

Destination:	Kent Island, (Chesapeake Bay) Maryland, USA	Date:	July 2006
Supplier:		"Agent"	Sonja

General Comments: It was a 10-hour drive (including a stop for lunch) from Kitchener, Ontario to our destination in Maryland. As you can see from the map, we drove through the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Never having driven anywhere in the States except to Buffalo airport, I was very surprised to see how green and lush New York State and Pennsylvania were. The road cut through beautiful forests and mountain ranges, giving sparse glimpses of small towns and villages almost all the way. A couple of larger towns/cities we either drove through or by-passed were Harrisburg, PA and Baltimore, MD.



Our friends live on Kent Island in the Chesapeake Bay which became our home base. Kent Island is accessible from mainland Maryland via the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. So far in my lifetime, this is the longest bridge I have ever traversed – talk about impressive!! It's a 50 year old 7km (4½ miles) long steel suspension bridge.

One of our excursions was to Annapolis which is situated on mainland Maryland across from the island. It's quite an old city which settlers started around 1650 and has only grown to a population of 36,000. As you can imagine, it has a lot of history and downtown is quaint, picturesque and made for tourists. All buildings are spotlessly decorated with flags and hanging flower baskets, with inns and restaurants sporting names of pirates



and seafood. Crabcakes are the rage and all food seems to be flavoured with a dousing of “Bay Spice”, a picante spice mixture.

Annapolis is also home to a Naval Academy. We were fortunate to get a tour from a friend of the family who is a senior at this academy. The grounds are open to the general public as long as you can show some form of picture I.D. and there is no charge to enter the

base. The grounds were absolutely beautiful and we were allowed to watch training exercises, wander past their ships and sailboats, all perfectly lined up and moored as if they'd taken a ruler along when they parked them. The academy had buildings which dated back 200 years. Architectural details were spectacular, as you can see.



These are parts of Memorial Hall. If you think this is impressive, you should have seen the young uniformed cadets!!

Another day took us to the capitol of the USA, namely Washington, DC. We picked the hottest day of the year to do this (100 F) but it was still beautiful and enjoyable. We decided to park the car at the furthest subway stop and take the Metro, as they call it there, to the city centre. Anybody wanting to see the sights of the city, historical or otherwise, and not have to worry about driving directions should consider doing the same.

The subway is very clean and has some great architectural features. Also, there was a section of subway where they had put signs along the tunnel.

As you look out the window while the subway passes these murals you get the effect as if you're looking at a movie – sort of the same idea as a flipbook – quite ingenious. At Union Station, we caught the “Old Towne Trolley” which costs US\$32/person. These trolleys take you on a specific route and you can get on and off all day wherever they stop. All drivers sport microphones and will alert you to all the sights, giving historical details and lots of pertinent information or simply colourful tidbits. Naturally, when you disembark they will welcome a small tip so come prepared with a bunch of Dollar bills. You won't mind tipping these guys as they really make the Washington experience not just educational but also entertaining. Some notable stops on our way were the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument with Reflecting Pool, Smithsonian (which is made up of numerous museums), Arlington Cemetery, Ford Theatre where Lincoln was shot, Old Post Office, US Capitol Bldg, White House, National Mall, etc. There were no entrance fees anywhere we went – unfortunately, we did not have time for the Smithsonian so I'm not sure if they charge an admission fee there.



Pennsylvania Ave (view from the Old Post Office)



Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery

Just to mention Kent Island a bit more – at first glance, it looks like it mostly consists of cottages though many inhabitants live there year round. It actually used to be mostly farmland. There are schools, churches and food stores, campgrounds, etc. However, to get to a decent outlet mall, you'll have to cross one of the bridges connecting the island to the mainland, either to Annapolis or, on the other side, to Delmarva Peninsula. We also visited this peninsula and found a couple of cute towns, one of which being St. Michaels which is where they filmed *The Wedding Crashers* a couple of years ago.