

Program: Touring Washington DC

Speaker: Alan D. Schmidt, PhD, Sciencetech Club member

Introduced by: Steven Poe

Attendance: 118

Guests: Everette Albrecht, Sheri Jordan, Ann Lunsford, Judith Murphy, Lynda Parziale, Michael Steineck, and likely others.

Scribe: Richard Carter

Editor: Carl Warner

Sciencetech member Alan D. Schmidt has a doctorate in chemical engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has done industrial chemical engineering polymerization research and development, and in 2014 retired as an environmental engineer for the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. (*Email: alan.schmidt@att.net*) (*Sponsored By: Dr. Alan D. Schmidt*) Alan provided numerous pictures, descriptions, tips, logistics, insights, and priorities on the tourist sites to see in Washington, DC that resulted from his many visits over the last five years. Preplanning the trip can save much time. Opening and closing visitation times, special events awareness, closures and repairs delays, special required admittance connections, and obtaining special passes, all need to be planned well in advance to be able to schedule around preventable disappointments. Alan has spent a full day or more touring each of some selections of the many listed museums.

By car it is a 625-mile, 10.5-hour trip to DC. By air, a nonstop from Indianapolis to DC Reagan National with American Airlines allows a Metro hookup to the sites to be seen. Dulles Airport IAD has a bus that connects to the Metro silver line. He recommends putting money on a SmarTrip® card to ride the Metro subway and buses (buy vending single card).

Here are Alan's recommendations of the top sites to visit: The free Smithsonian museums are strung all along the National Mall in Washington DC. While most museums close at 5 or 5:30 PM, some are open until 7:30 PM at times.

Visit the **Smithsonian Castle** first since it opens at 8:30 AM while the others open at 10 AM. It has gardens out front and interesting displays inside, typical of some of the other museums in a grand old-style castle. A guard checks bags while most other museums have metal detector security.

National Museum of Natural History - is, in Alan's opinion, the best site to visit in Washington, DC. The Hope diamond, halls of gems and minerals, fossils showing the evolution of man and animals, displays of ocean creatures, and spectacular photos of nature abound.

National Air and Space Museum - has flight exhibits from Orville and Wilbur Wright's 1902 hop through more modern airplanes and rocket ships. The Albert Einstein Planetarium displays visuals in a resolution 16 times better than your HD TV.

White House - tours are reserved ahead through a congressman. It has a small visitor center.

National Museum of the American Indian - has lots of Indian artifacts, gold from conquistadors, and great ethnic food in a cafeteria.

National Museum of African American History - is relatively new, very popular, and requires a ticket.

United States Botanic Garden - has wonderful exotic flowers and vegetation, and a living fossil tree.

National Gallery of Art - has fabulous large paintings and sculptures.

International Spy Museum - go on the spy adventure (you can open the safe) and see extensive displays on spying from the Revolutionary War to now

Visit during the magnificent **April cherry blossom time** - March 20 to April 17, 2019 and walk the tidal basin area to see war memorials, Lincoln, King, Roosevelt, and Jefferson Memorials. Early in the season, one cherry tree high left of the Jefferson Memorial may bloom before the others.

Newseum - explore the history of news, see the rumped metal antennae from the World Trade Center, Berlin Wall sections, and more.

United States Capital - tour information can be found at: <https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/plan-visit>

Museum of the Bible

Washington National Cathedral

National Museum of American History - see large old flags, a Revolutionary War era boat, and other historical items.

National Archives - see a faded Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Magna Carta. Sorry, no pictures allowed.

Ford Theater - tour where President Abraham Lincoln was shot, see a play.

National Portrait Gallery - portraits of famous people, Christopher Reeves in a wheelchair.

Freer/Sackler - The Smithsonian Museum of Asian Art, the Peacock Room, and a meteorite dagger.

Renwick Gallery - NW of White House with 9 rooms of elaborate unique art displays.

Library of Congress - exhibits of Mayan artifacts, tour of building, and library overview.

National Museum of African Art - 13th century to the present.

National Postal Museum

Bureau of Engraving and Printing - see money printed.

Holocaust Museum - war is evil.

National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center - Space Shuttle, SR71 spy plane

John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts - mystery play *Shear Madness*, some events free at 6PM.

US National Arboretum - 446 acres with paths through azaleas, rhododendrons, dogwoods, bonsai, and more.

National Zoological Park - pandas, orangutans, demonstrations, and much more, opens 8 AM.

Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens - extensive lily pads with a variety of colors and plant types in a river setting.

Department of State Diplomatic Reception Rooms – elaborate decor used for State events. Find more information including tours at: <https://receptiontours.state.gov/>

Pentagon - <https://pentagontours.osd.mil/Tours/> and <https://pentagontours.osd.mil/Tours/tourselection.jsp>, display cases.

Arlington Cemetery - changing of the guard.

Washington Monument - expansive view of DC. Closed for repairs, so check first.



Alan Schmidt