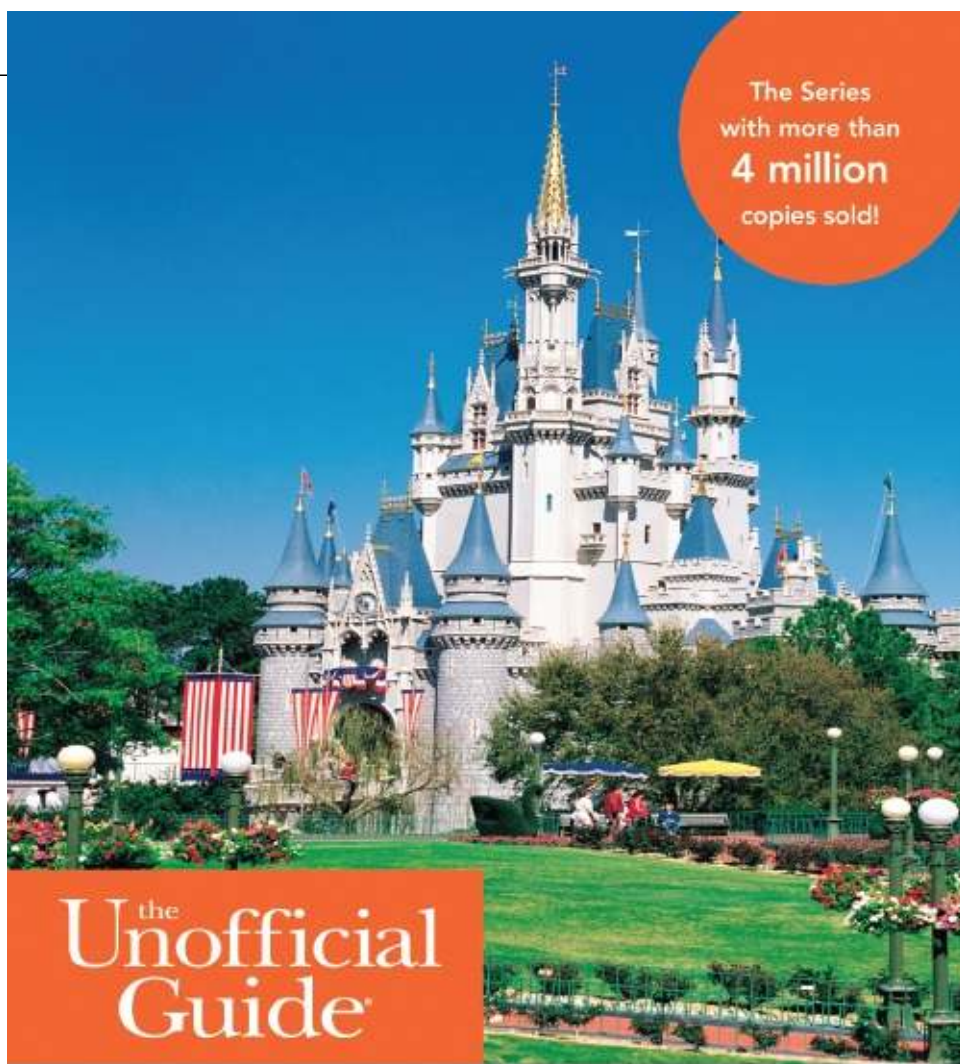


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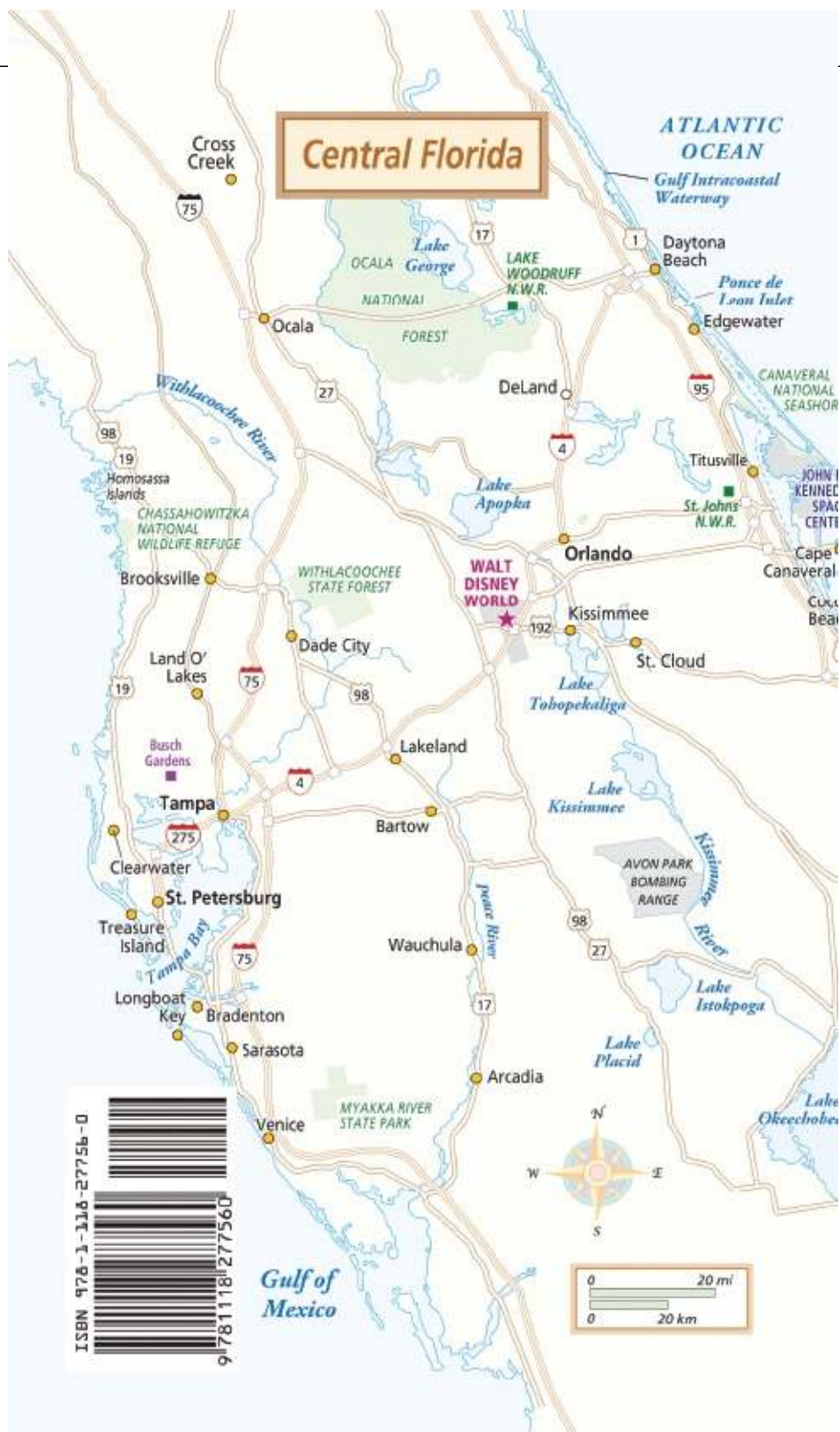
