

## Our Trip To Washington DC to March in the Inaugural Parade

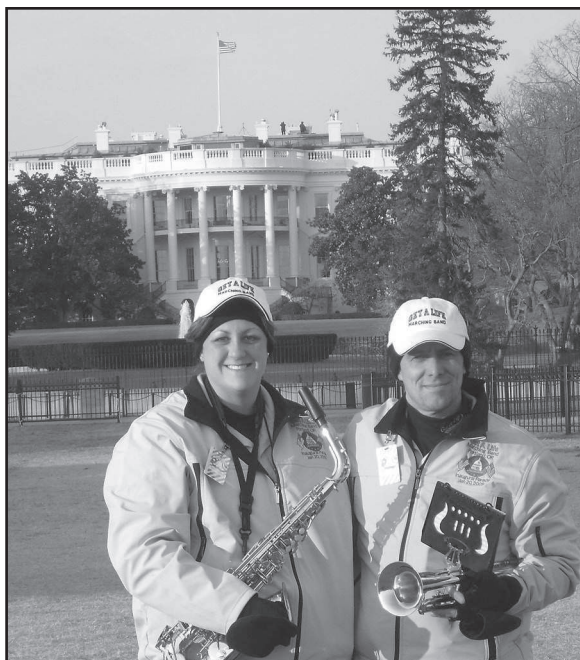
Shawn Baker and her husband Dan-- members of the "Get A Life Marching Band" represented Vernonia at President Barak Obama's Inaugural Parade in January. The Band was chosen as a last-minute alternate, and had to scramble to put together their trip. The "Get A Life Marching Band" is a group of adult band "geeks", whose slogans include "We'd rather miss a note than a meal." They are Vernonia favorites who have performed during Jamboree weekend the last two years. Because of the short notice for their trip, the group had very little time to fundraise and is still about \$18,000 short of paying for their trip. They need your help. You can visit their website, [www.getalifemb.org](http://www.getalifemb.org), to see more about the trip to DC, and visit their gift shop online at [www.cafepress.com/GetALifeMB](http://www.cafepress.com/GetALifeMB) to help support the group. The following is a "blow by blow" travelogue of the Bakers trip to Washington, D.C.

By Shawn Baker

Much to my mother's dismay, she picked us up at 2:00 AM to head to the Portland Airport on Sunday, January 18. I had not been on that long of a flight since I was 7 years old, so I was a little anxious. We landed in Philadelphia (this was the closest location to DC that we could find to stay) around 4:00 PM. We caught a shuttle and made it to our hotel by 5:30-- not that we were all that far away; it was just a challenge communicating with our driver!

The first thing I did was unpack and get the room organized. Luckily, I remembered everything! Yay me! We went downstairs to see who had arrived, and found a group that was going to McCormick and Schmick's for dinner. Mr. Schmick himself came to our final rehearsal in Portland and gave each person a coupon for a free cocktail and \$10 off of our meal. We all walked to the restaurant and the architecture we saw on the way there was amazing! We walked past City Hall, and the building just glowed! We had a nice meal, a foo-foo drink, and then began the walk back to the hotel. We went past Philadelphia's Hard Rock Café, so of course we had to go in! They had a gorgeous stained glass wall, so Dan had to go stand next to Elvis and have his picture taken. We got back to our room around 11:00, and we were planning to drive to D.C. to do some sightseeing the next day, then return to Philadelphia to sleep before the big day on Tuesday. Breakfast was at 6:00, and we were to leave at 7:00, so the alarm got set for 5:00 AM. Little did we know that this would be the night we got the most amount of sleep.

The drive to DC from Philly took us about 2 and a half hours. We got there around 10:30, and, not knowing my way around Washington, I was immediately lost. Luckily, Bill had been to DC before, so he was our impromptu tour guide. We came out just behind a beautiful brick building that looked like a palace. Turns out it was part of the Smithsonian. I was taking pictures, and Bill called the rest of us over his way. We went across a gravel sidewalk, and I got goosebumps... I turned to Robin and said, "I don't know why, but I just got the chills." Of course, I still didn't know where we were, and neither did she. So, we followed Bill out into this field, and he points to our right. There stood the Capitol Building. To our left was the Washington Monument. We were standing in the middle of the National Mall! The energy of that place was amazing! I'm really not into politics, but there was something about standing in the middle of this city that really affected me. After the Monument, we came to the WWII Memorial. It was beautiful, but very emotional. Robin and I both cried... I'm very thankful that she brought along tissue! From there we walked through the Korean War and Vietnam Memorials. Both were very quiet places. After paying our respects there, we ended up at the Lincoln Memorial. Unfortunately, they closed it down just as we got there, so we didn't get to go up the steps. Bummer. From there we walked toward the White House. That was the biggest madhouse that we had seen that day. There were SO many people lined up there to take pictures. After lunch, we walked to Ford's Theater, where Lincoln was shot. It was closed due to renovation, but the house where he died (across the street from the theater) was open. From there we went into the Air and Space building of the Smithsonian... We went up the escalator on the left, and down the one on the right, so we could say that we went "through" it, snapping pictures on the way "through." Then we hopped on the blue line Metro and headed



Shawn and Dan Baker at the White House in Washington DC. The Bakers traveled to DC with the "Get a Life Marching Band" to play in the Inaugural Parade.

to Arlington. We walked down to the cemetery to find that it had closed an hour before our arrival. It was now 6:00 PM, and time to head back to the car, and back to Philly. What an amazing day. Thanks to Bill and Robin for the idea of renting a car to spend the day here!

