Travel and Hotels/Restaurant Students Take D.C. by “Storm”

And so it did... so much so that on the final leg of the journey home, 30 Sullivan students and their three chaperones, along with thousands of other air travelers, found themselves stranded for hours as air traffic came to a complete standstill in Boston, New York, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and other hub cities as a powerful thunderstorm system moved up the East coast.

"This is not my idea of fun," said one exhausted student.

"Well, now I know the difference between a vacation and a trip," added another travel student.

And therein lies the message: travel is not always fun and exciting, particularly for those who must travel frequently and for those who plan the trip. "We're getting a firsthand lesson in the airlines' hub and spoke route system," said Betty Smothers, department chairperson for the Travel and Tourism program. "A storm in an airline's major hub city will affect hundreds of incoming and outgoing flights."

"This annual trip has always been a learning experience," said Sherry Klein, a member of the Graduate Employment Services staff who always serves as a chaperone on student trips. "Our corporate recruiters always look for graduates with pleasant, helpful attitudes. As these students serve clients and guests in the future, they'll know what it's like to walk a mile in the shoes of a tired, stressed-out traveler," she stated.

Travel is Adventure

"We want the students to experience the adventure of travel," explained Ms. Smothers. "In D.C., we turned the students loose with an all-day metro pass and map of the city. Using these tools, they must choose two or three sites to visit and then report on them back at the college as part of their grade. We haven't lost anyone yet," she chuckled.

Well, not exactly. Getting lost was not on Dianne Elliott and Angela Parker's agenda, two seasoned travel students who paired up to tour the humongous Capitol Building.

"We got turned around while trying to leave the building," explained Angela. "We couldn't find an exit anywhere."

"A nice gentleman in a suit finally took pity on us," added Dianne. "When we told him we were students from Sullivan College working on a class project, he gave us a behind-the-scenes tour."

"He turned out to be an aide to Senator Warner from Virginia," gushed the pair. "We saw parts of the Capitol that most people only read about in newspapers or see on TV. We are going to have an awesome report!" And that, perhaps, is the best way to describe this annual trip - awesome!

Ready for Cruise

This group of travelers is already dusting off their walking shoes in preparation for a fall trip to DisneyWorld and a four-day cruise of the Caribbean.

"These trips to major U.S. cities, resorts and international tourist attractions play a key role in a student's Sullivan College education," said Ms. Klein. "Their learning experience goes beyond the classroom and will be a valuable asset when they graduate and enter the job market."

Now, when exactly does hurricane season start?