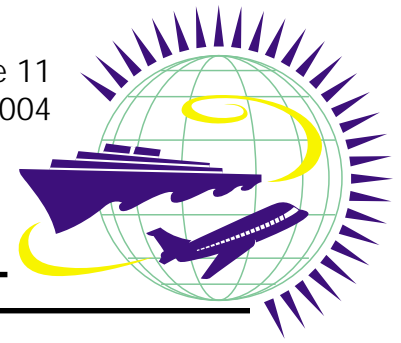


# Routon's **ROUSING** Reports

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A Routon's Romantic Reservations Publication – not for resale

As I write this we are, I believe, in the middle of setting a record! Home for 2 months, 8 days without interruption! Who said you couldn't come to see us because we were never home?

Some of you who are observant may have noticed that the last issue of RRR was mailed from Florida. Yes, we spent several weeks in August in Ft. Lauderdale (*not recommended in August*) house and dog sitting for Mark and Raina, Helen's son and wife. I'm happy to report that we not only got the house through OK but managed to train the dog. Within days we had him sleeping until 8:30AM – no more 6AM walks! I also trained him to eat both dog treats and people food.

For a change, we decided to drive instead of flying. A few observations to pass along in case you head south on I-95: The drive through North Carolina is rather pretty with trees and flowers planted in the divider; "South of the Border" (located just south of the North Carolina border) and their advertising signs along the road are a fascinating marketing operation; the Cracker Barrel restaurant chain has excellent pancakes with hot, real maple syrup; and many of the toll bridges and roads are free in one direction, so go only in that direction.

Since Washington, D.C. is right on the way when driving, it made a visit there and to the exclusive Chez Ferguson the thing to do. The Chez Ferguson is a delightful place to visit and the owners are wonderful hosts. Upon our arrival, the general manager, Patti Ferguson, welcomed us personally. (Patti is, of course, also the executive chef, the head housekeeper, the concierge, VP for reservations, and tour director. Husband, Fred, is assistant in each of the categories, head of transportation services, and the crossword puzzle.) It had been years since I visited them at the Chez Ferguson – Phoenix and it was wonderful to see them again. And their new if temporary location in Bethesda, Maryland, was a super base for DC sight seeing.

It was a first trip to DC for Helen and had been so many years for me that it seemed new. And the new sight I remember most – and will long remember – is the memorial to the veterans of the Korean War of the 1950's. This memorial is not piles of stone or marble with inscriptions, but a group of statues of men – a platoon on patrol. Each man is life sized, each man is in plain gray stone, each man is dressed for battle in the rain and mud, and each man has a face, and the faces tell the story. In each face you can see the weariness of danger, the weariness of the rain and mud, the weariness of too many hours and too little sleep – overwhelming weariness, but no quitting.



*The Korean War Memorial*

It's a bit eerie, a bit haunting. It is not to be forgotten – nor hopefully is the only inscription on the marble wall by the reflecting pool, "Freedom is Not Free."

Washington, D.C., is a great place to visit and so much to see! And Patti as tour guide tried to show us everything the first day – or so it seemed. I know she almost killed *me*. We started in the middle of the night (about 7:30AM) on

our way for a visit to the White House. (A hard place to get into these days but our concierge had contacts!) Next stop was one of the highlights of the day, the Corner Bakery. This may not be in your official guide book, but they have super Danish pastries – *highly recommended* by your editor. Then it was the White House Museum, a photo-op of the White House and rose garden, whisked by taxi (whose driver didn't know the way) to the Supreme Court, off to the Dirksen Senate office building for lunch (and finding that our federal office employees eat quite well) and to Senator Kyl's office to meet our guide for the Capitol. Then to the Capitol building itself by underground train (ah,

for once we were not walking) for our private tour. Tired yet? I was, but Patti pulled out her whip and we dutifully trudged (walking, again) to visit and tour the Library of Congress. At this point, Patti sensed rebellion in the ranks and relented. (Of course, it was also closing time in most of the buildings.)

Other than the Corner Bakery, the highlights of the day for me were the

Supreme Court and Library of Congress. The Capitol with its old chambers was interesting, but the current chambers were closed because congress was not in session. Now, why they were closed when no one is there is not clear – after all, rarely are many of the representatives or senators there when they are in session. But then logic is not involved. This is a government operation.