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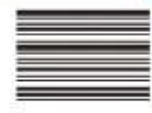
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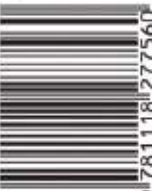
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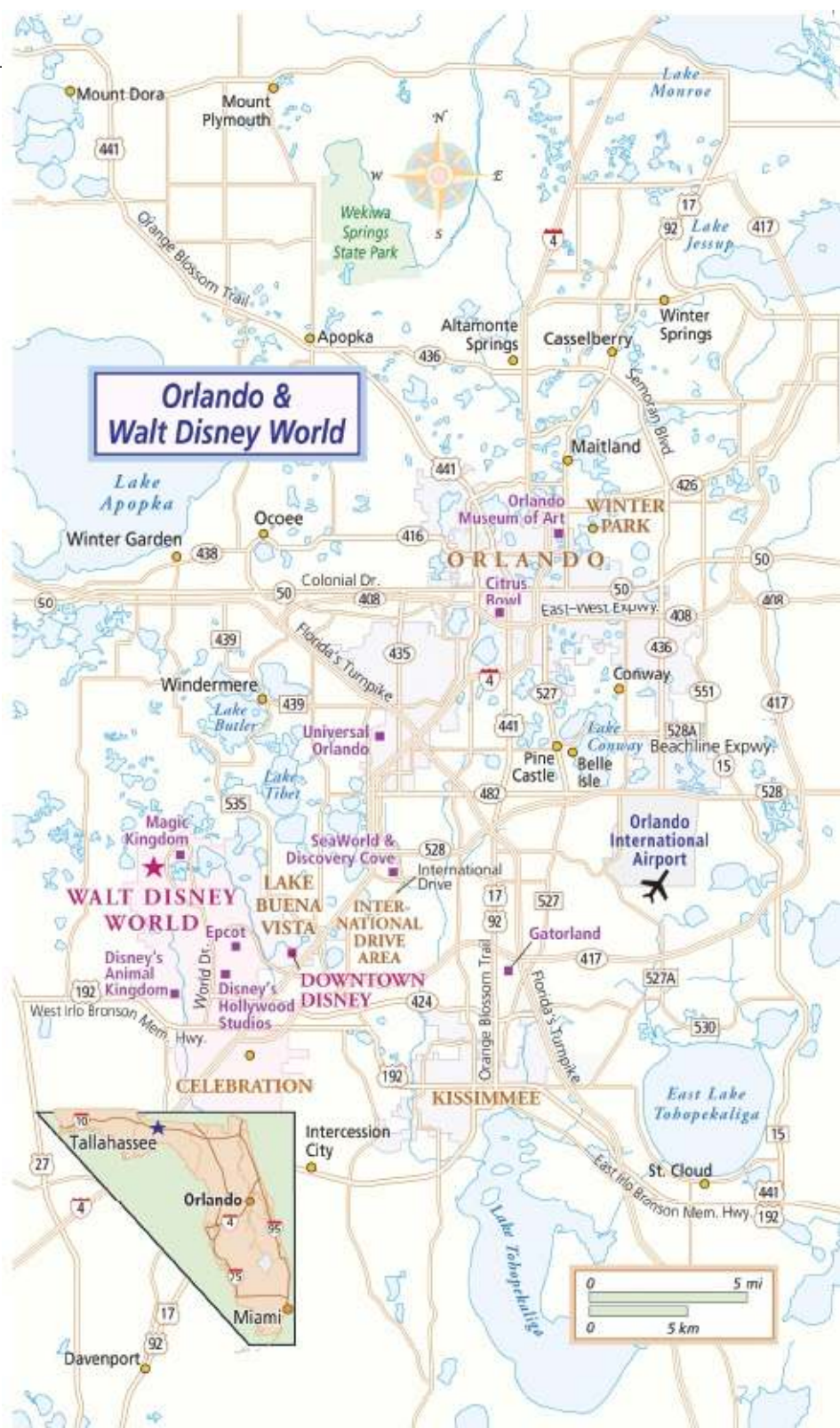
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Gulf of Mexico



