

A photograph of the Washington Monument in Washington, DC. The monument is a tall, white, obelisk-shaped structure that tapers to a point at the top. It is set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the foreground, there is a large, green lawn with a few people walking. Trees and other buildings are visible in the background.

*Washington DC*  
*2004*

## Washington, D.C. 10/2004

I really needed a vacation from work – two long projects back-to-back – one of them was 25 days straight (including weekends). I needed a break – a suspension of disbelief. For a week, I would be a traveler, sightseer and photojournalist with no schedules, family or responsibility. I can't thank Barbara enough for allowing me to take this trip.

At first, I didn't know where to go. I wanted to go to a place where my wife and family would not want to go, so I wouldn't feel so guilty. I had saved enough to go to many places, but I only wanted to take one week off. This pretty much ruled out Asia, Europe and most of the Pacific (due to cost or jetlag). I was looking at the Americas. One of my top choices was Manccu Pinccu, Peru. Another choice, Antarctica, was too expensive unless I spoke Russian, liked working for my passage, and liked eating fish. Easter Island turned out to be too expensive as well. Same with Rio. Just about the time I was going to book my Peruvian adventure, I did my bills and realized that most of my saved money was gone (my family went to Seattle and Canada without me, then we all went to Hearst Castle/San Simeon for a weekend). We had spent more than half the money. It looked like the US or Mexico; maybe Canada for me. I searched the web for cheap tickets and found some great prices to New York and Washington D. C. – both under \$200., and both destinations had siblings or parents who could offer free room and board. I had been to New York recently, but I hadn't seen to DC since I was eleven, and that was a drive-through. There was so much to see in DC, and so much history and Americana, so I booked the flight.

10/13

I was up very early to catch my flight. Not only was this a cheap flight, but it was direct to DC and I somehow wound up with no one sitting beside me. Cool! Thanks God for that blessing! The flight had some major turbulence, but the food was good and so was the movie: "Around the World in 80 Days." The turbulence really worked with that movie.

Kevin picked me up at the airport, drove me to his house, and I settled in for the evening. We watched the final Presidential debate, which didn't sway either of us.

10/14

Kevin rode with me on the Metro as far as the Pentagon. I had just purchased my seven day pass so I was set for the week. My plan (assuming it would rain today) was to hit the big museums. The day turned out to be sunny, bright and beautiful despite the forecast so I got off at Smithsonian and decided to make today a walk around the monuments day. I still wanted to see a few museums, so I started at the Museum of Natural History.



*The Metro in Washington DC*

The big elephant at the entrance was a nice touch. The dinosaurs were nice too, but this museum was nowhere near the size of New York's Natural History Museum. I did like their Asian cultural history section and the sea life section on the first floor. I loved the second floor gem collection – gems so big that they had names! I'm sure most consider the Hope diamond to be special, but it didn't catch my eye like some of the other big gems. I go more for color

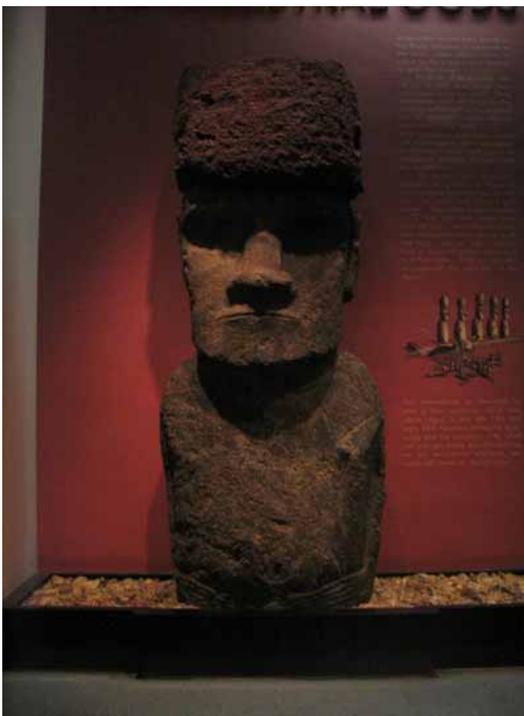


*A big bull elephant greets you at the museum*

and cut than rarity. The geology section was well laid out, as was the ancient cultures section. The bug place was interesting, but I had to compete with too many school children on their field trips. There were swarms all over.

Just behind the Natural History Museum was the National Archive. Once inside, I watched a 20 min. movie on the protection of America's key documents. Then I went upstairs and saw those documents: The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. It was so wonderful to see this part of my American heritage.

Once outside, I started walking up Pennsylvania Ave. I no-



*I did find a piece of Easter Island...*

ticed that I was on smooth cobbles, rather than cement, and that all the curbs were made of granite or marble. Pretty fancy. Other streets also had this combination. I got a kick out of seeing the FBI building and IRS building across the street from each other. As I was walking along, I noticed how clean DC was. It also had a distinct feel to it that was different than Paris or NYC (two other great walking cities). The people were friendly and, because of the time of the year, scarce. I had this city to myself.



*The National Archives Building*

As I walked, my eye moved towards this huge tower. It turned out to be the Old Post Office – now a mini mall and food court. I went in and had Greek food. The entertainment during lunch was watching a videographer grab images of the girls at the table next to me, then superimposing their faces on a muscular body, or on a body next to the President.

Anyway, onward. As I counted the blocks of Pennsylvania Avenue (1200, 1300, 1400...) I knew that I would soon reach 1600, and the White House. It was breathtaking to see, even though we couldn't get too close (no tours since 9/11, and now Pennsylvania Ave. is closed to traffic from 1500-1700 block, and no pedestrians down the side streets while I was there). I took a few pictures then moved on to the Cocoran Museum.



