

## Tuesday July 15, 2008

We were welcomed at the Washington Center at 9 am, by Tony Cerise (Senior Program Manager – Academic Seminars). At 9.30 Roger Aronoff, the award-winning media analyst from Accuracy in Media began his presentation called Challenging “The Media”. After 30 minutes I had to leave together with Connor, Richie, Megan and David for a meeting with Kenny Myers (Senior Advisor Senate Foreign Relations Committee for Senator Richard Lugar) in the Dirkson Senate Office Building at 11 am. He invited us to his office to discuss foreign policy and the relationship between the US and Norway.



Myers described Norway as a powerful player on the political scene, and a close ally to the US. He generously shared his thoughts about the future, and gave us many interesting ideas about where we are heading.

After the meeting we went back to the Washington center and had lunch with the rest of the group. Many of us decided to go to an Indian restaurant called Taj Mahal, with an excellent lunch buffet. On the way back I bought a great jacket from Nepal in an oriental shop close to Taj Mahal.

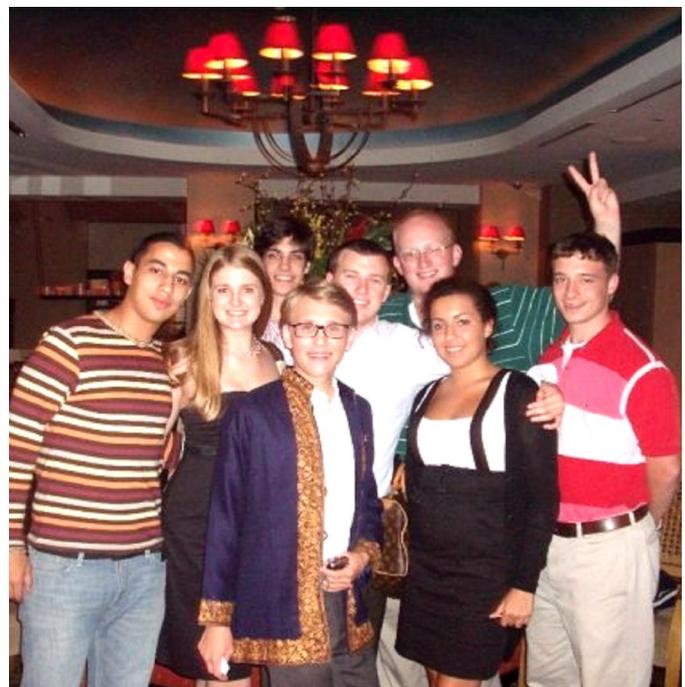
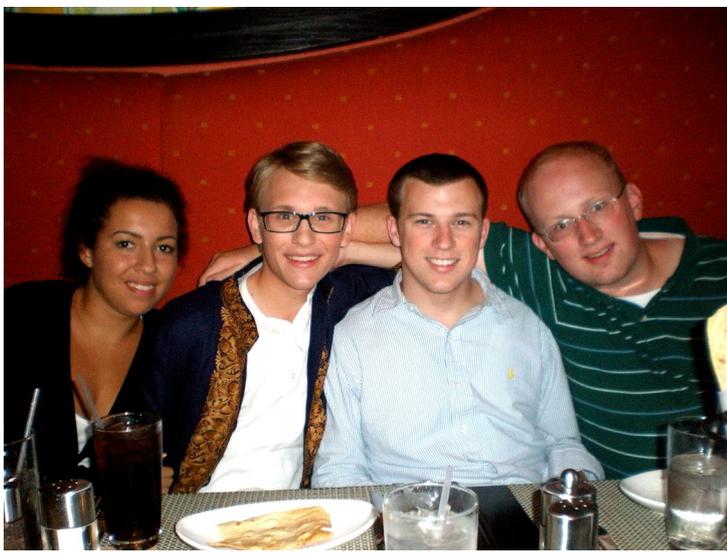


At 2.45 pm we headed off to the NPR headquarters, America’s premier non-profit news and cultural radio programming service. We had a guided tour, and Scott Simon was recording his show as we passed by his studio. He included us in his show, and we got to meet with Amos Lee, who played a beautiful song before taking pictures with most of us. We also met with the President of NPR, Kevin Klose, who introduced us to his organization and encouraged us to apply for internships next summer.

Listen to the show we “interrupted” here:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=92691367>





Susie, Richie, Connor, Massinissa, Adrien, Karima, David and I went out for dinner in the evening at a restaurant called Ceiba. We celebrated Connor and Richie's birthday. I had a spicy chicken feijoada, and a Mexican chocolate cake for dessert – delicious!