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# INTRODUCTION

## WHY “UNOFFICIAL”?

### DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

THE AUTHORS AND RESEARCHERS of this guide specifically and categorically declare that they are and always have been totally independent of the Walt Disney Company, Inc.; of Disneyland, Inc.; of Walt Disney World, Inc.; and of any and all other members of the Disney corporate family not listed.

The material in this guide originated with the authors and researchers and has not been reviewed, edited, or approved by the Walt Disney Company, Inc.; Disneyland, Inc.; or Walt Disney World, Inc.

This guidebook represents the first comprehensive *critical* appraisal of Walt Disney World. Its purpose is to provide the reader with the information necessary to tour Walt Disney World with the greatest efficiency and economy and with the least hassle.

In this guide, we represent and serve you. If a restaurant serves bad food, or a gift item is overpriced, or a ride isn't worth the wait, we say so, and in the process we hope to make your visit more fun and rewarding.

### DANCE TO THE MUSIC

A DANCE HAS A BEGINNING and an end. But when you're dancing, you're not concerned about getting to the end or where on the dance floor you might wind up. In other words, you're totally in the moment. That's the way you should be on your Walt Disney World vacation.

You may feel a bit of pressure concerning your vacation. Vacations, after all, are very special events—and expensive ones to boot. So you work hard to make your vacation the best that it can be. Planning and organizing are essential to a successful Walt Disney World vacation, but if they become your focus, you won't be able to hear the music and enjoy the dance.

So think of us as your dancing coaches. We'll teach you the steps to the dance in advance so that when you're on vacation and the music plays, you'll dance with effortless grace and ease.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING GOOFY

Egbert Hoofnagel, who coordinates the calendar for all Walt Disney World parks and venues, sits puzzling over an event to be held at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex....

“MacDermott, can you come here for a minute?”

“Aye, boss?”

“There's a, ahem, ‘ferret-legging’ contest scheduled next month at the Wide World of Sports. Is this something that involves the Disney characters?”

MacDermott looks surprised. “Nae, sir, it doesn't. But as far as characters go, it will

draw some of the strangest you'll ever see."

~~"So what is ferret-legging?" Hoofnagel inquires, more confused than ever.~~

"It's sort of a test of endurance where you stuff a live ferret down your trousers. The ferrets are quite, um, *lively* when they get in there. Whoever can suffer the beast the longest is the winner."

"Good grief! Have you ever tried ferret-legging?"

"Nae, sir, ferret-legging is for girlie-men in England and Wales. In Scotland we use the noble wolverine. Tuck it right up under our kilts, we do."

Hoofnagel's eyebrows take the elevator to the top floor and stick there, afraid to descend.

"Well, do you have anything on under there—like, you know, *underpants*?" he stammers.

"You'll hafta ask the wolverine. That's a Scottish national secret."

"This doesn't sound very Disney-like," Hoofnagel says. "Do you think it's appropriate for the Wide World of Sports?"

After mulling it over a bit, MacDermott responds, "Well, it depends, but my honest opinion is that Americans are too soft for this sport. Then there are those great, baggy britches yer lads wear. The seat of the pants hangs down around the knees, it does. A proper ferret could get lost in there for a fortnight."

Hoofnagel demurs. "Americans can't stand to watch a sport where they don't win. I think we should cancel."

"Either that or start small for the Yanks, maybe mouse-legging. Works well with our corporate symbol, it does. We could call it 'Mickey's in Yer Knickers.' "

"That's *appalling*! I'd be fired on the spot!"

"How about 'Parrots in Yer Pants'? 'Weasels in Yer Y-Fronts'?"

Enter Vilmos Paprikash, a recent immigrant who's heard the whole conversation while changing the air-conditioner filter. "In East Vovodyodo, ve put chicken in pants and keep her there until she lay egg. You could try, perhaps?"

Hoofnagel groans. "You're both giving me a migraine. I *won't* sign off on anything that involves putting live animals in your clothing!"

"Easily solve!" Paprikash announces cheerily. "Ve have other game where you run 1-mile race vith dead sturgeon strapped to calf. That would be perfect, yes?"

**"NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"**

And so it goes....

What really makes writing about Walt Disney World fun is that the Disney people take everything so seriously. Day to day, they debate momentous decisions with far-ranging consequences: Will Pluto look silly in a silver cape? Have we gone too far with the Little Mermaid's cleavage? With the nation's drug problem a constant concern, should we have a dwarf named Dopey?

Unofficially, we think having a sense of humor is important. This guidebook has one, and it's probably necessary that you do, too—not to use this book, but to have the most fun possible at Walt Disney World. Think of the *Unofficial Guide* as a private trainer to help get your sense of humor in shape. It will help you understand the importance of being Goofy.

## **HONEY, I BLEW UP THE BOOK!**

THE FIRST EDITION OF *The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World* was fewer than 200 pages, a mere shadow of its current size. Since that edition, Disney World has grown tremendously. The *Unofficial Guide* has grown to match this expansion. (Truth be told, Bob has put on a little weight himself. Len's rate of metabolism, on the other hand, is so high that his body is

incapable of producing fat.)