*The Old Post Office Tower*

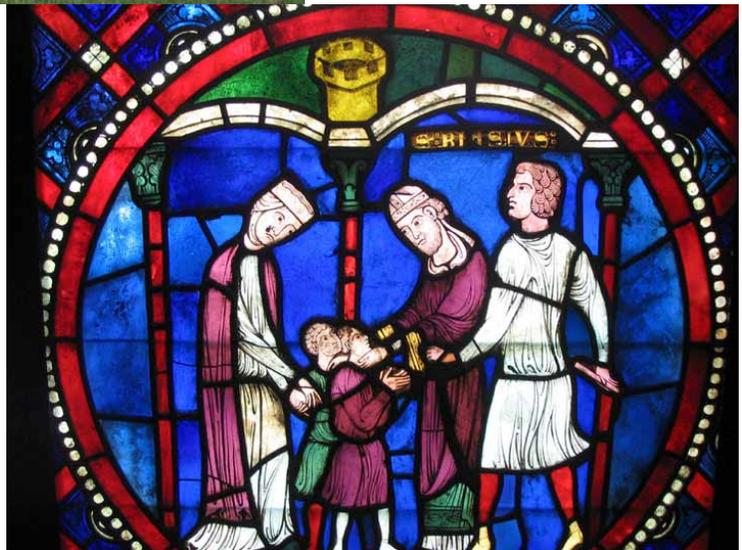


*The White House*

Since the Cocoran had a collection of Northern European Art, this was a museum I really wanted to see. The American Impressionist stuff downstairs wasn't bad. The Northern Collection they had upstairs was smaller than anticipated, but still so good. There was a Still-life and a couple of statues that I

thought were spectacular. There was a picture of George Washington that I liked. It's also not every day that you can go right up to (and touch if you dare) an actual section from a 13<sup>th</sup> century stained glass window. It's a window I had seen in one of my textbooks. Good little museum.

After that, I walked past the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) Museum on the way to the Washington Monument. Darn! It was closed! OK, I walked past the DAR and the Washington Monument on the way to the WWII Monument.



*13th century glass from Soissons Cathedral, France*



*The WWII Memorial*

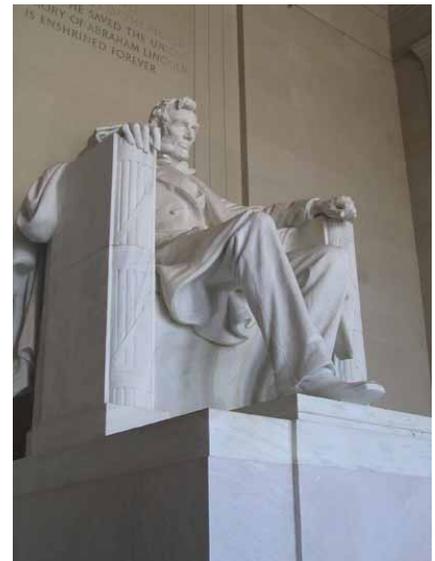
What a nice monument! When I got there, I was surrounded by WWII vets with all their patches showing where they fought, served, or which boat they were on if in the Navy. I felt great admiration and respect for these elderly gentlemen who had fought so bravely for our country.



*The Lincoln Memorial, with ducks*

It was a party in there. These guys knew how to have a good time. Off in the distance was my next destination: the Lincoln Memorial, which was at the opposite end of the reflecting pool. After finding the California pillar in the WWII monument, I was on my way to see Mr. Lincoln. On the way, I saw the Korean Memorial as well. No one was at that Memorial. By the time I had walked to the Lincoln Memorial, my left knee had begun to act up (my London 2000 injury) I knew that stairs would trouble me from this point on, but I went up the Lincoln Memorial steps anyway. Up is no problem — down is. Boy, Lincoln is big, and he's wearing boots. I had never noticed the “decappa” symbols on the arms of the chair before (a Roman sign of governmental authority). All around me were Germans and Japanese on vacation. I loved hearing these foreign languages. It reminded me of other trips. I wonder what they thought of DC — our seat of power?

I could only get halfway down the stairs before I had to stop for a while. That was good — It gave me a chance to soak in the views. I looked on my map for the nearest Metro (as I was clearly done for the day). Wouldn't you know it – the nearest one was a mile and a half uphill at Foggy Bottom U. or two miles away at Smithsonian. I opted for flat ground. By the end of the day, I had walked 13 KM, or around eight miles. Along the way, I saw the Vietnam Memorial, and I met a pair of Italian brothers who had just arrived to see the sites. One lived in Rome, the other in Toronto. The Canadian brother was showing his Roman brother around the States. They were in New York City last week. They were in DC this week. Next week, they would be in Oakland (family lives there). From there, they would do day trips to San Francisco and San Jose. Since I'm from the Bay Area, I was able to give them some must sees for SF and SJ. They were very appreciative. I also directed them to the White House, which was their immediate destination.



*Mr. Lincoln*

10/15

It was a cold and rainy day today. I hoped to spend much of today indoors, rather than being outside in wet and cold; that's no fun. First stop was to get a timeslot to see the Capitol Building. Along the way, I passed the Library of Congress and Supreme Court. Impressive. Before you knew it, I was on the north side of the Capitol Building. All my guidebooks said the ticket counter was on the west side so I walked around front. They were wrong... sort-of. The ticket counter was now on the southwest corner after 9/11. Even before I got to the ticket counter, I had to go to the bathroom quite urgently so I popped into the nearest building, which turned out to be the National Botanical Gardens. Now, I'm not much for gardens, but this place was spectacular. I liked the plants, the air (the air felt good!), and the way they arranged things thematically. Soon, I was back at the southwest corner and I got my ticket. Since my appointment was at 1:30, I felt that I only had time to see either the Air & Space Museum or the National Gallery. I chose the latter – I really wanted to see those four Vermeers (I am on a quest to see all the Vermeers in my lifetime).

