



We left Delray at 5:17 am, and took an uneventful flight to DC. About the only worry was whether we could board with the box of poles for our banner (3 sticks) or would have to put it into baggage. When we got to the security checkpoint, they questioned the box's contents. I pointed to our tee shirts, with the March logo on them, and said it had poles for our banner for the march in Washington. They were very impressed, and let us get on with it. One officer said that she would like to join NOW, but was pro-life so she can't.

We took the Metro from the airport to the Archives. We had agreed to meet at this Metro stop, which was two

blocks from the Mall. We waited a long time for Katie Dvorak to appear; she was our leader. In the meantime, we enjoyed each others' company, the slowly growing recognition that there were going to be a hell of a lot of marchers, and the nuts and seeds I brought and was desperately trying to get rid of because they weighed a lot.

Katie showed up, but we lost Maria and Skip for awhile—not sure if it was for coffee, a pit stop, or both, but Starbucks was involved. Eventually, everyone got together and proceeded to walk to the mall. Because Gloria has to walk a bit slowly, several of us stayed back a bit with her. She was besides me when, trying to catch up with the rest, she suddenly went flying into the stubbly sidewalk. She got a nasty gash on her right forehead, and a bunch of scrapes on her right knee. By sheer luck, the woman behind her was an emergency room nurse, and Gloria was administered to immediately and professionally. For 3 hours after that, Jean walked hand in hand with Gloria, who didn't protest the assistance. We were all glad that she did not break any bones.

We continued to the Mall, which was covered with marchers. We signed in and received a small green stick on circle saying "Count Me In!" This enabled everyone to see at a glance if you had registered—and, since the head count relied on documented proof, anyone without the sticker was advised to sign in and get a sticker.

Time was spent standing, sitting, listening to speakers whose images loomed out of enormous screens, and nibbling on my endless supply of nuts and seeds. The speeches were supposed to stop at noon, but they seemed to go on way beyond that time. Then, speeches stopped and we started to walk. We walked along about 1/3 of the mall, almost to the beginning of the march, and decided to take a shortcut and join the march directly to our right, which cut out about 2/3 of the actual route. With Gloria's banged up knee, this seemed the wisest thing to do. I certainly didn't object to a shorter route.

We joined on the sidewalk of the march; the march itself was in the street, and barricades kept out bystanders on the sidewalk. Most of the bystanders were fellow marchers, coming at the wrong place, but some of them were pro-lifers who felt called upon to raise their voices. Go rain on your own parade! We had been told not to interact with them, and, of course, I didn't. Near us was a young woman who, as she marched along, argued with them and scolded them ("bitches" was one word she used). At first, I thought she shouldn't do that, since it was counter to policy, but then I thought—hell, they had no business there; certainly, they weren't trying to convince anyone, they were just trying to criticize. Outnumbered, the pro-lifers kept quiet.

The march ended where we had begun. With our banner held high by Joe Dvorak, Katie's father (taller and younger than most of us, so gratefully accepted as the bearer), we were able to stick together and, using cell phone, reconnect as needed. We found a bench and sat down—first Gloria, then others as more room on the bench became available. My nuts and seeds were beginning to disperse; my apple had been uncovered and eaten; my water was finished; and so, my load was much lighter.

Looking around, we found lots of cute tee shirts, posters and buttons, clever paper maché images, etc. One tee shirt said "Warning: President Bush is hazardous to women's health"

I chatted with Barbara Dvorak, Katie's mother. Asked if anyone else in her family was an activist, she said her husband's parents had been union organizers, but that Katie had not been familiar with them (or maybe with that aspect of their lives). I told her it could be genetic—my parents had been activists in the 1930s, but not since then; still, I have always been an activist. She said her 19 year old son is unenthusiastic about their activism, so I told David, with two official March buttons on his March tee shirt, to be sure to give their son a framed copy of a photo of him in that outfit. Spread the word!

The most exciting part of the march, for me, was the realization that at least half the people there were under 40, and about 20% were men. Several men commented on that—they had thought they were unique, and now see that they have much masculine company.

And the count, 1.1 million, was best of all—and, being there, I know that the count is probably accurate, within 200,000. (i.e. at least 900,000) I was in the March on Washington (1963) with 250,000 and this had a lot more.

Returning was mildly interesting. The line to the Metro was one block long, but went quickly, and the train was actually not crowded. However, we had to abandon our sticks at the security checkpoint. Gloria, less than 100 pounds, had to be specially searched because her artificial knee triggered the metal detector. However, the officer ended up getting a hug from her; she (the officer) said Gloria reminded her of her own 80 year old mother, and she wished her luck. The plane was filled, as it had been coming, and many were marchers.