A mom from Streator, Illinois, was amazed by the size of the *Unofficial Guide*, writing not unsympathetically:

*It had been 10 years since we have been to WDW, and I was shocked by how the size of your book grew. After going, I'm surprised that it's so small.*

We have no idea where it will all end. In 30 years we may be selling an alphabetized, 26-volume edition, handsomely packaged in an imitation-oak bookcase. In the meantime, we offer a qualified apology for the bulk of this edition. We know it may be too heavy to carry comfortably without the assistance of a handcart or Sherpa, but we defend the inclusion of all the information presented. Not every diner uses ketchup, A.1. sauce, or Tabasco, but it's nice to have all three on the table.

Concerning *Unofficial Guide* content, a mom from Vallejo, California, requests that we include a map of the Orlando airport. Other reader ideas for new content included these suggestions:

- *I think your guide should have a list of attractions that provide (1) seats, (2) air-conditioning, and (3) at least 15 minutes off your feet.*
- *I feel your Unofficial Guide should include a claustrophobia rating for each attraction.*
- *I wish you'd discuss restrooms more in the next edition. I found myself constantly searching for one.*
- *We think you need a rating system regarding water [i.e., how wet you can expect to get on specific attractions]. EW = Extreme Water; SW = Some Water; M = Mist.*
- *A touring plan for wimpy teens would be helpful.*
- *I'd like to see a more adult version of the one-day touring plan for the Magic Kingdom—one that doesn't include Fantasyland, the Country Bears, or Tom Sawyer Island. Title this plan "I hate those damn bears!"*

These comments are representative in that many of you would like more detailed coverage of one thing or another. Believe me, we've debated adding an airport map, as well as hundreds of other things, but haven't done so. Why? Because we don't have an infinite number of pages with which to work, and we felt other information was more important. You'd be amazed by the wealth of worthwhile material that doesn't make the cut. What if we put it all in? Well, the book would look more at home in your hayloft than on your bookshelf.

## **YOUR UNOFFICIAL WALT DISNEY WORLD TOOLBOX**

YOU NEED DIFFERENT TOOLS to work on your car than you do to fix a leaky faucet or trim your azaleas. It's much the same with a Walt Disney World vacation. If we think of information as tools, a couple with two toddlers in diapers will need different tools than a party of seniors going to the Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival. Likewise, adults touring without children, families with kids of varying ages, and honeymooners all require their own special tools.

To meet the varying needs of our readers, we've created the very comprehensive guide before you. We call *The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World*, at about 850 pages, the "Big Book." It contains the detailed information that anyone traveling to Walt Disney World needs

to have a super vacation. It's our cornerstone.

But as thorough as we try to make the main guide, there still isn't sufficient space for all the tips and resources that may be useful to certain readers. Therefore, we've developed four additional guides, each designed to work in conjunction with the Big Book and provide information tailored to specific visitors. Although some advice from the Big Book, such as arriving early at the theme parks, is echoed in these guides, most of the information is unique. You might think of the Big Book as a vacuum cleaner and the other guides as specialized attachments that certain users might need for a particular job (back to tools, you see).

Here's what's in the toolbox:

***The Unofficial Guide Color Companion to Walt Disney World***, by Bob Sehlinger and Len Testa, is a visual feast that proves a picture is worth a thousand words. In the Big Book, for instance, you can learn about the best guest rooms to request at the Wilderness Lodge, but in the *Color Companion* you can see the rooms, along with the pool and the magnificent lobby. For the first time, full-color photos illustrate how long the lines get at different times of day, how wet riders get on Splash Mountain, and how the parks are decked out for various holidays. The *Color Companion* will whet your appetite for Disney fun, picture all the attractions, serve as a keepsake, and, as always, help make your vacation more enjoyable. Most of all, the *Color Companion* is for fun. For the first time, we're able to use photography to express our zany *Unofficial* sense of humor. Think of it as Monty Python meets Walt Disney in Technicolor.

