

## HAVING TWO HOMES IS EASIER

Valerie and Tom Schooley have completed nine exchanges. They say having a second home makes the process easier. They exchange both their primary residence in Itasca, Minn., and their lake home in Park Rapids, Minn. "Having two homes makes it possible to do non-simultaneous exchanges, then we aren't as limited," she says. About four to five hours of research per exchange is about what she plans for. But, it's always worth it, she says.

They've been to Tampa and Key West, Fla., Galveston, Texas, St. Simons Island, Ga., San Diego, Calif., England and a small fishing village in Ireland. Favorite exchanges were those that had skateboards, video games, bikes and neighborhood kids for her son to play with.

Along with having a second home to allow for flexibility in the exchange, Valerie says part of the success with finding great locations were having a fully equipped cabin. Golf clubs, a kayak, sailboat and everything you need to enjoy the lake are there. And, even though she's never met any of the other parties in the exchange, Valerie has had few reservations with exchanging. "You develop such a relationship over email they are no longer strangers. Besides, if you come home and something is broken, you know who did it!"

One couple, which she emailed about exchanging for their place in St. Simon's Island, wasn't interested in coming to Park Rapids. But, that didn't matter. They agreed to let Valerie and Tom stay in their second home on the beautiful island anyhow. "By the time you are negotiated, you know these people pretty well," she says.