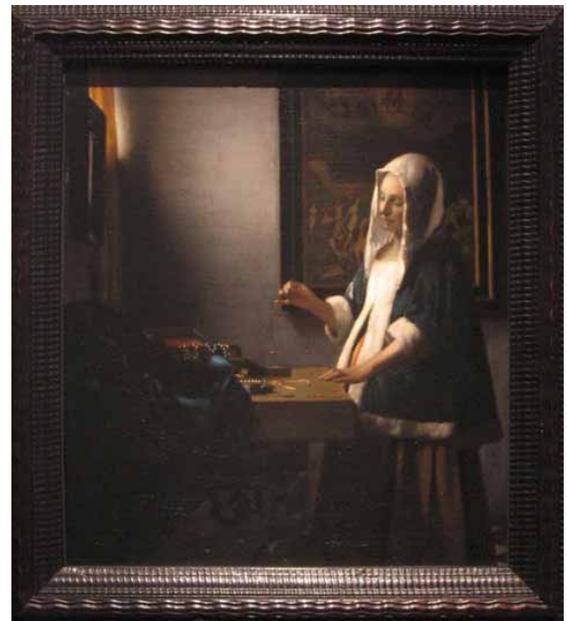


*Supreme Court*



*Library of Congress*

Once I got into the building, I knew I was in someplace special. How grand, this building. Many of my favorite artists and their paintings were here. The guards kept following me because I had a camera. They had a “once you flash, the camera goes away” rule. I never flashed, but I guess they didn't trust me. The museum was really empty, so I was also alone in most rooms,,, just me and a guard anyway. I kept hearing on their radios “man with a camera, and a limp, coming to your room” as I moved about the place. My limp became worse as I walked these hard wood floors, but I was determined to see every painting in the place. Eventually, I discovered that the Vermeers had been moved downstairs due to some construction. I had planned to not go downstairs because, well, I couldn't at this point, and because it was Ancient art, which I felt I could skip. I found an elevator, so I was OK. No stairs. Yeah. It was worth it. The statuary wasn't half bad, but the Vermeers were excellent. I am, however, even more convinced that the two questionable Vermeers at that museum are not Vermeers.



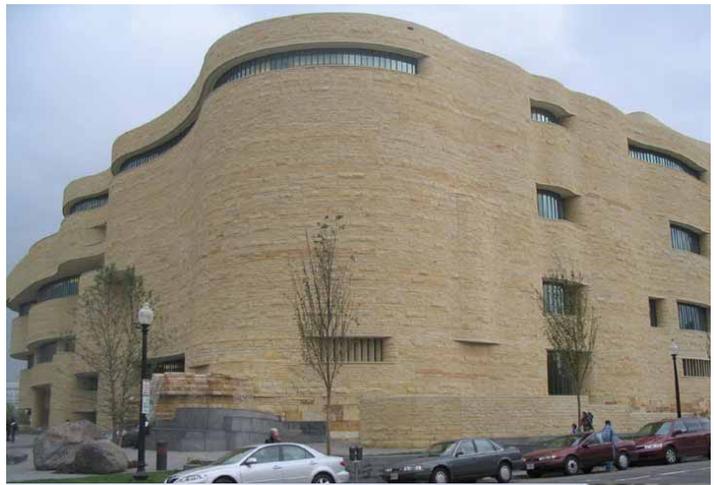
*“Girl weighing pearls”  
by Vermeer*

They were interesting none the less. The other two Vermeers were perhaps the best I have seen (I believe I only have two more to go to have seen the entire collection of Vermeer's known work).

When I got outside, a huge pro-traditional marriage rally had begun on the Mall. I avoided the crowd and searched for lunch. The National Museum was too expensive, so I hobbled over to the Air and Space Museum. They had visible food, but you had to go into the building to actually buy it. The entrance was a long way away for me, and that hotdog stand was much closer, so I had a hot dog for lunch. I was also tired of going through a metal detector every time I entered a building (All buildings in the Mall area now have guards and metal detectors, after 9/11). While eating my hot dog, I took in the amazing architecture of the Indian Museum.

When I got to the Capitol for my tour, it began raining. At least there was a tent. They were running just a little late. I got in the Capitol one hour after I was supposed to. Their security was also much more stringent. no liquids. I even had to throw away my empty water bottle.

The guide suggested that before our next visit, we call our congressman to see the council chamber or take a dome tour (neither is offered in the general tour). this is the only way you can see the chamber or climb the dome. I did see the dome on the tour from the ground. Impressive. 180 feet tall and made out of cast iron. It's painted to look like marble. I also saw a lot of statues in the old Senate room. The statue of Junipero Sierra is where Lincoln sat when he was a junior Senator from Illinois. The crypt below had no dead presidents but Reagan had recently been under the dome for a month. The crypt was supposed to be for Washington, but he stayed at Mt. Vernon instead. I escaped out the south exit, rather than exiting out the west (with a much longer walk). Good thing too — you can see more statues of State heroes, and there is a men's bathroom. You also exit at the top of the hill, rather than at a bunch of stairs leading you to the bottom.



*Indian Museum, Capitol, Capitol Dome*



My last stop was the Library of Congress. There, I saw a Gutenberg Bible and the reading room. I was mostly there because I really wanted to find my Master's Thesis. After all, I was required to send a copy to these people. It was in microfiche in the other, bigger, more modern building. I went home instead. You just can't hold up a reel of microfiche and say, "here it is!"

