and I'm not. I still have work to do, deadlines to meet and

chores around the house that need to be handled. Of course, our visitors find that hard to understand. After all, the magazines in Kansas and Nebraska show pictures of our beaches, tennis courts, boat docks and folks sitting around on the patio drinking orange juice. What they don't say is the majority of the people on the beaches, tennis courts and patios are relatives visiting us from Kansas and Nebraska.

We've just had the sixth family of the summer pull out of the driveway. We returned to the house wearily to do the dishes and wash the sheets and towels — only to hear the doorbell ring. There stood another couple, this one from Kentucky — complete with children. They had dropped by to spend the afternoon — assuming we didn't have anything else to do.

When my daughter called from town to see if there was anything she could bring home, I remarked that

the next family had arrived. When she asked how long they were going to stay I facetiously remarked, "Probably all summer."

A few minutes later my daughter arrived, bounced into the room and said excitedly, "Daddy says it looks like you'll stay all summer. Is that right?"

They exchanged funny looks and soon got up to leave. At the door the woman told my wife, "We really didn't plan to stay all summer. We just thought if you had time you'd like to go to the beach with us . . ."

The man turned and whispered in my ear, "I understand. Most of the folks who visit us in Kentucky think all we do is sit around drinking mint juleps and going to the horse races."

As for me, I'm looking forward to going to the beach and playing tennis. Maybe when we take our vacation next year in California we'll do that. I understand that's all they do out there.