

Washington DC. *continued*

After boarding our bus, we left Foxwood Village at promptly 6:30am. We then stopped two more times to pick up additional passengers and then headed south to Washington, D.C.

We arrived in Washington at 2:30 pm and before going to our first destination, we had a quick tour around the city. You could not help but notice how well kept and green Washington, D.C. is. For a major cosmopolitan destination, the city is not only clean, but extremely well-tended with plants and trees and wide avenues, which gives the appearance of uncrowded and relaxed. Even though it was bustling with people and new construction, you didn't feel confined or restricted in any way. We all remarked how inviting it looked.

Our first destination was Constitution Avenue, the National Mall, which is an expanse of green oasis down the center of Constitution Avenue. Here, our bus parked as central as he could and we wandered through the museums within walking distance. The American History Museum, Natural History Museum or the National Gallery of Art, any one that struck your fancy. Many of us chose the National History Museum because the ladies on the bus wanted to see the Hope Diamond, which is 49.56 carats. That's a lot of rock!

Our next day was a very full day. We began at 8:15 and stopped at the National World War II Memorial. This elegant and inspiring memorial showed the two theaters of the war; the Atlantic and the Pacific. The theaters were on opposing sides, separated by a large and beautiful water design, and surrounding the entire site were quotes from presidents and statesmen of the day that commented on the bravery and fortitude and courage of the American men and women that served and gave their lives in this battle.

The next stop was the Lincoln Memorial, which sits high on top a hill overlooking a most impressive reflecting pool. The monument is massive, yet elegant in its simplicity and beauty. There are 87 steps from the reflecting pool to the entrance, equaling four score and seven. Pretty cool.

Also in this area, were the Korean War Memorial, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, each significant in its own right and equally hauntingly tragic in the truth and sorrow of why there has to be such loss of life in the modern world.

Next it was on to Capitol Hill, and for those who doubt it is a hill, just try walking up. This building was a showplace of American History at work. The House and the Senate are on two opposing sides of the building, connected by the rotunda, which is an astounding, architectural masterpiece that has housed the congress since 1800. Here, within this unique structure are priceless paintings, sculptures and statues of all those who have served in our countries history as well as interesting and fun facts that were supplied to us by the guide who took us up and down, in and out of the capitol building. Of course, also in this area was the Supreme Court Building and the United States Library of Congress, but we did not have enough time to visit all of them.

We also saw the United States Air Force Memorial, built on a hillside overlooking the Pentagon. This memorial is both bold and graceful, depicting three stainless steel spires, soaring skyward, representing the contrails of planes in flight.

The last stop, and by no means the least of today's stop was the Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima Statue.) This is a bronze statue depicting the American Flag being raised on Mount Suribachi on February 19, 1945, on the island of Iwo Jima during WWII and commemorates all marines who have given their lives in battle since 1775. The statue is 32 feet tall on a 10 foot base. Out of everything we saw today, this was my personal favorite because the way it showed the struggle of raising that flag on that non-descript little island, made me realize how fragile freedom is and how much we should treasure it and this country for all we have.

Arlington National Cemetery was the beginning of our next day. We got to pay our respects at the grave of John F. Kennedy and Jackie Kennedy and then we went on to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, where we witnessed a very solemn and respectful changing of the guard. We then preceded downtown and visited The Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial.

We all agreed that our representatives in both the house and senate should come down to the Roosevelt Memorial to refresh themselves on just what they should be doing and saying for the people who elected them. This memorial was inspiring. moving, graceful, and most illuminating. If there is one place to pick, that you absolutely must see, this is it.

Last day we visited the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy National Air and Space Museum near Dulles International Airport in Fairfax, Virginia.

What a trip this was! Amazing, outstanding, awesome, does not describe it. All avionics from the beginning of flight to the space shuttle Discovery, are displayed for your thoroughly enjoyable time here. There are interactive displays and educational displays, but when you actually are able to stand next to an aircraft that has been to space 39 times, it is totally awesome.

We left Washington, D.C. for Baltimore, Maryland's Inner Harbor, where we had a scrumptious meal at one of the seaside restaurants, and then we bid adieu to return home to Foxwood Village, where we will not forget the memories we left behind.