Before I went to bed I had a cup of tea with Megan at the restaurant at the top floor of our hotel. At one point we started laughing, and somehow we could not stop. After 20 minutes we finally managed to catch our breath and go downstairs to our rooms.

## Wednesday July 16, 2008

At 9 am we were welcomed to the Washington Center by Dr. Eugene Alpert (Senior Vice President, Washington Center), and at 9.30 am Wally Dean (Broadcast/Online Director of the Committee of Concerned Journalists) delivered his speech "Improving and Maintaining Professionalism in Journalism."

At 10.45 am Marguerite H. Sullivan (Senior Director Center on International Media Assistance National Endowment for Democracy) delivered her speech called "Growing Democracy Through a Free press Model." At 12 pm we had lunch at a Thai restaurant.

At 2.30 pm we visited Washington Times and spoke with Stephen Dinan (National Political Correspondent TWT), and toured the office. We walked on the mezzanine, and saw all the journalists working.



In the evening I went out for a walk with Karl, Uche Val and Bobur. We saw the White House and the Vietnam Memorial. Karl and I took a cab back to the hotel because I did not feel well. When the others arrived we ordered Chinese food and enjoyed our last evening in DC.



## Thursday July 17, 2008

We began early in the morning at the Newseum, and we were welcomed by many friendly faces. We had two presentations, by Dr. Joe Campbell and Kate Kennedy. She wanted us to make our own t-shirts with a political message, and I decided to ask Karima from Denmark if she wanted to be my sister-in-crime. We made a T-shirt against the Law of Jante, and discussed the impact it has on Scandinavians, both positive and negative. Kennedy later told me that she thought it was a very interesting contribution to her t-shirt collection and that she would take a closer look at the Law of Jante.

We had lunch in a café right across the street from the Newseum, after switching restaurants twice. We tried out one place, that we left because of the poor standards and impolite waiters. The next place we visited turned out to be too expensive for some of the others and to split the group was not an option. We left in a hurry, and ended up with a sandwich and some salads.



I explored the Newseum together with Flandra. We saw the Berlin Wall, the Journalist Memorial (Which contained the name of the Norwegian Journalist Carsten Thomassen who died in Afghanistan in January.) We also visited a TV studio, they were going to record a show and we asked the interns if we could watch. They said, yes, but that we would have to be seated through the entire show, which meant 19 minutes. We thought it looked great, and were seated in the middle of the back row. The show started, and the host said that he was impressed to see that so many people were willing to give 90 (yes, 90!) minutes of their time to see the interview with war veterans. On a normal day we would of course sit through the entire show, but our bus left for Williamsburg in one hour and we had to get out. Flandra blushed and looked at me “We don’t have time for this!” I looked back at her and we decided to run out of the studio as fast as we could. Everyone looked at us as we disappeared down the hallway.





We left the studio embarrassed but still laughing. We met some of our friend by the entrance to the Pulitzer exhibition, and they were in tears. The contrast could not have been any bigger. We watched the Pulitzer photos and our smiles were gone too. Flandra saw a series of photos from her own country, Kosovo. We had to clear our minds and went down to the café and had dinner and watched a 4D movie.

Later that day we drove to Williamsburg, and stayed in a lovely colonial hotel. We went to bed after some refreshing hours in the swimming pool.



# Friday July 18, 2008

We visited colonial Williamsburg and were separated in two groups. My group had a fantastic guide, named Bettina Males. She brought us back to the 1700's and learned us how to address people; good day Sir/Madam! Colonial Williamsburg was by far the most interesting historical museum I ever visited, much because of our great guide and all the people that made our experience so unique!

We visited a wig-maker and a silversmith, and toured the old Virginia House of Burgesses. After the tour we had lunch in a nearby restaurant. I had a huge pizza!

After lunch we went to Jamestown, and our guide, an entertaining old man walked us through the three reconstructed ships that first arrived in the US, Jamestown and a Native American village. In the end we saw a collection of excavated archeological items.

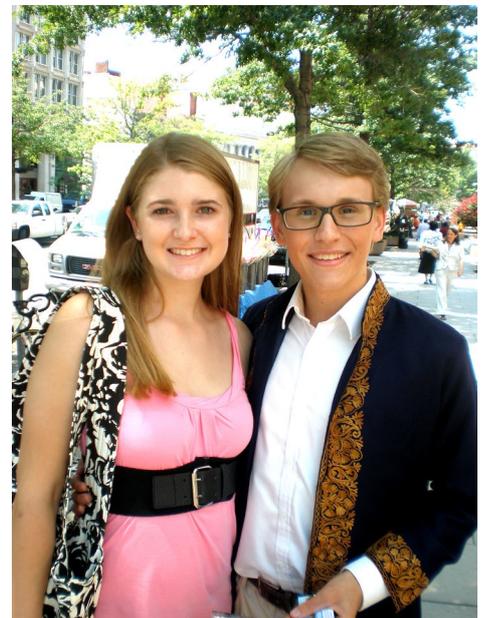
After spending the afternoon in Jamestown, we went to the amusement park Bush Gardens.

