



A Visit to the U.S. Capitol

ACSM staff exploring Washington, DC

—By Dawn James

Once each quarter, the ACSM staff engages in a morale-building activity that has a link to surveying and mapping. In the past, we've done a bus tour of Washington, D.C., and visited Great Falls and Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington. On Thursday, June 11, 2009, we visited the U.S. Capitol in the Nation's Capital. The U.S. Capitol is home to the U.S. Congress and its two legislative bodies, the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

The Capitol Visitor Center, the new entrance to the Capitol, is a beautiful building in its own right, and a most welcome addition to the Capitol complex. Our visit began with a 13-minute orientation film, "Out of Many, One," which was shown in the Orientation Theater on the lower level of the Capitol Visitor Center. The film narrated the history of how

the United States established a new form of government and highlighted, in most vivid visual representations of various historic events, the important role that Congress plays in the lives of all Americans.

After the film, the ACSM staff was taken on a guided tour of the Capitol building. Except for two ACSM staffers, none of us had ever visited the Capitol, a building that was truly a feast for the eyes with its wonderful skylights and beautiful, ornate architecture.

I believe we left the Capitol with a greater understanding of the history of U.S. democracy, as well as the challenges our founding fathers had faced as they established a new way of governance—a representative democracy.

Interestingly, on our way to the Capitol, we "ran," at Union Station, into the current President of the United

States, who was a great sport and allowed several of us to be photographed with him.

