

TRAVEL

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CROSSROADS

Iris Jones

Local Points of Light glow at Disney World

None of them did it for the medallions that now hang on thick multicolored ribbons around their necks. None of them knew that they would be appointed Points of Light by the White House and be honored by President George Bush at Walt Disney World.

They did it because they wanted to do something worth doing. The Kerby sisters, for example, Beth, Kerry and Megan Kerby of Troy are ages 14, 12 and 9 respectively. They are the daughters of Laura and Michael Kerby. All five of them went to Walt Disney World last week so that their girls could be honored for their volunteer work.

I was there too, to celebrate Disney World's 20th anniversary. I spent a good part of the anniversary weekend running around the 43 square miles of the World looking for the Kerby sisters, as well as other Michigan honorees like Deborah Walker of the Chrysler Corp. and the Volunteers of the World of Work Program from Detroit.

Security around the presidential program was tight. Only important people like the Kerby sisters could get past the secret service.

How do three young girls from Troy get to meet, and be honored by, the president of the United States?

Beth Kerby started it when she was finishing sixth grade at St. Hugo's. "One of the nuns asked for volunteers to work for the summer at the Wing Lake Developmental Center for the multiply-impaired," she said.

"I went for the interview with my two sisters. After they interviewed me, they asked Megan and Kerry if they wanted to volunteer too."

The three sisters have spent the past three summers working as teachers' aides at the school. "We help the teachers play games with children, to help them use their senses," Beth said.

The girls came to the attention of the White House after Beth wrote an essay on volunteerism that won an award. Strangely enough, the Kerby family was vacationing at Walt Disney World in January 1990 when the White House chose the three girls for their 50th Point of Light award.

Laura Kerby called home from Orlando and her mother said "has the White House found you yet?" Apparently the White House called the school, learned that the girls were at Disney World and began chasing them around the Magic Kingdom.

"We came back to the hotel and there were messages all over the door," Mrs. Kerby said.

Michael Eisner, chief executive officer of the Walt Disney Co., is a founding member of the Points of Light board of directors. Delta Airlines flew all 574 honorees to Orlando, and Walt Disney World hosted them for the time of their life.

What was the best part? Kerry: "It was really exciting. We had lots of fun. Especially hearing all the stories from the other Points of Light."

Megan: "The best part was meeting the president when he came to Detroit last year. The best part at Disney was the rides, especially Space Mountain."

Beth: "The best part is that you have no idea you will ever be recognized for something like that. It feels good to volunteer, and it's really neat to see kids grow, to give them pride and see them do things they wouldn't do. It's neat to meet the president too. We never expected that to happen."

I couldn't get anywhere near the ceremonies, but I watched them on television monitors in the China Pavilion, at World Showcase in EPCOT, one of Walt Disney World's three theme parks.

I heard Michael Eisner say that people like the Kerby sisters were "perfect examples of the kinds of private deeds that solve public problems."

And I was proud as punch to be within 100 yards of the Kerby sisters, even if I couldn't get past the Secret Service.

Relive the old South in Charleston

By Iris Sanderson Jones
special writer

Our carriage is moving with a rhythmic clomp-clomp down the brick streets of Charleston, S.C., pulled by mules called Katherine and Josephine. This is just the right pace to see a city laid out three centuries ago on a narrow peninsula between two rivers.

Our guide, David, is talking about the families that came down the rivers every Sunday in the 18th century from their grand rice plantations. "They would go to church, visit friends and return home with the tides. We still have a church called the 'church of the tides.'"

His next line is a clue to the Charleston state of mind, then and now: "The Ashley and the Cooper rivers meet at Charleston to form the Atlantic Ocean."

They make a lot of jokes like that in Charleston, whether you are buying rice spoons at Geo. C. Birlant and Co. on King Street, or following a tour guide through the Edmonstone-Alston House.

"Charlestonians are like the ancient Chinese. They eat rice and worship their ancestors."

The economy of the great rice plantations had declined by 1840, killed by competition from the East Indies, but the incredibly luxurious social life of Charleston continued until the Civil War.