We got back to our room at 10:30. We grabbed a fast bite of dinner, and got out all of our uniform pieces for the trip back to DC to perform in the parade. Not knowing what traffic would be like, our busses were scheduled to leave the motel at 2:00 AM. So, by the time we ate, organized parade gear, and crawled in bed, it was 11:30. We had to be at the busses by 1:30, so that meant up by 12:30... That equaled a solid one hour night's sleep. We picked up our boxed breakfast, crawled

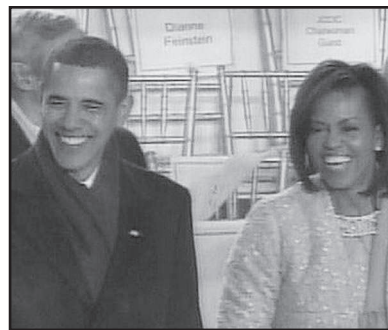
onto the bus, and headed for Washington, DC, again. Amazingly enough, traffic was non-existent, and we made it to the Pentagon (our check-in location) in 3 and a half hours. We didn't have to check in until noon. For security purposes, we were supposed to stay on our bus. There was one point where we were allowed to walk over to The Pentagon Memorial. It was just dedicated in September of 2007, and was such a solemn place. There was a bench for each of the 184 people that died. Each bench had a trench of running water underneath it. You could see the color change in the stone which built the Pentagon, clear reminder of where the plane hit.

At 2:00 PM, we finally got to head to the security checkpoint. We had to clear everything off of the bus, put our horns, as well as ourselves, through security (like at the airport), while our bus was taken to a different location. There, they had dogs go on and under to make sure everything was okay. We picked up boxed lunches, and got back onto the bus.

At sunset, we headed out to line up in the street. We were ready for the biggest performance of our lives! We walked... and kept waiting to see the swarm of spectators. And we walked more and waited

more. Had there not been a sign that said "parade starts here," and all of the lighting that was in place, we would have had no idea that we were on the parade route. The parade had started late, and we found out later that if you attended the inauguration, it was difficult, if not impossible, to get to the parade. Dan and I were pretty disappointed at the lack of people in attendance, but really, we were there for just one reason, and that was to play for the President.

We played non-stop until we reached the "silent zone" so that we could keep warm. Then the cameras were rolling, and it was our big moment. I was in the front row of the band, and ultimately 20 feet from the President and First Lady. They had big smiles on their faces-- they were dancing and waving at us. It was amazing. This was the reason we were here. We were fantastic!!



Barak and Michelle Obama enjoying the "Get a Life Marching Band"

The parade route ended not too far from that point, and we had to walk 2 miles back to our bus-- we were frozen and exhausted! We crawled back onto the bus and headed back

to Philly. The motel had a pizza party waiting for us... it was 11:00 PM when we got there. The entire group hit the beer line!! Afterwards, any sane person would have gone to bed and gotten some rest before heading back home the next morning-- but not us. Dan and I and Leilani decided that we wanted to see Independence Hall before our trip was over. We bundled up and headed out on foot in search of these buildings... it was midnight. We were given incorrect directions as to the location, and stopped to talk to a parking lot attendant, who gave us even worse directions, and we ended up in some scary neighborhood. We turned around, giving up, and found a sign that pointed to the Hall. It was a beautiful brick building with security all around, and next to that was Congress Hall... the inauguration spot for Washington and Adams. Then, as the security guard was telling us that we had to take the pictures from across the street, we turned to see the Liberty Bell hanging

in a glass building. WOW! We could see it from all sides, except the cracked side. We finally got back to the motel at 2:30 AM. I packed everything up when we got back, because we, of course, were on the early flight out. The cab was set to pick us up at 4:30 AM. We got to bed at 3, alarm was set for 4, and we got a call at 4:15 that the cab was waiting. Leilani shared the cab with us (another first for me... never been in a cab before), and off we went to Philly International. The flight home was uneventful. Mom picked us up, brought us home, and I turned on the heater, crawled into bed, and crashed for 14 hours!!

It was an unbelievable adventure, and I am so honored to have been able to share it with my husband. It was a moment of a lifetime that will not be forgotten.



The Bakers visit the Washington Monument

Insurance for all your precious possessions.



**FARMERS**  
Gets you back where you belong.

James Dias Insurance Agency  
2504 Sykes Road, P.O. Box 1077  
St. Helens, OR 97051  
503-397-4259 Fax: 503-397-5557

Barlow  
Bikes &  
Boards

## Spring Specials

Mention this Ad for these sale prices

Tire tubes	\$4.50
Tires (in stock)	10% off
Bike helmet reg. \$15	\$12.
Spring Tune-up reg. \$65	\$55.

**New Spring Hours  
for Vernonia  
coming in April**

**Featured Bike: 2008 Haro F1**  
(1 in stock)  
Reg. \$325  
**Now \$285**

**886 Bridge Street, Vernonia**  
(503) 429-0762 - Vernonia store  
(503) 397-4900 - St. Helens store  
[clydembarlow@yahoo.com](mailto:clydembarlow@yahoo.com)  
(503) 438-5824 - cell (if you really need us now!)