*"Fifteen Times...Fifteen Times...Fifteen Times," a group of Diplomats chanted as they left The Escape From Pompeii water ride at Busch Gardens. At the end of the day, the crowds started to disperse, and the lines for the popular water ride shriveled down to zero, offering the Diplomats the opportunity to escape Pompeii repeatedly over the course of their final hour at Busch Gardens.*

*This eagerness to explore and bond with their fellow Diplomats was present the entire day. Over the course of the afternoon, the fellows have been racing across the park, from ride to ride, show to show, theme country to theme country. They traveled by foot, miniature train and skylift. Some, like Susan Eckman, were ambitious and brave, attempting to ride each and roller coaster. Others, preferred to stick to the less intense attractions opting to experience Busch Gardens 4-D attractions. Whether a Diplomat's taste made him or her want to ride the Loch Ness Monster or hop aboard the miniature train, one fact is undeniable, no obstacle, whether it be the intense heat and humidity or the sheer exhaustion from touring Williamsburg and Jamestown for several hours, can stop the bonds of fellowship formed among the Diplomats.*

*"Quickly, Quickly," I yelled as I looked down at my watch which read 9:50, "We have to get back to bus." We all started walking to the exit, and I watched the fellows smile at each other over a day that they may not soon forget.*

Lendyll Capitolo



# Saturday July 19, 2008

We woke up early and went to the amusement park called Water Country USA. The others left their belongings near the wave pool, and I did not mind looking after them. After weeks with tight schedules it was great to have a couple of hours off and just rest!

We left in the afternoon, and drove all the way back to Winston-Salem. Our host-families waited for us on campus and were ready to take us home. I stayed with Matt from Ohio, and we lived with Victoria, a fabulous lady I am very fond of. She picked us up in her convertible, and she had Tucker, her dog, with her. Dr Louden saw us, and took a picture which he later posted on the webpage with the headline "Kenneth and Matt win the Lottery!" Dr Louden was very right. I can not really think of anyone who had a better week with their host-families than we did. I gave Victoria a book about Norway, and we looked through it and talked for a while before we went to bed.

*"Kenneth and Matt win the lottery - pictured driving away after a 9 pm Saturday evening arrival at Polo Dorm, Wake Forest Univ. campus. Fellows will spend a week staying with their home stay hosts, returning to campus for activities and classes during the week."*

Dr Allan Louden



## Sunday July 20, 2008

We woke up at 8 am and had breakfast in Victoria's dining room. We usually had toasts with honey, marmalade or cheese, cereals, fruit and yoghurt. After breakfast we got dressed for church, and drove to St. Timothy's, where Ginger picked us up and took us to Sealy's church in a rural area. Sealy is a good friend of both Victoria and Ginger, and she used to be their reverent but is now working in a small church in the countryside. As often as they can, Victoria and Ginger drive out to Sealy and attend her worship. The Episcopal Church of the Ascension at Fork was a whole new experience to me, and I enjoyed the worship.

We had lunch at a nice place called the Dessertery.

In the afternoon, Victoria had a party for her friends from her choir. They all brought dishes, and I got to experience traditional American cooking. Victoria had just remodeled her house, and all her friends were amazed by what she had done with it.



## Monday July 21, 2008 - Friday July 25, 2008

The week after DC we started a huge parliament exercise. We were divided in six parties, and one group that provided media coverage. Dr Allan Loudon was the founding father of the wealthy country called Loudenia, located in the middle of Europe. I was a part of the media group, and we established the newspaper called the "Loudenian Crier" I had the role as public editor and reporter at large, and wrote several articles every day. We posted pictures, articles and small youtube-clips at our webpage, <http://lcmedia.blogs.bftf.org/>

The parties had videoconferences with State Department experts in DC and put a lot of work in their bills. Media had the expertise of Dr Ron Von Burg and Dr Gordon Mitchell at disposal, and we succeeded in arranging a big youtube electoral debate and covered events with live blogging. Alexandra Datii became the president of Loudenia, and she lead the parliament for several days.

We had a lot of social activities in the evenings of the parliament exercise-week. Although we spent a lot of time in the evenings writing articles and planning debates and general assemblies, we had time to go to a baseball match, and attended a great pool-party on Friday at the DiMarco's house.



