

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

BUMP IN THE ROAD

NO VACATION FROM SLEEP TRAINING

A WEEK WITH A 6-MONTH-OLD IN A STRANGE PLACE HAD MOM IN TEARS TOO

By Maria Cramer
GLOBE STAFF

It'll be fine, I told my husband, Michael, not bothering to hide the exasperation in my voice as we made the six-hour drive to Owls Head, Maine.

Gabriel, our 6-month-old, sat in the backseat, gurgling happily. For such a long drive, he was behaving beautifully. A good sign, I thought, and smugly crossed my arms.

I knew this seven-day trip had been a good idea, and I could not understand why Michael wouldn't let himself relax.

His hands gripped the wheel tightly, the way they always do when we drive Gabriel long distances. When Michael wasn't watching out for tractor-trailers hauling huge logs, he was consumed by his other fear: How would Gabriel sleep in a strange place? Not only were we taking him out of his environment, we were staying with two other couples and three other children, 18 months to 3 years.

Three weeks before, we had successfully sleep-trained Gabriel, a practice that requires parents with strong wills and well-stocked liquor cabinets to let their children cry themselves to sleep. The hope is that once a baby goes to sleep on his own, it will make putting him down the following night considerably easier, and eventually he (and his parents) will sleep through the night.

We had planned the trip to Maine for months. Every year, we meet old friends for a week somewhere in Maine, where we hike, cook huge meals, and discover new watering holes. This was our first year going with a baby, and we figured if we sleep-trained far enough in advance, the nights wouldn't be too tough.

We agreed that we would to rock him to sleep, rather than make him fall asleep on his own in a house full of screaming toddlers. I was confident that once he was down, he would sleep through the night, as he'd been doing at home.

What's the worst that could happen?

The first night, he went

down fairly easily, and Michael and I climbed into bed, relieved.

Two hours later, he was awake, weeping.

Michael scooped him up and began rocking him, and I prayed he would not wake up the whole house. The Victorian had incredibly thin walls and floors.

Fifteen minutes later, Gabriel fell asleep. He woke up 90 minutes later.

He followed the same pattern well into the morning.

At 5 a.m., I was near tears. "I can't take seven days of this," Michael said. "If he does this again tomorrow night, we're driving home."

Half-crazed, I punched my legs and hissed, "No! This is *my* vacation."

"Fine," Michael responded, "I'll drive home with Gabriel and you can stay here."

"Oh, and make me the bad guy!" I shot back.

The next day was humid and hot. My friends suggested a hike and then a drive up Mount Battie in Camden Hills. We

were miserable.

Gabriel looked droopy and worn, his round, fat cheeks sagging in the heat.

Michael and I barely spoke to each other all day, so tired and terrified were we about what the night held.

It held nearly the same horrors as the previous night, except instead of waking up every 90 minutes, he woke up every two hours.

The next morning we agreed we would have to go back to sleep training if we wanted a chance at a full night's sleep.

That night, we laid Gabriel down at 7 p.m. I tried to avoid his gaze, but I caught his look of panic as it dawned on him I would not be nursing him to sleep.

As I closed the door, he began wailing.

That night, our friend had prepared an elaborate lobster dinner with gin and tonics. I don't remember the lobster, but I dove for the drinks.

I gulped down my first as Gabriel's wails pierced the warm air. We had our baby monitor on but didn't need it. You could hear his pitiful cries from the backyard.

My friend Megan patted my shoulder and said he would stop soon.

Forty-five minutes later, he was still crying. I was on my third gin and tonic.

"I think his cries are getting softer," Megan said. Michael glared at her.

Another forty-five minutes later, Gabriel was still wailing.

"He's quite resilient," Megan said sheepishly. I fled into a back room to cry. Michael rubbed my back as I blubbered that this vacation had been a terrible, terrible mistake.

Thirty minutes later, Gabriel was silent. He had fallen asleep.

That night, he woke up only twice.

The night after that, he woke up just once. Even his naps got better.

During one of Gabriel's blissful afternoon dozes, I sat on Michael's lap in the backyard and looked out across a still pond. I sipped my wine.

"I forgot we like each other," I said.

He nodded happily.

I murmured: "I can't wait to do this again next year."

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HERE

GIVE THANKS FOR HOT TUBS AND FREE SKIING
Celebrate Thanksgiving by escaping to Jay Peak with the Boston Ski & Sports Club. The trip runs Nov. 28-30, and includes two nights at the Stateside Hotel and a three-day pass to Jay Peak's adult-oriented indoor water park, where the temps hang at 82 degrees and you can try surfing, boogie boarding, chilling in the hot tub, or tackling the country's only loop waterslide. If the mountain is open, you will get a free three-day lift ticket. Jay Peak, located close to Canadian border, typically gets the most snow of any resort

in eastern North America, and has 50 miles of trails and 385 skiable acres. \$179 for the package. 617-789-4070, ext. 229, www.bssc.com

WARREN MILLER'S 65TH SKI MOVIE
Don't miss Warren Miller's latest high-octane, adrenaline-laced movie, "No Turning Back," which mixes the acrobatic and highly skilled moves of some of the world's top skiers and snowboarders, in some of the world's most stunning wilderness areas. See Vermont-native Heather Paul, a two-time National Telemark Champion, and Maine's Seth Westcott, a two-time Olympic champ in snowboard cross. The film takes viewers to Niseko, Ja-

pan, which gets nearly 50 feet of snow a year, and also highlights terrain in France, Greece, Norway, and Switzerland. It also looks back at 65 years of Miller's skiing history and movie-making. See the film at the Endicott College Auditorium in Beverly tonight (Nov. 16), and The Colonial Theatre in Pittsfield, Nov. 19; at the State Theatre in Portland, Maine, Nov. 21; at The Music Hall in Portsmouth, N.H., Nov. 24-26; and in Vermont at Middlebury's Town Hall Theater, Dec. 3-4, and at Burlington's Flynn Center for Performing Arts, Dec. 6. Go online for more New England showings. Tickets: \$22, which also gets moviegoers a lift ticket to Sugarbush Resort, in Warren, Vt. 800-523-7117, www.warrenmiller.com

THERE

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KEITH HARING FOUNDATION

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