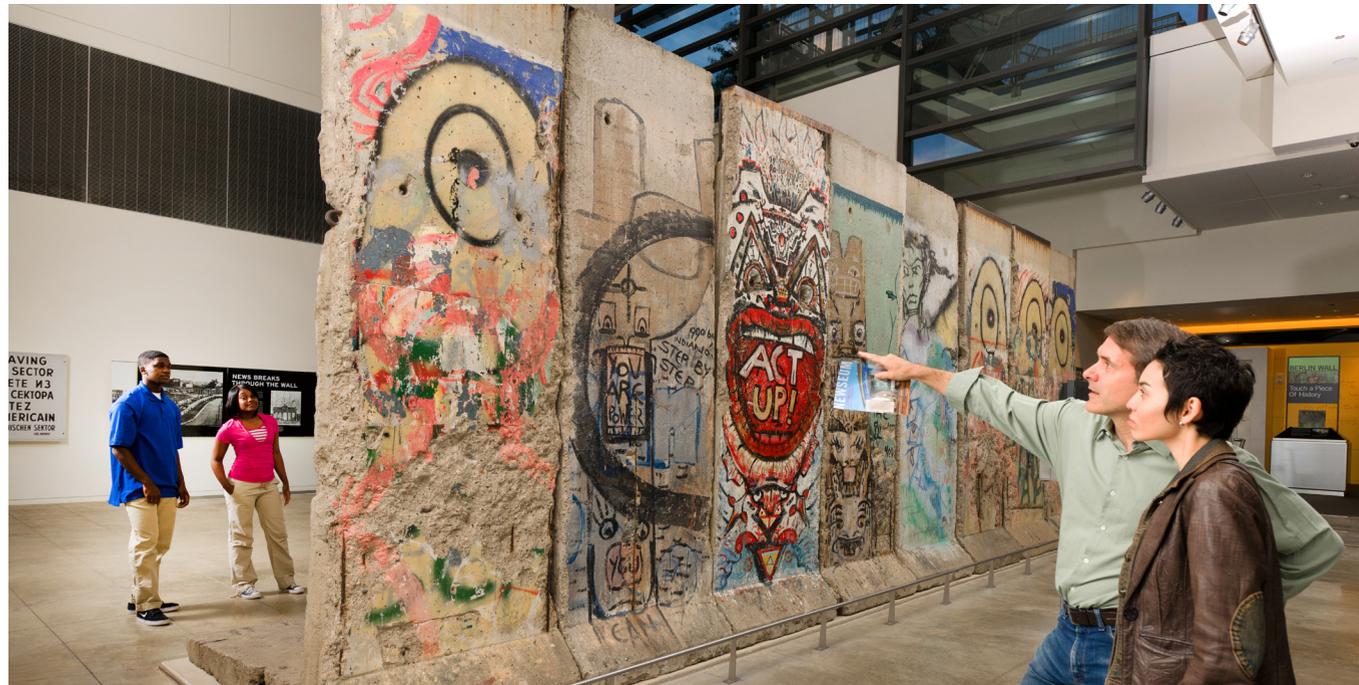


Traveling with Kids

By LIBBY CARTY MCNAMEE

A place where “the news” is the news



Above: The Newseum's Berlin Wall exhibit. Photo by Sam Kittner. Below: The Newseum exterior. Photo by Maria Bryk.

Want your kids to learn about the five freedoms provided by the First Amendment? Head to the Newseum in Washington, D.C. This one-of-a-kind museum is dedicated to 500 years of news and the people who made it. Only five years old in its new location, the soaring glass-and-marble edifice is located in downtown D.C. on Pennsylvania Avenue.

With 15 theaters and 15 galleries spread over seven levels, there is no shortage of entertainment and information, all geared to learning about the press throughout history. You can easily spend the day trying to explore its expansive 250,000 square feet. You can even return the next day for free using the same ticket.

The Newseum's claim to be the “world's most interactive” museum is not an exaggeration. It really is a marvel of technological innovation. Using state-of-the-art media, there are countless interactive activities throughout the museum geared specifically to kids. Seven floors of touch-screens, theaters, film and video, studios, computer games, interactive kiosks, documentary footage and hands-on multimedia exhibits are enough to satisfy any child obsessed with the latest gadgets.

In the Comics Section, even the “funny pages” are expanded to be kid-sized. In addition, there are neat

objects for kids to see, interesting videos to watch, historic headlines from around the world to read, and plenty of things to touch. In fact, the Newseum has the largest portion of the Berlin Wall outside of Germany. Part of it is set aside just for touching.

Upon entering the Newseum, there is a four-minute orientation video with tips to maximize your experience. In another nearby theater, older kids will enjoy the entertaining and educational film, “I-Witness: A 4-D Time Travel Adventure.” Don't miss the slide show in the lobby, posting hilarious newspapers “bloopers” through the years. (For example, “Panda Lectures at Zoo.”) During the movie, viewers learn about several historic journalists who pioneered the industry. With motion seats and temperature changes, it feels like Busch Gardens. Be prepared for your seats to move because they will. Motionless seats are also available.

The chance to “Be a Reporter” is an extremely popular interactive activity. Kids get the dream opportunity of being a real on-the-scene TV reporter on a staged news set. With a Washington scene as backdrop, kids speak into the microphone, look into the camera, and read the news provided by a teleprompter. The recorded segment then airs on the

nearby television screen, framed like a real report.

The Interactive Newsroom is another highlight for kids. Using individual touch-screen kiosks, each child becomes a rookie reporter or photographer. The assignment is to gather information for a local story on a circus emergency. During the investigation, the rookie must confront various ethical dilemmas.

Please keep in mind that some exhibits, such as the 9/11 Gallery, are geared to adults due to the sensitive subject matter. Parents can use their judgment whether certain exhibits are appropriate for their kids. As we all know, what may frighten one child may be another's favorite. If you have an extra adult in your group, you could send someone ahead to scout out the upcoming galleries.

Make sure to enjoy the spectacular panoramic view of the city from the sixth floor's gorgeous terrace. Don't miss the perfect photo op with the Capitol in the background.

Want to run into some famous people? Visit over the weekend. The Newseum often hosts Inside Media to film programs in the Knight TV Studio. Visitors can attend for free with admission. Check for upcoming events at www.Newseum.org under “Programs.” **RPM**

WANT TO GO?

The Newseum

Address: 555 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20001.

Website: www.Newseum.org

Phone: 1-888-NEWSEUM (1-888-639-7386)

Admission: At \$22 per adult and \$13 per child over 6, admission is on the pricey side, especially with the Smithsonian nearby. Rest assured, it is money well spent. Also this museum receives no federal or local funding. Kids enter free when accompanied by a paying adult during the summer.

Parking: There is no parking at the museum, but there are two garages across 6th Street. For \$23, you can park all day.

Metro stop: Archives or Judiciary Square

Food: Run by Wolfgang Puck, the Food Section has an extensive selection of hot entrees and kid meals with whole fruit. The espresso and gelato bar is open all day. Wolfgang Puck's upscale restaurant, the Source, is adjacent to the building.

Gift shops: The Newseum Store is located on Levels 1 and 2. Look for the kids' shop on 2.

Hotels: If you would like to stay overnight and enjoy the museum for a second day, there are some special packages with several local hotel deals.

Online learning: With suggested lesson plans, the Newseum's innovative Digital Classroom features interactive timelines, videos, and historic front pages. Check out www.Newseum.org/education.

