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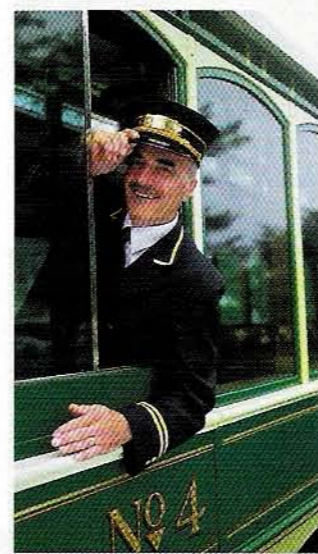


A Weekend Without Homework and Video Games Brings a Mother and Son Closer

"This will be your last Easter as a child," I said to my then 11-year-old son. "Indulge me as I savor it." ¶ Harry went along with my plan for a mother/son trip. I had gotten a good deal for one night at the Homestead resort (thehomestead.com) in Virginia. After our four-hour drive, we hit the indoor pool, a gorgeous coffered-ceiling affair fed by a warm mineral spring. While I lounged under a tall palm, Harry horsed around with a boy his age. ¶ Ten years later, the sweetest memory is Saturday-night dinner. It was fun to get ready together. While I dabbed on Bal à Versailles, he tied his tie. I was proud to enter the dining room with my son, walking tall in his navy blazer. With no one we knew looking on, we had a mother/son dance in that grand room, with its yellow walls and Palladian windows. ¶ Earlier in the day, Harry ran me from waterfall to waterfall along the gorge walk, laughing and yelling, "Come on, slow Mommy!" The laughter continued on the golf course, although I appreciated that Harry observed golf etiquette—unless you count being underage at the wheel of the cart. ¶ Sunday morning, I presented Harry with an overflowing Easter basket before we headed downstairs, hand in hand, for brunch. In the pancake line, we debated the secret ingredient. A chef whispered, "malt." At an afternoon egg-decorating workshop, we made sparkly faux Fabergés that have graced our table every Easter since. ¶ Driving home, we snacked on Peeps but didn't do much talking. Harry fell asleep before long. I had time to think about how much closer I felt to my son in just a short time away from homework and video games. While we would still take family trips, I knew that getting away, just the two of us, was something I'd plan again. And I have—when teenage doldrums hit, after high-school graduation, when he needed a break during college. Or maybe it was me who needed a break—from my empty nest.

—ANN COCHRAN

Saturday dinner with her son—“walking tall in his navy blazer”—is the author's fondest memory.



Hershey Trolley Works takes visitors on an old-fashioned ride through the town built on chocolate.

Country Roads

Show your kids life without iPods in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where the Amish live without electricity and use mules to plow their farms. Drive along country roads and through villages. Take a buggy ride over a covered bridge. Kids can milk cows and play mini-golf at Dutch Wonderland, an amusement park with 33 rides geared toward young children. See padutchcountry.com.

Beach Bound

Want to spend a few lazy days building sandcastles with your child? Consider Bethany Beach, Delaware. This family-oriented town is quieter than its neighbors, Rehoboth and Ocean City, but still has a milelong boardwalk and lots to do. Besides the usual beach diversions, you might crab at Assawoman Wildlife Area or visit the DiscoverSea Shipwreck Museum in Fenwick Island.

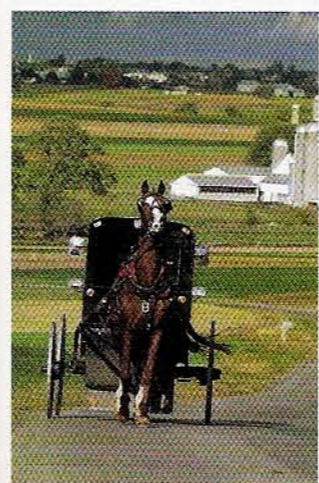
Two blocks from the beach is a Holiday Inn Express with a pool; Sea Colony offers oceanside condos for rent. When it's time to eat, kids like the waterfall and barbecue at Bethany Blues and the coconut shrimp at Mango's.

For details, see visitsouthernndelaware.com; 800-357-1898.