The Library of Congress is at least half museum and that is the portion open to the general public. The displays are limited; the impressive part is the building itself. The brilliantly painted ceilings and upper reaches of the walls contrast with the carved, gray stone of the columns and arches. Thus the tour of about 25 minutes concentrates on the building rather than the exhibits. There is a “back” area for researchers. This is limited to people who justify their need for a special pass and even then they do not get into the shelf areas. (No photos are allowed of this area, but... a forbidden photo just might exist in the secret places of Chez Routon – come see for yourself.) Actually, very little of the vast store of 48 gazillion items held by the Library are on the shelves there anyway. It seems they are stored all over the US and a request might be answered in an hour or it might take a week or more. Incidentally, did you know that every book formally copyrighted in the US supplies one copy to the Library? No wonder they have 48 gazillion items!

The Supreme Court is quite different. Oh, it has stone columns like seemingly every building in DC. The building is nice and the museum in the basement deserved a lot more time than we had, but the building feels functional, not like a museum. The lecture on the history of the Court and how it functions today was the interesting part. Not only did we get to sit in the Court room (ahh, *sit*) but the docent was excellent. Did you know that the court receives 8,000 petitions per year for review? Only about 100 are granted hearings, but allegedly, all 8,000 are reviewed by each justice. And did you know that you don't have to be an attorney to serve as a justice? Of course, good luck getting confirmation from that den of attorneys called the US Senate.

The largest and most prominent statue



*The ornate ceiling of the Library of Congress*

in the Court's hall of honor is John Marshall. Marshall was not the first chief justice – he was the fourth – but he is known as the father of the Court and considered the most important of all the justices. He was appointed in 1800 by John Adams, our second president, just before Jefferson took office as president. The court was not well established and Jefferson tried to weaken it further for his own power gain, but Marshall, who was a long time adversary of his fellow Virginian, not only overcame the pressure but handed Jefferson a major defeat in the case of *Marbury v. Madison* in 1803. Why is this significant? This was the case that once and for all established the division of powers between the three branches of the US government and made the Supreme Court an equal with the other two. This and other landmark cases in his 35 years as Chief Justice are little known but were critical to the government as we know it today.

So much for day one! So much more to see and so many more things to do. Like the National Archives. More stone columns on the outside (49, I think – or 89, lots like everywhere in DC) and precious documents on the inside. The Archives also has stuff stored in 31 other sites (maybe I could use this technique to clear some of our basement?), but the key documents – the originals of the Declaration, Constitution, and Bill of Rights – are right there to see. (and, frankly, the

original Declaration is almost unreadable – we need to get a new original.) In addition to these, there were other important documents on temporary display in the main rotunda. The one I remember was the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. But the surprise was the special display of the documents related to the Treaty of Kanagawa and its history. In case the Treaty of Kanagawa doesn't immediately spring to mind, this was the “opening” of Japan to the west beyond a few special traders. Without this, you might not have

been able to buy your Toyota.

One of the musts, of course, is the National Gallery of Art. It actually consists of two large, multi-story buildings connected by an underground passage the size of a building (and with a very large souvenir/book store). It is massive, but it also has some very lovely, quiet, garden like courtyards. Room after room of fine quality art plus special exhibits like the “Palace and Mosque” Islamic art that is there until February of 2005 courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Helen and I enjoyed our first day there with Fred (you remember – he is the assistant everything at Chez Ferguson) so much that we spent an extra day just for the Gallery.

Another must – there are so many! – is the new Aeronautical and Space Museum which is out of town in Virginia. This is the new one, just opened early this year. Massive is the only word. Well over a 1,000 exhibits with planes hanging from the ceiling trusses as well as parked. You start face to face with an attacking fighter plane “flying” on its cable from the truss

*The Supreme Court Building*





*The subway train arrives at the Capitol building*

overhead. Then you wander on the ramps and elevated walkways and are surrounded by planes, rockets, etc., at every turn. Some old and some not so old (at least to me).

The exhibits range from the third “airplane” (the Wright Brothers’ plane is in the city museum) to the Gemini VII and Mercury space craft and the space ship Endeavor. They have the B-29 that carried the first atomic bomb (the Enola Gay), the Stratoliner that was the first plane to have a pressurized cabin, the prototype of the Boeing 707, the SR-71 Blackbird spy plane that still holds all speed records, and the only supersonic passenger plane, the Concorde. And, again, the docents are super. Interestingly, there are probably 8-10 docents with groups at any one time and the place is so big, they do not get in each other’s way. Since each one has his own special interest, it can become a whole day tour as you go from one to another.

Just a couple of statistics to tell you how massive it is, the main exhibit area is 10 stories high on the *inside* and three American football fields long, 103 feet high, 986 feet long, and 248 feet wide. And this doesn’t include the “Space Hanger” which by itself is about a sixth the size of the main hanger. And, believe it or not, US taxpayers, none of the \$311 million spent for the site and buildings came from your federal tax dollars – some from Virginia and the rest from private donations.

(An aside. One *most* unusual thing about all the museums and galleries in Washington, D.C., is that all are free – no charge, quite unlike New York with its \$20 admission fee to the Met. The only charge we ran into was parking at the Space Museum.)



*Changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns*

Sunday saw us and the Fergusons at services in the National Cathedral followed by a tour of the basement chapels and forced exit through the Cathedral shop – unlike all of the museums, interestingly. As we entered the church barely on time, we again saw Patti’s influence and connections. The nave was seemingly full, but an usher grabbed us and personally escorted us to four empty chairs, front row and center. I tried to explain to Patti that front row, center is not necessarily the best place in church; it interferes with sleeping. But it was interesting and kind of strange sitting in the area where the president and high ranking visitors were sitting just a few weeks before when we watched the state funeral for President Reagan on television.

To make our last day in DC memorable, Fred managed to get us two seats on the Interior Department’s private National Park Tour van – total of only 14 seats per day. (Did I mention that Fred is not only the assistant concierge at Chez Ferguson but to make ends meet he has a day job in the Interior Department, high enough so that the continuation of his job depends on our presidential election?) And it was a full day, but without Patti’s whip. We

stopped at all the major monuments. I’d been to the old standards – the Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson memorials – on prior trips. The new ones were the Korean, Viet Nam, Franklin Roosevelt and World War II memorials. While the Korean Memorial made the greatest impression, the ones to FDR and World War II are very well done. Both are quite large and cannot be caught in one photograph with the FDR Memorial being like four or five different, very large “rooms” but all outside. Many of FDR’s most memorable quotations are etched in the marble walls, and on reflection are perhaps the very best way to remember the man. The World War II Memorial has a Pacific wing and an Atlantic wing with various quotations that carry the weight of the day. However, the thing that sticks with you – or at least with me – is the wall of gold stars. 4,000 stars, each star representing 10,000 of the dead – over 400,000 gave their lives. It tends to put current struggles in perspective.

In that vein, we finished the day and the tour at Arlington Cemetery, saw the eternal flame and the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Also learned a bit about the cemetery. The big mansion on the grounds generally known

## | Helen's Corner

Due to a labor dispute that was on-going at the time of publication, Helen’s Corner will not be published in this edition.

as the Lee Mansion had led me to believe it had been the home of Robert E. Lee. And it was, but Lee never owned it. The brief history is the house was built as the Arlington House by George Washington's grandson in the early 1800s. His daughter married Lee and some years later the will of her father gave her a life estate but left the property to their son, grandson of the builder. She and Lee did restore the run down mansion and lived there until the outbreak of the Civil War. Lee was, of course, away in the Confederate Army and made sure his wife left before the Union troops came across the Potomac. In 1864, the property went to the government in a sale for non payment of taxes – Mrs. Lee wasn't about to come home to pay the taxes. Shortly after that the Union general onsite determined he would make the place uninhabitable for the Lees. He built a large crypt in the rose garden and buried 1,800 of the Union soldiers killed at the Battle of Bull Run in this mass grave. This status lasted until 1882 when by a 5-4 majority the Supreme Court returned the property to the grandson. The following year, Congress properly bought the property for a military reservation. Some years later it became just the cemetery.

As many of you know, any American military veteran may apply for burial in Arlington. But did you know his spouse

*A rare glimpse of an FDR paralyzed by Polio*



and any children who die before the age of 18 may be buried with him? It's done vertically, one above another with only one headstone. What happens if there were two spouses? Three stories, but I'm not sure who is on what floor. One woman has two husbands buried with her. She was married to one general then married another. This is, I guess, what you call the extended family? And did you know that Kennedy's grave site includes not only his wife but also two children? Great for trivia buffs.

We had a short but wonderful stop in DC thanks to the help and hospitality of Fred and Patti. They were just super hosts – thank you. Oh, one last observation. We rode the Metro (subway) a lot and were amazed at the youth of the government workers headed to the offices. Makes you wonder who the baby sitters are. Or am I showing my age?

So what's ahead? November will see us back on the road. Helen goes to Ohio, to Kentucky, to Atlanta, back to Ohio, to Florida, and then home. Find her if you can (I do the first part only). In December, it's to Texas for Christmas with the two little ones and Will's christening. We get back on a Tuesday, take luggage to NYC on the next Monday, fly to LA one week later to see some of you good folks, and then the following Monday we board the QE 2 for – I swear – our last world cruise. As usual for us, it will be hectic. So, please, let us take this opportunity to sincerely

wish you and yours wonderful holidays and the very best of new years – may both be all you desire.

Do let us hear from you with your news. We enjoy your letters, emails, and telephone calls. Now, 'til next time, my traditional and sincere prayer for all of us, *may a kind and loving God walk with us and with each of you.*

*Amen.*



*The White House from the south lawn*

