

THE COMMUNITY COORDINATOR PROGRAM

NEW YORK

by Jennifer Fowell

Living in New York! A city of sometimes bewildering choices in terms of where to live, personal interests to be developed, opportunities to be gained, and, for families with children, types of educational and extra curricular facilities to be selected.

At the inception of the Community Liaison program for 35 Canada-based staff in May of 1985 it was decided to divide the work between two people, one for the suburbs of Westchester, where some married couples and most families with children reside, and one for Manhattan, where all single employees and a few families are living.

With a large turnover of staff during the summer I took over the whole program in October and began by doing a survey among the membership and working closely with the representative from Statistics Canada on the cost of living survey, a matter of great concern to us all in this incredibly expensive city. As well as answering many individual questions that come my way and lending a sympathetic ear to those who just need to talk, I have also been doing extensive research on the educational system here and upgrading our data base.

My activities have already begun to focus on the new posting cycle, including welcome and follow-up kits and an orientation meeting with a video-presentation for all newcomers. Early liaison with newly-appointed staff is especially important since the challenge of house-hunting on the open market is compounded by transportation and often education considerations.

Looking to the future I would like to develop a short newsletter that is geared to the needs of the membership but that does not contribute to "information overload" in a media rich environment such as this. Stress management seminars suggest themselves especially for new arrivals who must bite off so much simultaneously from the "Big Apple".



WASHINGTON, D.C.

by Laurel Pardy

Washington has no Statue of Liberty, no Golden Gate, no Astrodome and no arches except those of McDonald's.

What it does have is the White House and the Capitol.

It is, thus, the repository of the hopes and dreams, aspirations and dilemmas of 236.5 million Americans and their neighbours, allies and partners.

People, politicians and power; that is the game in Washington, not Joe Theisman and the Redskins. And, like any sport, the game has its players, spectators, commentators and groupies.

Not the least among these are the members of what is probably the world's largest diplomatic corps.

In many respects, Washington is merely Ottawa times ten:

- Historically, both were built on locations arbitrarily selected to avoid choosing between other, already established, sites.
- Geographically, both depend on bridges to keep their functioning halves together, and are conscious of the "across the river" syndrome.
- Culturally, both are considered slightly behind the times and conservative, but thought to be catching up with other large cities.
- Ethnically, both have been less influenced by waves of immigration than other large urban centres.
- Bureaucratically, both are civil service dominated and politician inundated.

Architecturally, Washington is a collection of Greek and Roman wedding cakes, the offspring of a late nineteenth century lust for Athens and Rome. Porticoes and Ionic columns, saucer domes and inset-arches, improbable balconies and wrought iron curlicues amaze and amuse thousands of visitors each year.

Conceived and built originally as a place where Congress would meet during the cool months, Washington emerged from the mud of a peninsula formed by the Potomac and Anacostia rivers, a neutral zone independent of state influence.

A city whose budget is controlled by Congress and administered by an elected mayor and city council, and whose residents could not vote in presidential elections until 1964.



"Liberty is a great Lady who loves the sea. She watches the ships as they come in. The men and women of those ships have dreamed of her all their lives and they cheer her as they approach. Afterwards, life is never the same as their dreams. Liberty is a great, great Lady."

— Angelo Tarlazzi

Despite malaria and yellow fever (which are now eradicated), dank, dreary winters and infernally hot summers (which are not), the city survived and gradually acquired the accoutrements of modern political prestige: a great library, universities, medical research centres, media facilities, cultural centres and theatres, an army of lawyers and lobbyists and a massive bureaucracy.

The past has been carefully preserved in museums, collections, heritage homes, statuary and painting.

At first, Washington seems much like Ottawa only larger, faster, more diverse.

The differences sneak up on one and can come as a shock. One feels a half beat off the measure, and it is hard to define the reason. Washington has something for everyone; but, because of the large size of the mission, you will have to make the first moves in becoming established.