The metro ride home was interesting. A college student was demonstrating some things she learned in her PE class—pole dancing. She had the attention of all the men on that train, not just her boyfriend.

10/16

Today, Kevin, Kelly, Kristen, Thomas and I went to the Museum of American History. We really enjoyed it. There was certainly more to see than we had time for. We only had two hours. We saw tech, transportation, sports, "pop" (Dorothy's shoes, Spock's phaser), First Ladies' dresses, the Star Spangled Banner, and doll house furniture. I liked the hands-on science stuff that the kids could do. We spent half an hour there. Afterwards, we walked to the Old Post Office for dinner (both the museum and the food court were new experiences for Kevin, Kelly and kids). Most of us ate Lebanese. I got my picture taken with the President (I didn't know he ate here too!). When we got out, it was getting dark and the Capitol Building was all lit up. It was beautiful.

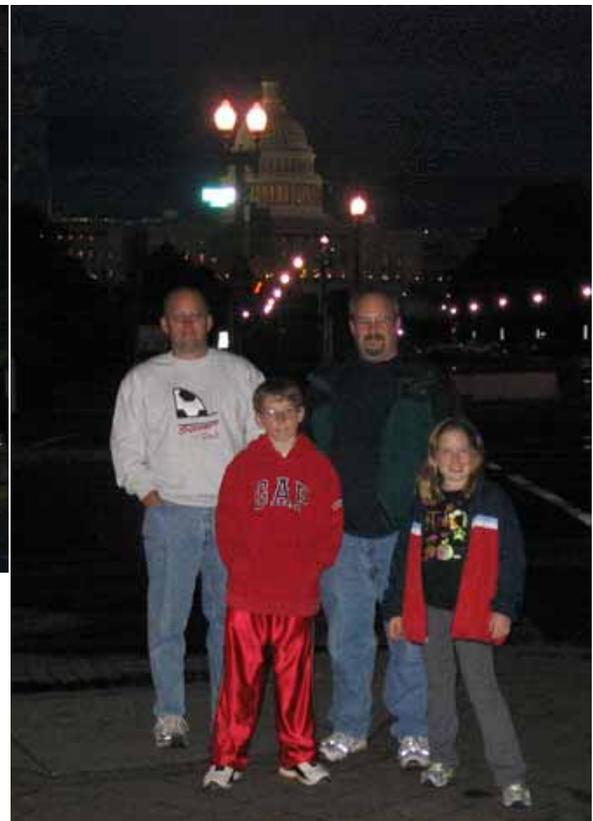


*Library of Congress Reading Room*

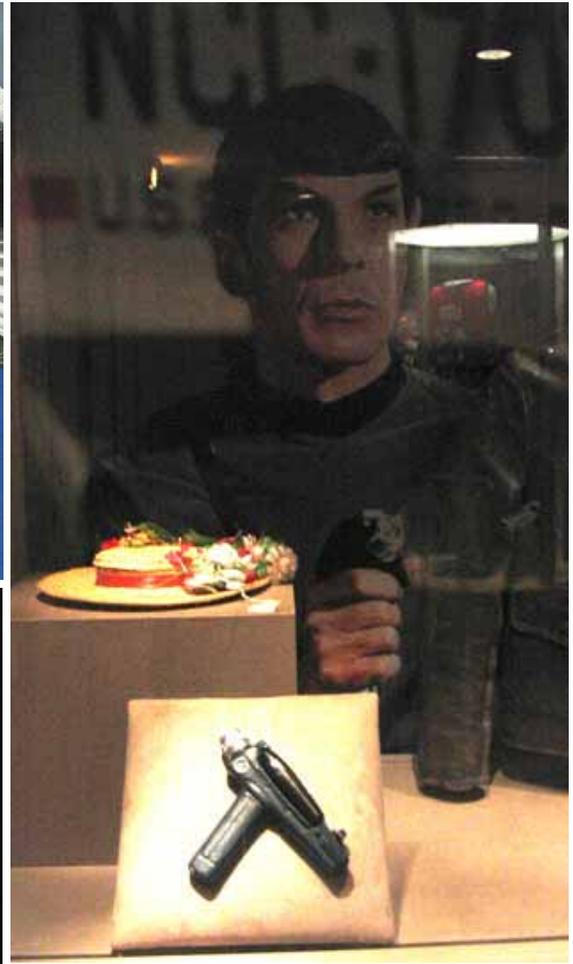


*Capitol Building at night*

Kevin was nice enough to stop at the Jefferson Memorial on the way home. I think this is my favorite memorial so far. Jefferson had Ionic capitals. Lincoln had Doric and the Capitol had Corinthian. I love all the columns and all the marble in this city!



*Kevin, Me, Thomas & Kristen*



*Columns with Corinthian Capitals; Spock's Phaser;  
Dorothy's Ruby Slippers; first Apple Computer;  
Jefferson Memorial*

10/17

Went to church, ate at a nice Italian restaurant, watched some football, and saw a church production of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.” It was pretty great. When we got home, I watched more football.

Here on the east coast, the first game starts at one, and the last game ends at 11:30! I couldn't get used to that.

10/18

It was very cold this morning. I had to scrape ice off the windshield. Today would be a big Metro day as I was beginning to hit the outskirts of the city. When I got to the MCI center, I had about 20 minutes before the Spy museum opened, so I walked to Chinatown and got some batteries for my dead camera. Hmm, no Chinese people about, yet clearly the place was decorated in a Chinese fashion; that is to say, regular looking DC buildings, but with Chinese banners hanging off them. All the employees in the store I went to were black and did not speak Mandarin. I contemplated Starbucks on my way to see the China Gate, but the line was way too long. I talked to Barb on the cellphone while walking back to the Spy Museum.



