

2011
A CAPITAL IDEA
Grove Inside the Beltway
By Penny Peters

Another gathering of the Grove and so, another rhyme
But this Grove seemed quite odd to me [though ever so sublime]
There was not a bathing suit in sight, no flip flops, no big hats
Each Grover showed up dressed to kill, in heels or stunning flats

I couldn't recognize my friends, each was so business "glam"
And I didn't quite know where I was, this wasn't "Grove-istan"
We usually gather at beach, or at least by some lovely pool
But here we were in a formal place...where the weather had turned cool?

As I sat, wrapped up in many shawls, I tried to understand
What this strange Grove was all about [why meet in a cold land?]
Then the Capital loomed before me, and thought, "oh silly me!"
This is the Grove we've been waiting for... our first ever in D.C.!!

One hundred forty Grovers travelled there from far and wide
To learn all about Washington [get insights from the inside]
These Grovers [and the Taras too] were here for serious stuff
To ponder pressing issues, one day hardly seemed enough

The fate of our Democracy, Security and Freedom for all
This is what we came to talk about, that's why meet in the fall
Our world is so chaotic, the risks growing every day
We couldn't wait, we had to learn, and do it right away!

Susan's opening remarks, as usual, most aptly set the stage
She laid out the agenda - we couldn't help but all engage
Life's become a complex journey, with more mazes in our way
And ever fewer road signs to be our guides along the way

Ambassador Rice, our UN guest, said Aid's our best defense
Preventing war beats winning one -- that sure seems to make sense
By being on the ground to help, we make friends out of foes
And we can assess most threats first hand, before they turn into woes
Strategic Foreign Assistance was the morning panel theme
We got the real insiders scoop [not what politics make things seem]
"We can't dictate to others," Nancy told us loud and clear
Instead we must empower, and not wield a club of fear

Rear Admiral Michelle Howard [yes, a woman at the navy's top!]
Confirmed that aid's a strategy, if we want to make threats to stop
Our armed forces are most powerful, and we must increase our might,
"But the best war," she advised us, "is the one that we don't fight!"

The morning flew by so quickly, conversations seemed barely started
When Mimi announced "the busses await...it's time we all departed!"
"Don't miss the bus, we leave on time, each D.C. minute is planned
And we're VIP guests, promptly at two, in the highest court in the land."

One hundred and forty Grovers moved...in just five minutes flat!
[For none of us was about to miss an inside tour like that]
Not only did we see the court, but in unprecedented grace
The Honorable Sonia Sotomayor met with us face to face

Supreme Court Justice Sonia, once a Grover, still a friend
Spoke candidly with us until well past when our time should end
She talked to us about writing her book, and about life in the Court

And about throwing out a Yankee baseball [she adores America's sport]

And she even made sure that we could take a group photo when we were done
[Though we were such a humongous hoard, we couldn't all fit in one]
And she shook our hands and bid farewell, and when it came time to part
We knew from the twinkle in her eye, she's a Grover still at heart

Even the most jaded of our group, felt privileged, and ever so blessed
And to stop right then would be enough...but for Grovers there is no rest
An inside tour of the Newseum was the next stop in our day
Where news elite told us in depth about journalism today

And we looked at media in the past, how reporters made us think
And just about when our feet gave out, it was time to have a drink
We were hosted at a cocktail hour where we drank rum punch with zest
And slipped right into party mode [that's what Grovers do the best]

And then a lovely dinner, where we had a chance to chat
Until Auctioneer Melanie rose to the stage, and put a quick end to that
"Ladies, Ladies," she cried, "it's time to bid!" [we've heard that line before]
But CIA agents stepped in this time, with a message we dare not ignore

Agent Judy and Agent Jenifer appeared with a threatening warning
We've all got to give, and we've got to give BIG...or they'll deal with us in the morning
Better donate today, they threatened, they demand BIG donations from all
Or an IRS audit for everyone...or worse, those two agents might call!

Those black coated agents meant business, and left us all frightened and shaking
But Frances Townsend's remarks were such sobering truth, that all of us really were quaking
We're at risk she confirmed, in most terrible ways, and while many threats have been averted
So many more loom, and they grow everyday, at best we can just be alerted

Judy Woodruff and panel confirmed our worst fears, it is not "if" they told us, but "when"
Yes a 9-11 scenario can reoccur, it really could happen again
Or a cyber attack, where the power grid goes, and our commerce is brought to its knees
Or a few dirty bombs in New York and DC, today's terrorists can do this with ease

Safe and secure are words of the past, China's hackers can wipe us out now
But instead of all coming together to act, our focus is still on the Dow
Or we're tied up in partisan politics, instead of working to secure our cities
And Homeland Security can't do its job, cause it's ruled by too many committees

We've run out of time, we've got to act now, we must avert such dire fate
We've got to stand up for tough action today, there is no more time to sit and wait
And the men who have lead us into this morass, to the mess we are facing in today
Had better move over for if we're to survive, it is WOMEN who must lead the way!

Grovers just can't sit still, when survival's at stake, we all must step up and take a lead
To help be prepared, bring bipartisan views, put results before politics and greed
We can insure the future, give terrorists pause, and help keep our homeland secure
And with sisters across the world, we can seek peace...and get closer than men have, for sure!

In just one DC day, we all opened our eyes, to the issues our nation is facing
And what ever we knew, we're so much wiser now, and we feel how that clock keeps on racing
We are powerful women, we can make a change, we can avert future disaster

And unlike the men who have failed in the past, we'll collaborate...and we'll work faster

Thank you Mimi and Sandy and all of our hosts, the fabulous Grovers D.C.

For bringing us inside the Beltway to learn, and giving us so much to see

In just one short day, we were challenged and stretched, and toured around to the max

And a shout out to Joan for the Sunday night party, which gave us some time to relax

You are all living proof that this Grove that we share, is a treasure that never stops giving

That together we really can remake the world, no matter where we are all living

And that Grovers go deep, and they always surprise, each sister will make us all wiser

[Yes, the wild gal you know from a beach in Belize, might be a security advisor!]

At the Holocaust Museum, we all were reminded, of the evil that people can do

But the Grove's a reminder of all of the good, of compassion, and friends tried and true

Of heart and of mind and of passion and joy, our sisterhood keeps growing stronger

And we'll all stick together, no matter what comes, for a zillion tomorrows...or longer

And so one more time Susan, we give you our thanks, for bringing the Grove to our lives

Be we chairmen or presidents, authors or stars, or retired grandmothers and wives

We are each something more, since the Grove's come along, and DC's proof we keep getting better

So on to the DR, and to the "Big Mo"... and a beach where I won't need my sweater!