***The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World with Kids***, by Bob Sehlinger and Liliane J. Opsomer with Len Testa, presents detailed planning and touring tips for a family vacation, along with more than 20 family touring plans that are exclusive to this book.

***Mini-Mickey: The Pocket-Sized Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World***, by Bob Sehlinger, Len Testa, and Ritchey Halphen, is a portable CliffsNotes-style version of *The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World*. It distills information from the Big Book to help short-stay or last-minute visitors decide quickly how to plan their limited hours at Disney World.

***Beyond Disney: The Unofficial Guide to Universal, SeaWorld, and the Best of Central Florida***, by Bob Sehlinger and Robert N. Jenkins, is a guide to non-Disney theme parks, attractions, restaurants, outdoor recreation, and nightlife in Orlando and Central Florida.

## THE DEATH OF SPONTANEITY

ONE OF OUR ALL-TIME FAVORITE LETTERS came from a man in Chapel Hill, North Carolina:

*Your book reads like the operations plan for an amphibious landing: Go here, do this, proceed to Step 15. You must think that everyone is a hyperactive, type-A theme park commando. What happened to the satisfaction of self-discovery or the joy of spontaneity? Next you'll be telling us when to empty our bladders.*

As it happens, *Unofficial Guide* researchers are a pretty existential crew. We're big on self-discovery, if the activity is walking in the woods or watching birds. Some of us are able to improvise jazz, and others can whip up a mean pot of chili without a recipe. When it comes to Disney World, however, we all agree that you need either a good plan or a frontal lobotomy. The operational definition of self-discovery and spontaneity at Walt Disney World is the "pleasure" of heat prostration and the "joy" of standing in line.

*Let's face it:* Walt Disney World is not a very existential place. In many ways it's the quintessential system, the ultimate in mass-produced entertainment, the most planned and programmed environment anywhere.

We aren't saying that you can't have a great time at Walt Disney World. What we *are* saying is that you need a plan. You don't have to be compulsive or inflexible; just think about what you want to do before you go. Don't delude yourself by rationalizing that the information in this guide is only for the pathological and the superorganized. Ask not for whom the tome tells, Bubba—it tells for thee.

## **DON'T LET THE TAIL WAG THE DOG**

SOME FOLKS BECOME SO INVESTED in their plan that it becomes the centerpiece of the vacation. A Columbia, Missouri, mom, obviously intent on making every second count, offers time-saving advice that makes *Unofficial* strategies look flat-out amateurish:

*Getting to the park when it opens is the key to beating the lines. To make that happen: (1) Pack breakfast on the go—you can eat your Pop-Tarts once you're on the shuttle bus, then drink your juice while you wait in line for Dumbo. (2) Send the fastest runner in your party to jump on the bus or boat; the driver will wait if he sees you coming and one of your kids is already hanging on. (3) Showering wastes precious park and rest time; the pool will do. (4) Braid your daughter's hair. Seriously. My 8-year-old never had to brush her hair in the morning (worst case: do her hair on the shuttle bus—don't waste time in your room). (5) Ball caps for boys also avoid hair brushing and help with the sun.*



It's hard to imagine keeping up with this woman, but she apparently derived great satisfaction from creating and executing her plan. For most, however, the stress and doggedness of this approach would push them over the edge. Remember the basics: Know thyself, nothing to excess, and concentrate on having fun.

## CORRECTIONS, UPDATES, AND BREAKING NEWS

CORRECTIONS AND UPDATES can be found online at the *Unofficial Guide* website, [touringplans.com](http://touringplans.com). Also available on the site are the WDW Crowd Calendar; more than 140

touring plans; our mobile app, Lines; trip-planning and -organizing tools; a Ticket Calculator; research reports; and breaking Walt Disney World news.

## WE'VE GOT ATTITUDE

SOME READERS DISAGREE about our attitude toward Disney. A woman from Golden, Colorado, lambastes us:



*I read your book cover to cover and felt you were way too hard on Disney. It's disappointing when you're all enthused about going to Walt Disney World to be slammed with all these criticisms.*



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