*China Gate, as seen from Starbucks*

I really liked the museum; though it was crowded. I had seen most of these spy gadgets in movies or on the History Channel, but it was nice to see them all in one place. I think many people (myself included) would like to be a spy, but in going through the museum, I discovered that I probably lacked the skill and the temperament. The constant lying would bother me too. Oh well; I continue my life as an engineer (currently posing as a tourist and photojournalist!).

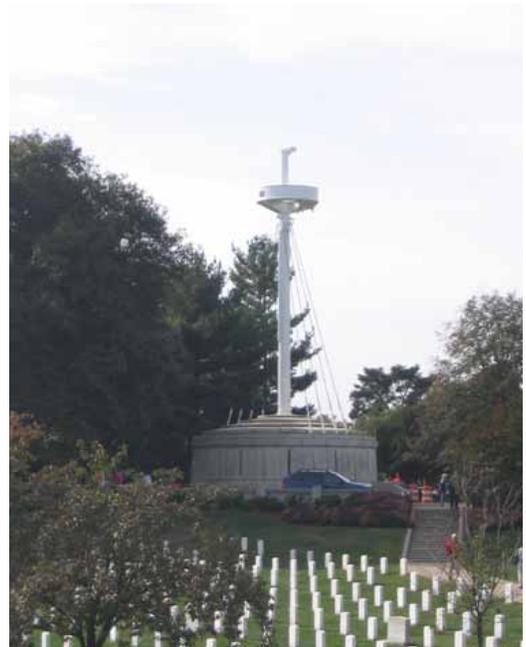
Nice spy store.

I went back into Chinatown to eat Chinese food. There, at least, I saw Chinese people.

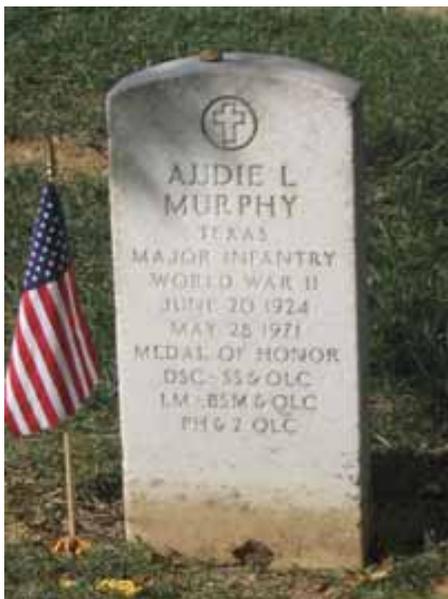
I went right by the Spy Museum on the way to the Ford Theater: my next stop. If the National Portrait Museum were opened, I would have gone in, but that big, beautiful building was under repair. The Ford Theater was closed as well. They were filming some A & E special today, so I went next door to the Hard Rock Cafe and got a t-shirt. Gordon Bierch was also nearby – I could have avoided the long trip to Chinatown and had beer instead! I walked slightly past the Old Post Office to get on the Metro. on the train, I was surrounded by German youth on the way ton Foggy Bottom U. Next stop for me was Arlington National Cemetery.

I really didn't want to do a lot of walking at the cemetery (knowing that I would be walking a lot at the Pentagon later), so I decided to take the tourist trolley. Boy, did that save a bunch of walking. First stop was Kennedy's tomb. I had no idea that it had an unobstructed view of the Lincoln Memorial, and almost lined up with the Mall. up the hill was General Lee's house. No wonder Kennedy liked the view (It was JFK's comment to Bobby about how he liked the view from this spot—eight months prior to his death—that lead John, and later Bobby to be buried here). I was not aware that Jackie was also buried here along with two children that both died in infancy. Jackie had remarried and was living in Greece. I just assumed that she was buried in the Onassis crypt.

Next stop was the tomb of the unknowns. There was more to see than just that however: there was the mast of the Maine, memorials to space shuttle tragedies, and the most decorated war hero in WWII. The sinking of the Maine off the coast of Cuba is what started the Spanish-American war. Memorials to the two doomed Space Shuttle crews were there along with a monument to the soldiers who died in their successful mission to rescue the 52 hostages from Iran during the Carter/Bush era. Audie Murphy, the most decorated soldier in WWII, was not far away. The unknowns were at the far side of the amphitheater. The Vietnam Unknown was recently identified, so he is no longer there beside the WWI, WWII and Korea guys.



*Mast of the Maine*



*Audie Murphy's Tomb*



*Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers*

I skipped the Arlington house (home of General Lee) because it was getting near 3PM—the time I was to meet Kevin at the entrance of the Pentagon.

The Pentagon was big, yet smaller than I thought it would be. Kevin used the self-guided tour brochure to guide me around. We started at the mini-mall at the entrance. We visited galleries and the top brass spots for all the services. The Airforce area was neat and appealing. All the portraits had happy Generals on them. The Coast Guard was rundown, old and dingy. The Navy was all done in blue paint—it looked like the interior of a ship. The most impressive section was the civilian secretary of Defense place. Their corridors were lined with real wood and pillars. They had waiting rooms with leather furniture. This is where they filmed the movie, “No Way Out.”

