

NORTH PLAINS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Youth Tour 2003

BY IKE JULIAN

Wow! I can't believe that it has been a month since my amazing trip to Washington, D.C. This was something I will remember for the rest of my life. I had been to Washington several times before, so when I entered the contest, I told myself that if I won that I would decline the trip and let someone else see Washington. After I won, I discussed it with my older sister, Tamera Julian, who had previously gone on the youth tour, and she said that is a "life-altering experience" and it truly was.

Let me take you through a normal day of "youth tour life." You wake up to the noise of a hotel phone ringing at six o'clock in the morning, having stayed up the previous night until about two in the morning. So, with a lovely four hours of sleep, you start your day. You fight off about 200 people who are just as "awake" as you to try to use the elevator. By the time you make it on the elevator, you realize that you could have already been eating breakfast if you would have just taken the stairs. So, you get down to breakfast and you have about half an hour to eat, and then it is time to load the buses. After singing the "Good Morning Song" to your bus driver, you sleep. (You may only be going a couple of blocks, but on the youth tour, you have to be resourceful as to when and where your sleep comes from.) You make it to your destination and from this point on, you go nonstop, pedal-to-the-metal sightseeing and meeting important people. In a typical day on youth tour, you might see such things as the Washington Monument, several war memorials, walk up to the lawns of the White House, and countless other sights. Then you board a bus and sleep as you are driven back to your hotel. Even though you are exhausted from being up late, waking up early

and walking about five miles of Washington, you still have about a thousand people you haven't met. So, again, you stay up late talking to people from all over the United States. I am happy to report that, according to students from

the other states, all the Texans were voted (in a non-official poll) most likely to come up and start talking to you, especially when they didn't know you. You wind down the day with a sing-along led by none other than



Tania Logan and Ike Julian pose on the steps of the Capitol during their trip to Washington, D.C.

"Queen Jean." You return to your room about eleven o'clock and as exhausted as you are, you still find the strength to talk to your roommates till about two in the morning. Then the phone rings, and it is Jim, telling you to get up so you can do it all over again.

Like I said, I had seen Washington, but being on the youth tour, I got to know Washington up, down, left, right

Youth Tour 2003

BY TAUNIA LOGAN

The trip to Washington, D.C., was a great experience. I had been once before so this time I was able to view the scenery rather than worry about getting a lot of pictures. I also learned some more about our nation's history.

The bus ride was the longest I had ever taken, but at the same time fun and eventful. We played an assortment of games and watched plenty of movies to make the time go by faster. It was a great opportunity to meet new people other than my roommates and make more friends. When we arrived in D.C., the first thing we did was eat at Hard Rock Cafe. The food was great, and it was our first chance to buy souvenirs. Afterwards we took a night tour to view the city's famous monuments lit up. The next day, we took the morning to enjoy the Rural Youth Day, where we were able to speak our opinions on how we could come together as a better country. We also heard wonderful speakers lecture about how our freedom is not free; it comes with a price. While touring the Smithsonian Institution that afternoon, I was able to see artifacts from historical events that happened all over the world. That night we watched the play "Pirates of Penzance." I really enjoyed watching more experienced actors on stage.

On Tuesday, we went to the Capitol grounds and spoke with our congressman. What he had to say was very interesting, along with everything else

and inside out. This is something that I wish everyone could do, so if I can offer you one piece of advice, it is to encourage any boy or girl you know to do everything they can to be a part of Youth Tour 2004.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who helped me out along my way. Mrs. Diana McGarr for helping me decide on an angle for my speech; my two older sisters, Tamera for telling

his intern told us about the Capitol when he took us on a tour. We sat in on the 108th Session of Congress until we got kicked out for sleeping. I can assure you I was not the one asleep. I was looking forward to the Sunset Parade at Iwo Jima that night, but the rain kept us at the hotel for the rest of the evening. The next day we went to the National Zoo, where we were on our own to view the animals, and then we toured the National Cathedral. It was magnificent. The height of the towers and the architectural structures were outstanding. We also went to see the White House.

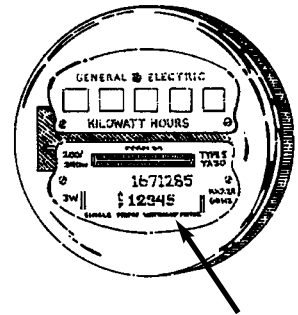
Thursday morning we headed for Mount Vernon, and we visited George Washington's living quarters and burial site, then we went to the Navy Museum. The tiny models of ships and submarines were awesome. We even got to board a Navy ship.

Within the next day, we viewed the Washington Monument, Jefferson Memorial, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Korean, Lincoln, and Vietnam Memorials, and we saved the best for last: Iwo Jima. I loved looking at these sites to see how we commemorate our nation's history.

I would like to thank the membership, the board of directors, and the general manager of North Plains Electric for allowing me to be a part of such a wonderful experience at our nation's capital. Thank you!

me ever since she had been on the youth tour that I should do it as well, and Kimbra for driving me to the contest and admitting that she knew me, even though I was dressed like our grandmother! I would like to thank the NPEC board of directors, Randy Mahannah and Paula Lehew, and anyone else at the North Plains office that made this trip possible. And last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Jean Murray, "Queen Jean," our tour director from Texas Electric Cooperatives. Her hard work and year-long planning make this a worthwhile experience of a lifetime!

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