

The Tar Heel

Free trip to London? There must be a catch here



with
D.G. Martin

Con games never end. Here is one of the latest, and I would like to know what you think ought to be done about it.

You get a letter — or a telegram — or a bulk mail letter that looks like a telegram. It tells you that you have won a prize. It may say that you have won one of several prizes. Some of the prizes look pretty good. All you have to do to get one of these prizes is to come by and pick it up and take a "short" tour of some property or listen to some other sales pitch.

Nothing new? You have been getting those for years, haven't you? You can even take a look at the list of "prizes" and figure out which one everybody is going to win.

But there is a new twist. A new prize that everybody wins.

If you haven't already gotten one of these letters or telegrams, it won't be long. Be ready for it. The new prize that is being offered is so tempting. It sounds so good. Too

good to be true — and it is. But it almost fooled me. I wanted to believe it so much. And it has fooled some of my smartest friends.

What is this great new prize? It is a vacation certificate — not just the certificate for two or three nights in some hotel in Miami. That has been around for a long time. No. The new prize promises something like a free seven-day vacation to London (or some other distant desirable place) "including airfare, accommodations and sightseeing tours for two."

Who wouldn't jump at a chance to go to London for free? What is the catch? How can anybody afford to give away thousands of such trips? Or simply, what is the catch?

There are a lot of different catches — one of them is a part of almost every giveaway. Here are a few of them:

- The vacation is for only ONE person. But it said "for two." It sure did. That meant only "sightseeing for two." The second person pays full fare for the airfare. Usually, the second person has to go and pay as a condition for the "free" trip for the winner.

- A large deposit is required. Sometimes it is refundable; sometimes it is not. Almost always, it has to be sent to some unknown company, at a post office box in a distant city. Would that make you reluctant to send the deposit? That is what it is designed to do.

- Delay. Even if the deposit is sent in, some additional information or documentation will be requested "before processing." Your passport, a marriage certificate, a certificate from an employer confirming work and salary, a copy of your tax return. They never run out of things to ask for. You would think that they really don't want you to go. They don't.

- The departure dates that you request will not be available. Your trip will only be available during a period of a few weeks. That time will be inconvenient. If the time should suit you, they will reschedule to a time when you will not be able to go.

Is that enough to discourage you? It is enough to make almost everybody give up. Few, if there are any at all, ever make the trip. That is the way it is intended to be. These vacation certificates are sold to sales centers and other promoters for a very low price — about \$15 each. That covers only administrative costs and profit for the companies that print and issue the certificates. There is nothing to cover the cost of any travel. So these companies have to discourage everybody — or almost everybody — from taking the promised trip.

There ought to be a law.

Or should there be? I would like to know what you think. Should the government pass a law to make this kind of vacation certificate illegal? Should the law permit these certificates, but require full disclosure of

the problems up front? Or should the government do nothing and let everybody look out for themselves? What should be done?

Think about it. I think that your answer will give a clue about what your real political philosophy is. Let

me know what you think should be done. If you have already had an experience with this kind of certificate, I would like to hear from you.

Write me at the summer *Tar Heel*, Box 49, UNC-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK

Your name and address _____

- Government should make these vacation certificates illegal.
- The Government should permit the certificates and require full disclosure about the negative aspects of the "gift."
- The Government should not do anything about the certificate. Let people take care of themselves and learn to be careful in dealing with this kind of situation.
- Other. Your comments: _____

Please mail the form to: D.G. Martin
c/o *The Tar Heel*
UNC-Chapel Hill
Box 49
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

ATTENTION STUDENTS ASHLEY FOREST APARTMENTS

- Now leasing \$435 a month
- Two bedroom units/all appliances
- Washer and dryer connections
- On the bus line
- Approximately 2.5 miles from Downtown Chapel Hill
- On Airport Road—Look for Ashley Forest Apartments sign on right
- Model Open Daily 12-4 pm

ALLENTON REALTY 967-0543

105 No. Columbia
933-2679

5¢
Xerox
Copies

4 1/2¢
Self-Service
Copies

Open
7
Days
A
Week

Soft
Bindings

Official
Passport
Photos

SECOND ANNUAL BACK TO SCHOOL BASH — 40 KEGS

August 23, 1985 4 pm-11 pm 204 Finley Golf Course Road. Bands: Stratus and Castaways

Sponsored by Phi Delta Chi and Theta Chi

T-Shirt Proceeds Donated to Cystic Fibrosis Foundation