Next, we went over to the Army wing. Along the way, we passed a one, atwo and athree star Admiral. They were conferencing in the hallway. They looked so normal and friendly. Kevin said that you couldn’t pick most of the brass out of a crowd if they were out of uniform. They are pretty regular guys. We did meet two of Kevin’s acquaintances. One (who turned out to be the highest ranking enlisted man in the Army) worked for the Vice Chair of the Department of the Army (acting Chair). Though definitely not on the tour, he took us into the guy’s office. Wow—big and impressive with antique furniture, a war board and a 60" plasma HD TV for video conferencing. Throughout the office (and down the corridor) were all these “blood & guts” Army rah-rah posters that seemed to glorify fighting and dying. Sign me up! (just kidding) Though I am an advocate of the Armed Services, I did think the posters were a bit too much. Speaking of too much, when we walked down the completely unadorned Marine Section, all their Generals in their portraits looked stern, mean, and like they would rip your arm off and beat you to death with it, or eat it for lunch. Mean people! There was also a picture of Marines hitting the beach and getting all shot up. The painting was more red than green. Sign me up! (again, kidding)

Kevin did sort of show me where he worked. He opened up encrypted door #1 so I could see encrypted door #2 which would lead to his cubicle. The plain, beige corridor failed to impress (as would Kevin’s cubicle; so he tells me).

Kevin and I Metro’d home together after that. On the way home, we passed a train with 20 or so cars filled with coal. you don’t see that on the West Coast. It made me wonder what we were using to power California.



*The Pentagon (“new construction” side facing us, where Kevin works)*

10/19

It would appear that the Thomas map for the DC area is wrong in at least three places that I have found. Though listed as current, I'll bet they haven't surveyed the city in ten years. Much has changed. All these map errors cost me time in some way. I actually wound up in Alexandria's old downtown, rather than my first destination of Mt. Vernon because of this map. I guess Mt. Vernon could come second, but it would be an 18 mile round trip. Since I was already in Alexandria, that's where I started.

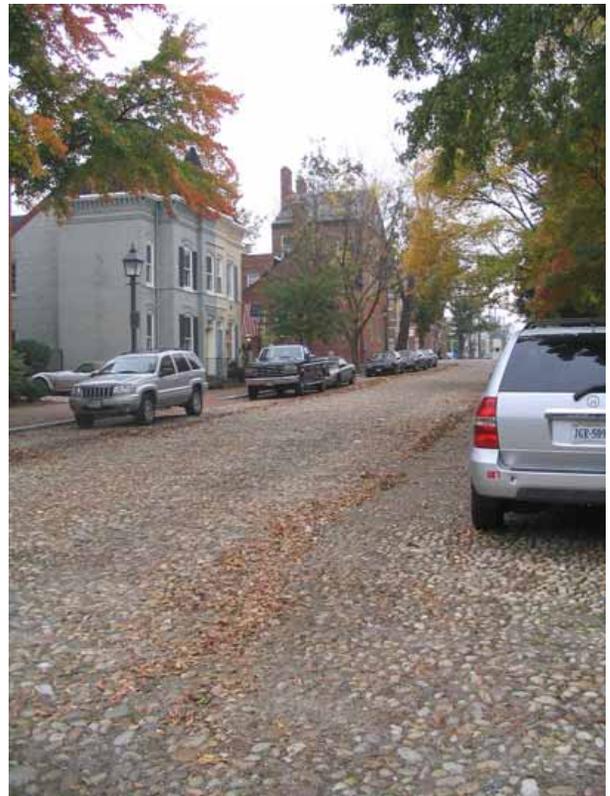
I parked at the former torpedo factory on Union, and my first destination turned out to be a Starbucks! Kevin and Kelly only drink decaf, and I had been going through withdrawals all week. Now I had a little cup of heaven in my hands as I exited the 150 year old building. While drinking my Grande Cappuccino outside in the brisk morning air, a polish man sat down next to me and started smoking a cigar. He saw me with my map and guidebook out and asked me how I liked his hometown. I told him I hadn't seen much yet, but what I had seen so far I liked. He said it was the perfect city – nice and slow-paced with everything close by. It was, in many ways, Old World (and probably similar to the man's native Poland). Most of the streets and buildings were built between 1770-1845.

I got up, wished him a good day, then began my Michelin Guide walking tour (which I did backwards). The first street I came to had river stones for pavement. These were the most basic form of cobblestones. The cobblestones I know and love (from Europe — big, square and flat) were on the next street. Everything else was brick or flagstone.

Most of the houses I saw were square and made of brick. I believe they called it "Federal" architecture. There were a few nice churches about. When I got to the Greek revival building, "The Lyceum," I went inside. It was now a museum of the city of Alexandria. As the docent of that museum said: "small but powerful." He was quite a wealth of knowledge. He pointed me to where Washington's city apartment was. He was way off, but a nice man none the less. Lonely too – only the ring of a phone saved me from an even longer conversation. Once fascinating tidbit he did tell me was that those stone streets came from the ballast of the ships that came over from Britian.



*Christ Church - Where Washington and Robert E. Lee worshipped*



*Riverstone cobble streets  
(from ship ballast)*

Once I had made my escape, I saw many other houses including Robert E. Lee's childhood home, which was just down the street from Washington's apartment. No wonder Lee married Washington's great granddaughter: they were neighbors. My favorite spot was just another block down – Gadsby's Tavern. This is where Washington held many of his meetings. I wanted to eat there, but I was a little early so I popped into the gift shop. I met a docent (Scandinavian) and a tour guide. The guide told me many things, and made some historical connections for me: Washington did his address to the officers before going to war with the British on the steps of Gadsby's. At