# HOMESTAY WEEK

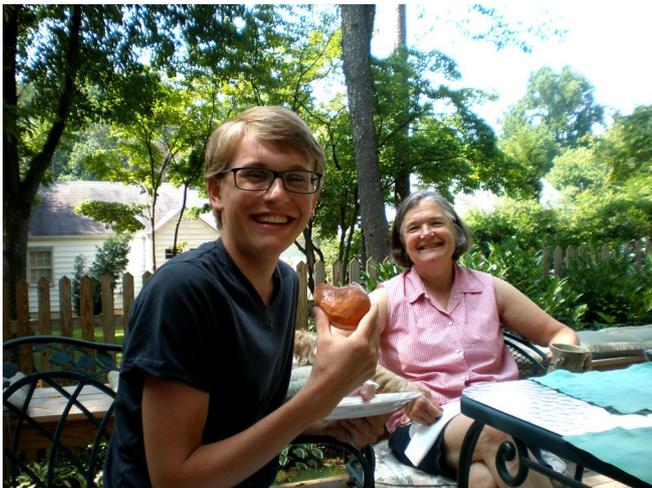


## Saturday July 26, 2008

Saturday was the first day we could sleep for as long as we wanted, but sleeping did not appeal to me at all - we had so much to do! I had breakfast with Victoria on her porch, and she bought crispy cream donuts for dessert. They are absolutely delicious when they are hot, and I had one with crispy cream and one with strawberry cream.

We drove off to see Winston-Salem, and Victoria took us to Old-Salem, the charming historical part of the town. We did some shopping and visited the church, Home Moravian Church founded in 1771. We went home for lunch, and after that we visited the Reynolda Gardens, with exotic flowers and great trees.

In the evening we had dinner at a new restaurant called Big Shots. I had teriyaki chicken and a big brownie for dessert. We had a great day!



## Sunday July 27, 2008

We woke up quite early and went to Victoria's church, St Timothy's. It is much larger than Sealy's church and we had a great time at the picnic after the worship meeting new people. Matt wanted us to drive him to "his church" for the worship there after the picnic. He was there for about three hours, and when he came home we had to drive back to the university with our luggage. We had new dorms, and I shared a room with David, Karl and Matt. These rooms were much bigger than the ones we had in the Babcock Residence Hall, and we had a kitchen, living room, two bathrooms and separate bedrooms.

In the afternoon we had a farewell-dinner with the host families, and during the dinner we had a talent show. Among the gifted students were Aida with her belly dance, Bibigul with her domba, Connor and Flandra with their poems and many more. In the end we all went up in front of the families and told about our week and thanked them for having us. It was very sad when Victoria left, and I cried - like most of the others.



## Tuesday July 29, 2008

Tuesday was our last day of classes, and we completed our parliamentary session with diplomas for everyone. We packed our luggage, finished several surveys on the webpage and went off to the mall. For the kitsch party we were supposed to cross-dress, and I bought a beige skirt, black top, black pumps and a Hanna Montana-wig.

In the evening I did Susie, Odile and Flandra's makeup, but Petya had to do mine. I looked swell! The other boys had also dressed up, and it was funny to look at each others outfits. Everyone was given a book where our friends could write a last greeting, and we spent most of the time before the Kitsch-party doing just that. At 12 pm we started the party, and we danced and had a good time. Adrien, Christina, Uche, Laura, Anastasiya and I performed a Harry Potter song we had seen on youtube one of the first days, and we also gave Dr Louden and the mentors presents from everyone. I went to bed at four, but did only sleep for about three hours.

## Wednesday July 30, 2008

I woke up at seven to say goodbye to the first group of people that left for the airport. Susie was among them. It was very painful to say goodbye, and we all cried. The second group was the most difficult one, and saying goodbye to Uche and Karl was really hard. There was another group too, with Laura before I left. I had so much to leave behind. I cried as I said goodbye to Flandra, Odile, David, Ece and all the others. At the airport we checked in our luggage, went through security and had a pizza. After lunch we said goodbye to the group that not was going to Dulles in DC, and waited in our gate. I met Adrien at the restroom by a coincidence because his flight had been cancelled. We had a few minutes together with him before we boarded our flight and took off to DC.



Dulles was much easier this time. I just had to walk for five minutes before I found my gate. Because of a strike in Lufthansa, we were only served a sandwich and a snack. Luckily I had bought some bananas and cookies in DC, and had a comfortable flight.

## Thursday July 31, 2008

In Frankfurt I called my mum and told her that my flight was on time. I sat next to a couple from Mannheim on the flight to Oslo, and we had a good time. They were going to Oslo and Bergen and I was happy to help them to point out interesting places to visit.

I arrived in Oslo on time and could hug my mum for the first time in a month.

