Second home owners offer first-hand advice

By Marni Jameson, Orland Sentinel

Is owning a second home all it's cracked up to be? That's the question I cast to my experience-wizened readers. And their resounding answer? A definitive sometimes.

I am giving the reins over to my readers, who have shared their first-hand knowledge of second-home ownership. Here are their lessons from the trenches, beaches, mountains and golf communities:

"Just think!"

"There we were, stretched out on the beach – in January!" begins Bonnie Wilkes, explaining how she and her husband, then Chicago residents, came to own a second home in Sarasota, Fla. "The temperature was in the mid-80s. Wow! We thought – just think if we could have this all the time! We should buy a second home here."

And they did. That was 34 years ago. "Never again did we feel that same level of relaxation while on vacation at that same beach," she continued. "Some days we didn't even make it to the beach because we were waiting for the refrigerator repair guy. Instead of strolling the gift shops in the village, we were at a big box store looking for a TV for the guest room."

Waiting until the kids were grown made a second-home investment pay off for Jane Gold, of Saratoga. After their three children were out of the house, she and her husband bought a second home in Lake Tahoe.

"Our family always vacationed there, and we have fond memories of those times." Five years ago, they bought a house close to

the lake and just a four-and-a-half-hour by car from their main home, so they can take their dogs. “We don’t regret buying one bit.”

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