*Tavern folk*

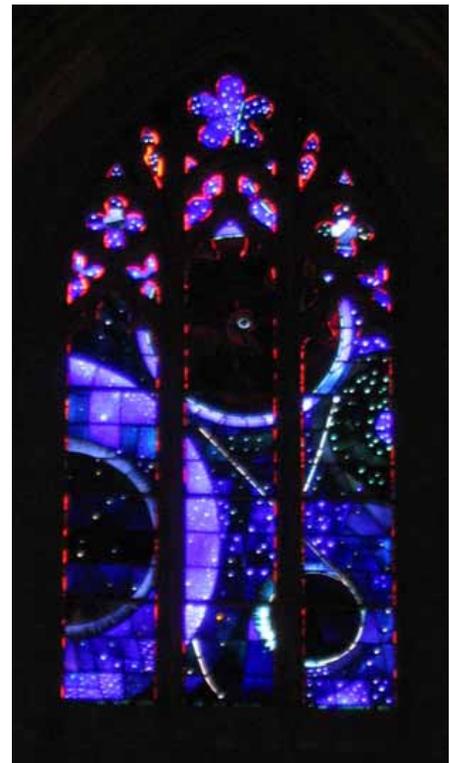
the end of the war, George spoke on the steps of the house of Larz Anderson, a wealthy man in DC (Larz's house became the Japanese Embassy for a while). Larz wanted to create a "Washington" type society to commemorate George's success in the war so he formed the Society of Cincinnati. That sounds weird until you know that Cincinnatus was a Roman general who convinced Roman men to give up their farms (as George later did) to go defend Rome from the attacking Gauls (English, in George's case). After the war, Cincinnatus returned to farming. George did the same thing. Today, Larz is buried in the Washington Cathedral out of gratitude for what he did for George.

Neat stuff! and by that time, it was lunch. First, I stood where George stood on the steps of the tavern and looked out, trying to envision what it would look like from that vantage point. I then looked at my feet – "just where he stood." I was standing on history. I then went in.

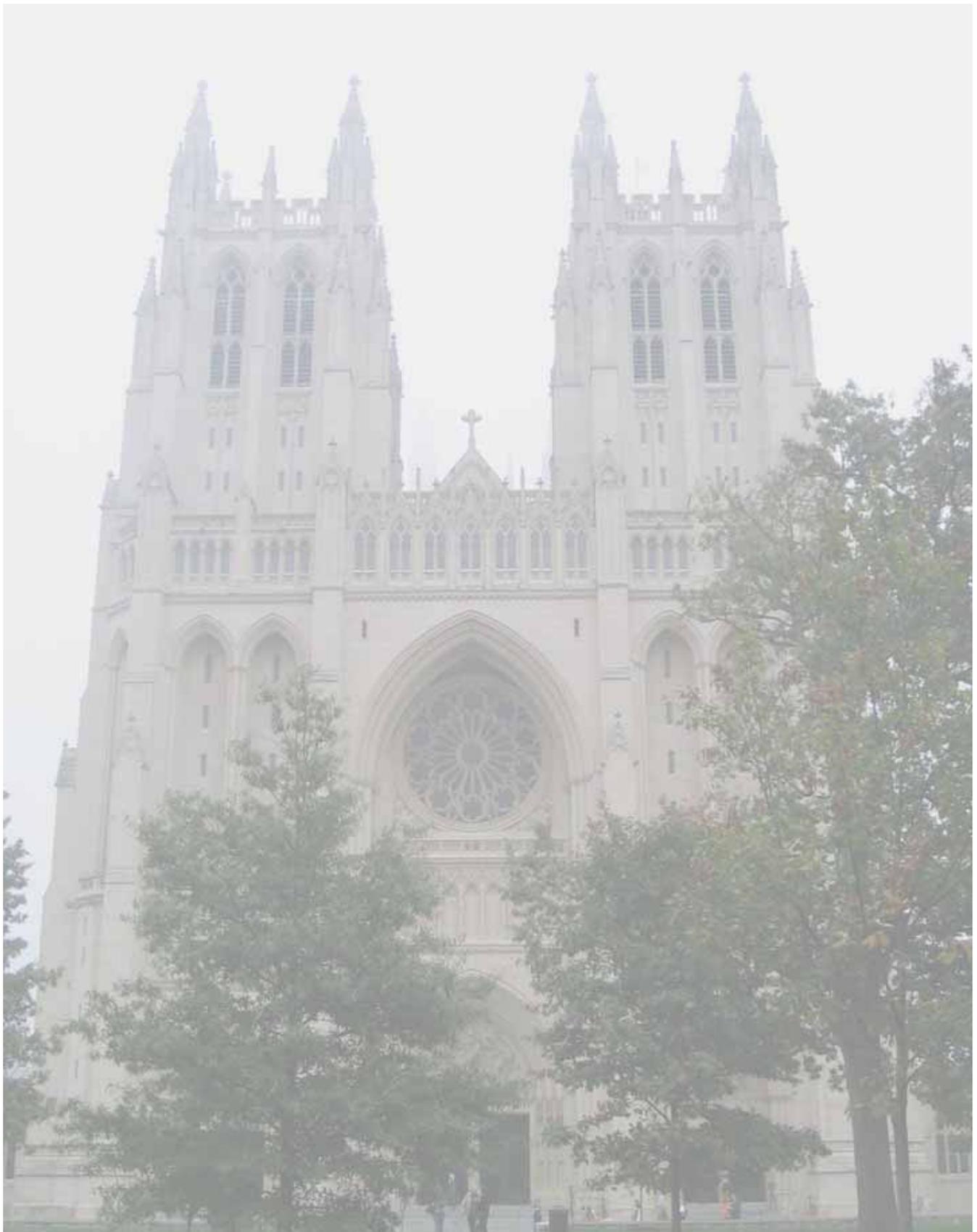
The Tavern had been restored to the condition it was in when George ate there. The staff was in period costume as well. The menu was also authentic, and good. I had the peanut soup, crab cakes, and Fullers 1845 bottle conditioned beer (a British facsimile of what George would have drunk). The waiter told me that George celebrated all his birthdays at the tavern. I wondered what an 18th century birthday was like. Man, that food was good, and the staff was kind enough to let me take their picture.

