

Thursday, March 15

The *ROD* Washington Illustrated

Dear Diary,

Our journey is coming to an end. The weather on the east coast has turned nasty. The warmest part of the day today was this morning when we got on the buses to go into the city. The first thing we did was board a circle line boat to take a cruise around the Island of Manhattan. This was very cool as it gave us a completely different view of the city. Our guide Arthur was a wealth of information. He told us all about the different neighborhoods in the city from Battery Park, to the financial district.



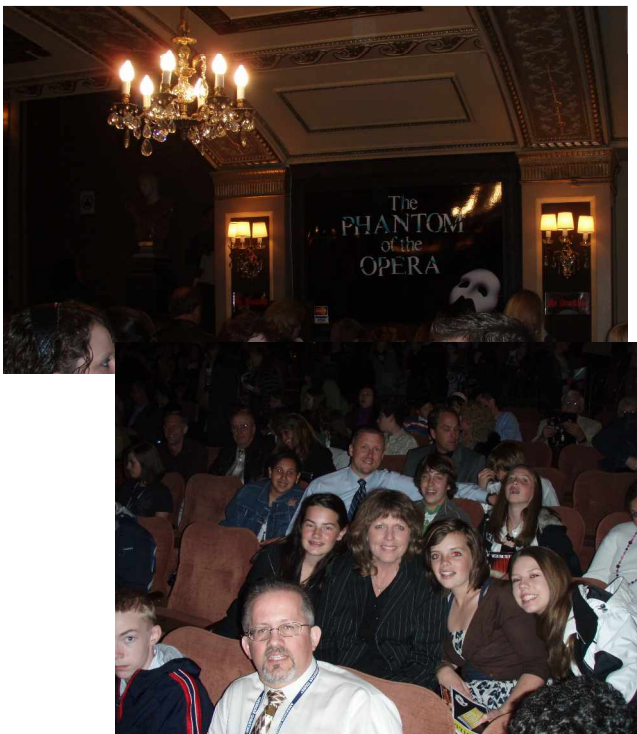
He also gave some insight that only a native New Yorker could give about the whole 9/11 tragedy. You could tell he was a true New Yorker by his accent. We got to see the Statue of Liberty from right up close. Who would've known that the Statue of Liberty is a natural barometer? Arthur said that you can tell if the weather is changing by the color of the statue.



After the boat ride we went to Battery Park and did a little bit of shopping from the local vendors. Then we walked up to the financial district and saw the New York Stock Exchange. We then went to Times Square for a quick bit of shopping there before returning to our hotel.



We had dinner at the hotel tonight and found out that the World Champion Miami Heat is staying at our hotel. Their coach Pat Riley was just hanging out in the lobby talking on the phone. Five of our girls were a little late getting on the bus to go to the play and they actually got to ride on the elevator with Shaq. No kidding! Where's the justice?



We finally got on the bus and got back into the city to view a performance of Phantom of the Opera. It was held at the Majestic Theater right in the heart of the city. What a great experience. We were all in awe at the costumes, and the way they were able to change all the elaborate sets at the drop of a hat.

We're back at the hotel now and hoping that the weather holds enough so that we're able to do a little more shopping on 5th Avenue tomorrow and get on our plane to head home. I'm sure that we'll be tired but it's been an amazing trip so far. We look forward to seeing you all in Ontario tomorrow night.

Your Staff Writer