Charlestonians sat on the "plazas" of their high, narrow "single houses" — one room wide and the rooms deep — and watched the Confederates fire the first shots of the Civil War on the federal troops at Fort Sumter, just offshore in Charleston Harbor.

Union soldiers burned most of the old plantation houses to the ground and slavery ended, but that old southern life still draws the tourists to this gracious city set between the Ashley and the Cooper rivers.

Tourists stay at the Omni Hotel at Charleston Place or at one of the bed-and-breakfast inns built into commercial buildings in the old city. They come to enjoy the echoes of antebellum life and to relive the old South.

Most people see Charleston for the first time as I did, aboard a mule-drawn carriage, with a guide who tells the history of the city spiced with stories:

"This church has a cemetery on one side of the road where born-and-bred Charlestonians were buried, and a cemetery on the other side of the road for strangers."

"One of our governors was buried on the 'stranger' side. The Yankees moved his body across the street into the good cemetery when they occupied Charleston. As soon as the Yankees left, the Charlestonians moved him back."

Katherine and Josephine were great fun, but you get the real feel of Charleston by walking the streets at your own pace, meeting the people who will happily "tell you all the real story about Charleston."

Take a shopping tour along the antique shops of King Street or a guided walking tour of the old city with David Farrow, whose family goes back to the 17th century. Take a harbor tour or the boat tour to Fort Sumter. The most popular tours in Charleston go to Patriots Point, home of the World War II aircraft carrier Yorktown.

Whatever else you miss, don't miss the old river plantations.

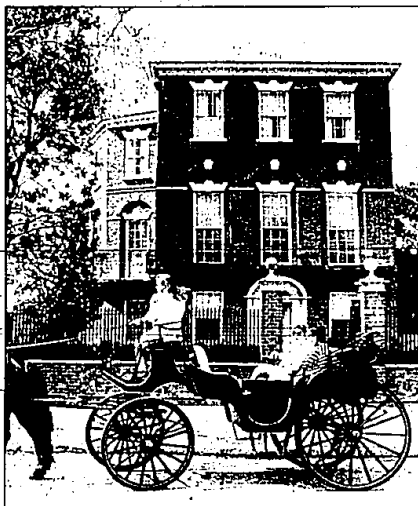
Drayton Hall was the only one of the grand houses on the Ashley River left standing after Union soldiers burned their way down the river road. It stands now, as it did a century ago, surrounded by live oaks, its river landing intact, but with no furniture in the great house.

Middletown Place, also on the Ashley River, is a carefully preserved 18th century plantation, with 17th century gardens, stables and a 1755 guest house that was left standing after the great plantation house was burned.

For more information on the old South side of Charleston, as well as the new eating-dancing-singing side of the city, contact the Charleston Trident Convention & Visitors Bureau, P.O. Box 975, Charleston, S.C. 29401 or telephone toll-free (800) 868-8118.



Shoppers will find a variety of wares at the city market in downtown Charleston.



Photos by Micky Jones

One way to see historic Charleston is by carriage ride. Here, a carriage passes the Nathaniel Russell House built in 1808 on Meeting Street.

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SUNDAY SPORTS & Symphony

Sunday, October 27th
6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

Make plans to attend this Gala Fundraiser to benefit The Livonia Symphony Orchestra

Highlights will include:

- A stirring performance by the Livonia Symphony Orchestra, Francesco DiBlasti conducting.
- Meet Red Wing Star Shawn Burr, and former Tiger great, Mike Wilcox - Free Autographs!
- An appearance by a local sports celebrity.
- "Holiday Wardrobeing" from Ann Taylor
- Silent auction featuring resort vacations courtesy of Northwest Airlines and Marriott Hotels and Resorts.
- "A Tasting of Livonia," provided by the area's finest restaurants.

SAVE \$5.00... Tickets are \$20.00 prior to Oct. 14th and \$25.00 after Oct. 14th. Tickets available in the Laurel Park Place Management Office or The Marriott Hotel.

For further information call The Marriott Hotel at 402-3100

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