Well, it was getting late. I had no time to see Mt. Vernon today. The tour guide told me how to get to the Washington Cathedral and DuPont Circle, so I headed off there.

I could not find parking at DuPont Circle so I headed to the Cathedral. Nice place. I saw Larz (buried in the Cathedral) and a moon rock inside a stained glass window. When I got outside to walk the grounds, it was really foggy out. It made for some very moody pictures.



*Moon Rock window*



I spent two hours at the cathedral in all, so I had no time to see DuPont Circle. I headed home instead. I did take a few pictures whenever traffic stopped. There was so much to see, and so many places to get lost. Did I mention that the map had mistakes? I found a few more on the way home.

10/20

It was so nice to have my flight in the evening — it gave me one more day of sightseeing. Today was Smithsonian day.

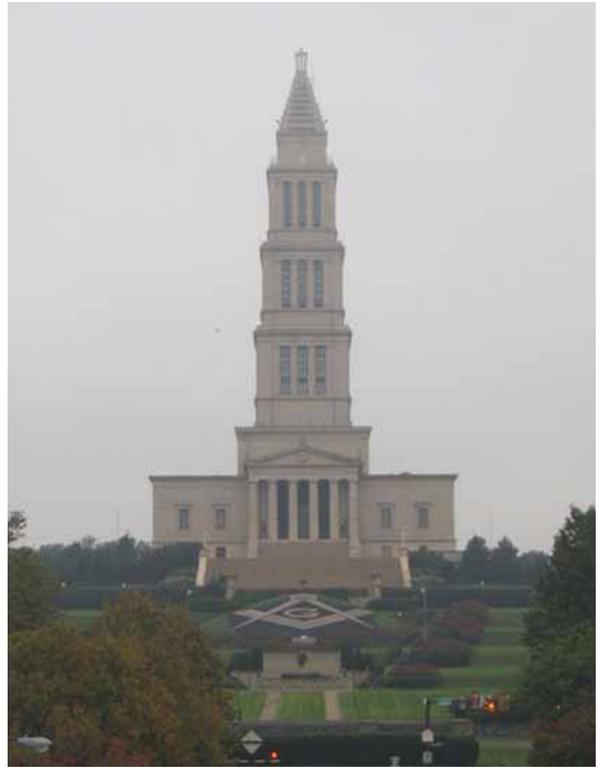
The blue line (Metro) had a flooded station and a medical emergency at another station. I got off at King to grab the more direct yellow line — missing all the excitement in the process. King is where that creepy Masonic Lodge is. I feel it exude evil whenever I have passed by.

Anyway, I got to Le Enfant Station and walked to the Air and Space Museum. It was not at all crowded, but I knew it would be later so I went upstairs to see the space stuff first. I was completely alone for more than half an hour. Everyone else had started downstairs. I eventually got downstairs myself. After seeing everything, I had lunch in the cafeteria. Shopping followed — Air and Space had a really nice store.



*Lunar Lander*

illuminated manuscripts the best. Mixed in with all that Asian art was the biggest collection of Whistler paintings that I had ever seen — It may be the largest single collection in the world. Somehow, it really complimented the Asian art. Some of Whistler's art was Asian in flavor as well.



*Masonic Lodge*

I got outside and it was drizzling. I walked through the Smithsonian gardens and into the castle. The castle is best seen from the outside so I went out (inside was boring). They were setting up for some huge event in the Mall (for AIDS I think). Gee, in the week I've been here they've also had huge events for traditional marriage, the Democratic Party, and a million-man march for something else.

I went into the Freer and Stecker Museums next. They are connected underground. I still don't know how to appreciate Asian Art, though I did enjoy things from Japan, China, India and Persia. I liked the Persian



*Self-portrait in "heat vision"*



*Two views of the Smithsonian Castle*

If I don't understand Asian art, then I really don't understand African art. I had 20 minutes left to see something, so I skipped the African art and went to the Hirshhorn museum of modern art. In 20 minutes, I was able to cover the top two floors. I do believe that their permanent collection is in the basement that I missed. Pity.

The only thing floor three had to offer was a spectacular panorama of the Mall and of the three big museums on the far side. It's probably the single best view in the city. It's too bad that it had gotten so dark that I couldn't get a decent shot (I could not figure out how to switch to a manual F-stop on Barbara's digital camera). Floor number two was an installment of some gal who used her body to create art by rolling around in mud or paint. When she wasn't doing that, she was creating "Mother Goddess" nature art.



*Me and Bosch's "Miser"*

Everything was very organic. I could tell her earlier work from her later work by the shifting sands of her figure. Well, enough of that — I had a train to catch.

Blue was still having issues so I took Yellow again. Kevin and I met at the house and he took me to the airport. After a few very long lines, off I went... after an hour delay on the ground (we were plane 20 something in line). The movie, "The Terminal," was quite entertaining, but

I'm glad I didn't pay money to see it in the theaters. As I write, there is a strong headwind and turbulence. We are flying lower in search of clear air. The moon is only a sliver tonight. It doesn't illuminate the ground at all. Oh how I miss that flight from St. Louis to San Jose I took a few years back where there was a full moon and snow on the ground. That was magic! About as magical as this trip to DC has been. I can't wait to go back; with my family this time.