



Stan Ruddle

Peaceful Places in Washington, D.C.

Whether Congress is in session or thousands of school children are visiting on their spring break, Washington, D.C. is always busy. You'd think there wasn't a quiet place anywhere? Wrong! As the co-author of Peaceful Places Washington, D.C., Judy Colbert searched for those little pockets of tranquility in the middle of seeming chaos.

by Judy Colbert
Photos: Judy Colbert and iStockphoto.com

Washington, D.C. is home to about 80 native butterfly species and on the migratory path for others. The outside Butterfly Habitat Garden, to the east of the National Museum of Natural History on the National Mall, has four areas filled with woody and herbaceous plants to attract the butterflies. Wooden benches are available for sitting and contemplating or looking for birds or bees and other insects. Pansies are planted during the winter to add visual interest for humans (they do nothing for butterflies). The Butterfly Pavilion inside the museum has a live butterfly exhibit with numerous tropical butterflies and hundreds of plants.

i National Museum of Natural History, 10th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W. (202) 633-2220



Photo: iStockphoto.com / andrea

The Historic Congressional Cemetery (or the Washington Parish Burial Grounds) was created in 1807, and within a few years thirteen members of Congress and two vice presidents had been buried here (hence Congressional Cemetery).



Photo: iStockphoto.com / Timothy DeLuca

A WALK AMONG THE TOMBSTONES

The Historic Congressional Cemetery (or the Washington Parish Burial Grounds) was created in 1807, and within a few years thirteen members of Congress and two vice presidents had been buried here (hence Congressional Cemetery). Among those buried here are former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, composer John Philip Sousa, Civil War photographer Matthew Brady, and gay rights activist and Air Force veteran Edward Maynard. It was—and still is—also a public park where people spend a quiet afternoon. People walk dogs leash free (you

must belong to the cemetery's association), celebrate weddings in the chapel, picnic, and have a 5K dead man's run. Free tours are offered during the summer, or check the website for brochures covering the location of the War of 1812, women of arts and letters, brewers, and other special interests.

i Congressional Cemetery, 1801 E Street S.E. (202) 543-0539
www.congressionalcemetery.org



Photo: iStockphoto.com / Richard Guevin

LABYRINTH

Labyrinths have been in existence for thousands of years with references in Greek and Roman mythology and before. As labyrinths have only one way in and one way out, there are no decisions to be made, meaning a tranquil time for your mind. The Labyrinth at the American Psychological Association building is unexpected because it's on a rooftop eight floors up from busy streets and a short walk from Union Station. This labyrinth is 42 feet in diameter and is a Santa Rosa design with seven circuits, quarter markings, and a small opening in the fourth path that is called a "heart space." Funded by TKF Foundation that promotes green spaces in urban places, you'll find their signature bench and waterproof notebook for your comments and thoughts. Check with the lobby guard for rooftop access, Monday through Friday, 7 am to 7 pm

i American Psychological Association, 10 G Street, N.E. (202) 336-5519
www.apa.org

BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

The National Building Museum explores the built environment. Exhibits may focus on urban planning, architecture, or design, with an examination of green communities, fencing, Amish barn raising, Legos, World's Fairs of the 1930s, and parking garages. The building's been used for inaugural balls and other special events because of the interior's grace and grandeur. It all makes for a great gift shop. Pick up a brochure to help you as you meander through the building, join a guided tour, or just bring your lunch and a book and sit by the fountain in the center of the court. The calla lilies surround the fountain all year. With an average of 800 visitors a day (including people using the building for a shortcut), it's rarely busy. There's a fee to explore the museum, but none to just sit by the fountain.

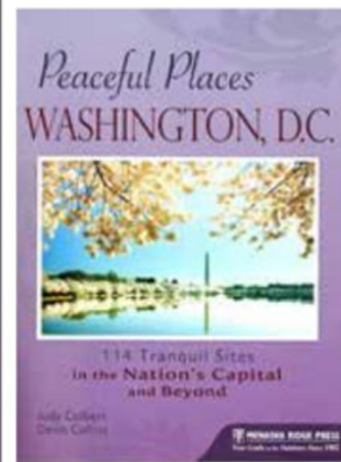
i The National Building Museum, 401 F Street, N.W. (202) 272-2448
www.nbm.org



NEWSWORTHY

In a city filled with news junkies, here's a museum dedicated to more news. Run by the Freedom Forum, the Newseum explores how the news is covered. A Hurricane Katrina retrospective showed this event going from a natural disaster to a man-made one. An interactive area lets you become the next hotshot weather forecaster or news announcer. Amid this noisy place is something that is rather soothing and inspiring. The sixth floor Hank Greenspun Terrace offers a spectacular view up and down Pennsylvania Avenue. Look east and you see the Capitol, the National Gallery of Art, the dome of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, and the façade of the Embassy of Canada. Look west and you see the Archives and down to the Washington Monument. It's a WOW, although the price of admission may be a bit steep.

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Judy Colbert is a native Washingtonian and the co-author of Peaceful Places Washington D.C., available in bookstores and at amazon.com.



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