

# I want to wake up in a city that never sleeps... New York, New York



Mike Suicide!

Members of the group:  
 Mary Abraham - P.S.S.A. President  
 Alex Stairs  
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Ah New York...city of glamour, night-life, Broadway, bright-lights, cheap thrills and, of course, the U.N. Yes, that's right. It stands for the United Nations. When a group of 14 (mainly) political science students travel to the "Big Apple" in a 15 seater rented van for 16 hours, what else can prevent them from going completely insane but their anticipation of a deluxe tour of the UN? Right, I didn't think it would work either. However, the trip down was, to say the least, eventful. Even if we hadn't had the bright orange "Budget" logo on the side of the van, anyone could have picked out our vehicle a mile away. You see in a frenzy of misguided creativity someone (thanks Mike) very artistically scrawled through the dirt on the back window "N.Y. or Bust."

Entering the great city at 2:30 in the morning, our "tour guide", P.S.S.A. president and one time New Yorker, Mary Abraham, immediately treated us to a scenic route which involved a few turns around the Manhattan district highlighting various points of interest. Strangely, much of this initiation into N.Y. city life seems mysteriously erased from my memory. However one of our tireless van drivers, the incomparable T. Allen Roulston, did not (thank goodness) succumb to the lullaby of snores circulating around the van by now (no reflection, naturally, on our tour guide's ability).

We arrived at the Millford Plaza, following our drive around the city, at six in the morn-

ing. The Plaza was located on 8th Avenue, right in the heart of the theatre district. We were fortunate to stay there while in New York. Waking up three hours later, we set out to paint the town red.

There's so much to do in New York City! Now that I've made this profound observation, I will outline what exactly we did ... Well, first there were the shows: "Cats", "Evita", "A Chorus Line", "42nd Street" and "Oh Calcutta" (a sizzler which, incidentally, had absolutely nothing to do with Calcutta - just ask Oliver and Alex!) We spent some of our most enjoyable nights at these lavish Broadway productions which are perennially popular and help to give New York a distinctive flair in the world of entertainment.

The daytime provided ample opportunity for us to do some sight-seeing. The group subdivided, some taking boat tours around the island for a fabulous view of the Statue of Liberty, a visit to Greenwich Village, Wall Street, The Empire State Building, the Rockefeller Centre and the World Trade Centre. In the World Trade Centre, the tourist was able to go up all one-hundred and seven stories (by elevator of course!) to an observation deck. Members of our group went at night and were rewarded with a magnificent five mile radius view of New York's famous skyline illuminated by the city lights. One of the incredible facts about the place is that the World Trade Centre alone employs a staff well in excess of the population of Fredericton.

Other group members took advantage of New York's much maligned sub-way system to travel to Grand Central Station, Times Square and Uptown. As semi-paranoid tourists, we were at first acutely aware of the stories everyone hears of New York subway muggings. Nevertheless, clutching purse and wallet we did go underground. The subway trains turned out to be a graffiti artist's haven. The trains were literally covered from top to bottom with writings in paint, marker and any other implement capable of marking. Although graffiti was the decor of the subway, the people made the atmosphere. There were some real weirdos down there! One saw anything from swaggering drunks singing on top of their lungs to strange cult groups

Feature by Sarah Abraham  
 Photos by Andrew Worster



A New York Landmark



Times Square

soliciting donations. Needless to say we steered clear of them and usually travelled "en masse" while underground.

Downtown New York vibrated with activity. We woke up to the legions of yellow cabs which swarmed the streets below our hotel by seven each morning. Street vendors sold everything imaginable from giant pretzels to switchblades and four dollar calculators. There was even a poor musician on one corner who competed for our attention over the sounds of rush hour traffic. Attached to his open saxophone case was a sign thanking passersby for contributions.

New York's department stores and specialty shops sold almost anything one could ever wish to buy. This was certainly true of "Macy's", the world's largest department store. Gimbels, Bloomingdales and Saks were among the other stores that group members visited. While downtown, we enjoyed the great variety of international cuisine afforded us by the numerous restaurants and bistros within walking distance. Of course, for the less adventurous there was always the familiar "MacDonalds" on 42nd Street! Most of us however, had the opportunity to sample much more exotic dishes. We thoroughly enjoyed Greek and Japanese cuisine. Japanese food is distinct from Chinese in many respects and provided a new eating experience for most of us. Speaking of new experiences, try eating a whole meal gracefully equipped with only chopsticks. It makes for a particularly enjoyable, if long, meal!

A trip to New York is bound to be filled with new experiences and more than a dash of excitement and ours was no exception. Of course, one of the chief sources of excitement for some group members (mentioning no names) were the revolving doors. Seriously, some of us developed a real "revolving-door hang-up" by the end of our stay in New York. It's just one of those crazy little things you notice about a city. New York was definitely a city of revolving doors. It seemed that every building you entered had cemented shut the normal "pull-push" doors and installed revolving ones which, (as some of us discovered the hard way), comfortably accommodated only one person per slot.

Well we finally did get our tour of the U.N. Our competent tour guide escorted us through the meeting chambers of the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council. The United Nations is a vast complex of world organizations. An interesting feature of the building is the fact that member nations leave their cultural mark in the U.N. through the interior design of council chambers each of which is decorated by a different nation. The unusual architecture and art which make up the various meeting chambers represent the cooperation among nations which brought the United Nations into existence. Though its functions are numerous, one of the U.N.'s primary purposes is to foster peace and cooperation among nations. Symbolic, perhaps, of this goal are the 157 flags of the member nations which fly side by side in front of the complex.

One interesting aspect of the tour was the display of gifts donated by various countries to the U.N. Among these gifts was an enormous tapestry which when unravelled, we were told could encompass the earth several times. These were a peace bell donated by Japan, a model satellite, various sculptures and paintings, and a large pendulum suspended from the ceiling which showed the earth's rotation.

We were just nearing the end of our tour when someone in our group innocently asked what gift Canada had given to the U.N. Our tour guide then immediately drew our attention away from the magnificent works of art which surrounded us, and pointing towards the foyer, she informed us that Canada's contribution to the U.N. was its own plated and gleaming set of revolving doors! One is tempted here to remark wryly on the cultural and artistic heritage of our nation. Revolving doors indeed! It was good for a laugh at any rate.

Although this account could not possibly describe all of our experiences in New York City during our four day stay, over the March Break, one thing's for certain, it was an instant cure for the "small-town blues."



The Rockefeller Centre