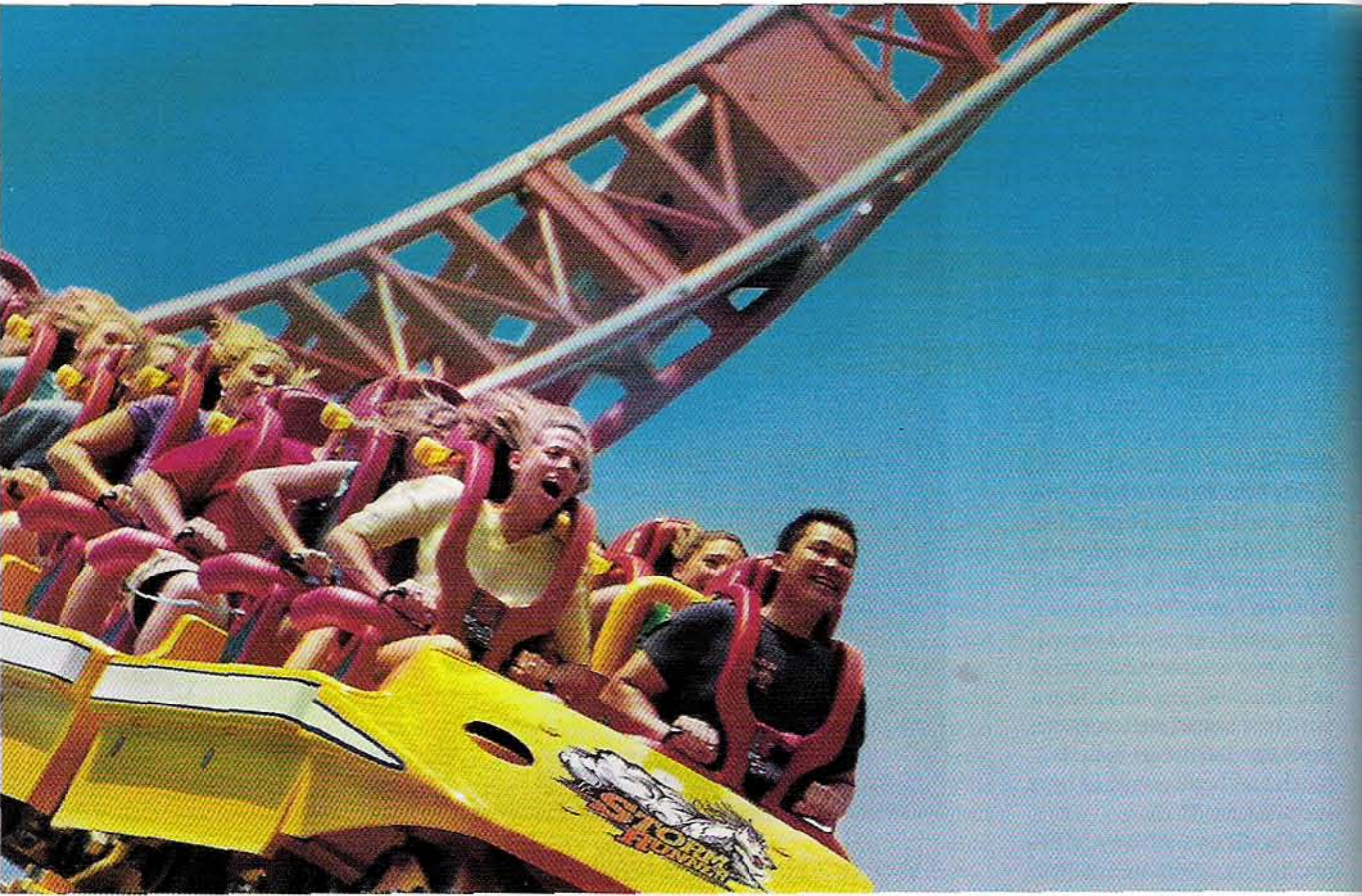


Kids love Hersheypark, with its 11 roller coasters. Scary rides not your thing? There's always golf or the spa.

Immersion Theater combines high-def sound with special effects like mist and wind. Teenagers enjoy Baltimore Ghost Tours and the American Visionary Art Museum, devoted to creations by self-taught artists. For more tips, see baltimore.org.



In Amish Country, kids can see what life is like without TV and iPods.



"Mom, Let's Do It Again!"

Kids grow up quickly. On a parent/child trip, you can stop time a little and form wonderful memories.

BY ANN COCHRAN

A MOTHER/daughter, father/son, or other parent/child weekend is a great chance to see one another in a new light—and strengthen family ties. Here are good places to enjoy a trip with a child.

edy, jazz, Dolly Parton, and *Mamma Mia*. Hershey, 2½ hours from Washington, has a range of accommodations and dining options. See hersheypa.com or call 800-HERSHEY.

Rocky Gap Lodge & Golf Re-

sort, two hours away in Maryland's Rocky Gap State Park, is a bargain with its small spa, new indoor pool, 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature course, and lake boating and fishing. In the park, guests can hike, kayak,

and bike. See rockygapresort.com or call 800-724-0828.

Charmed City

Baltimore has lots for kids, from baseball to a tour of the USS *Constellation* (the only Civil War ship still afloat) to Geppi's Entertainment Museum, which traces pop culture through toys, dolls, and comic books. Next to Geppi's, near Camden Yards, the Sports Legends Museum spotlights Maryland athletics including Babe Ruth, the Negro Leagues, Cal Ripken, and Scabiscuit.

At the aquarium, a new 4-D

At the aquarium in Baltimore, a new theater shows a 3-D ocean film with such special effects as wind and salt spray.



For All Ages: Resorts

Hershey, the Pennsylvania town built on chocolate, has a big draw for kids—an amusement park. This season it adds an 11th roller coaster, Fahrenheit. There is also a zoo and a car museum, and teen girls love the spa, known for chocolate treatments. At the town's theater this year: ballet, com-

Ann Cochran, a frequent contributor, wrote a chapter of a new book on raising teenagers: Like, Whatever, published in March.