

My

CHALLENGE

Experience

Christmas, 2007

Tammy and I (and Kilar) spent Christmas at Paul, Laura & Lilly's house. We were also happy to have Laura's brother Mark there also.



Santa hats were the order of the day – as well as a great time .

Of course, Lilly was the main attraction – and she really cleaned up on the presents.



Paul and Laura gave me an interesting gift. It contained 6 envelopes, a GPS navigator, a compass, a Rubik's cube, a computer thumb drive, a bank debit card for \$500 and some batteries. No explanation. No nothing.



Although my curiosity was killing me, I thanked Paul and Laura, set it aside, and continued enjoying the day – and Lilly.

The computer thumb drive contained 5 executable files entitled:

CHALLENGE 1

CHALLENGE 2

CHALLENGE 4

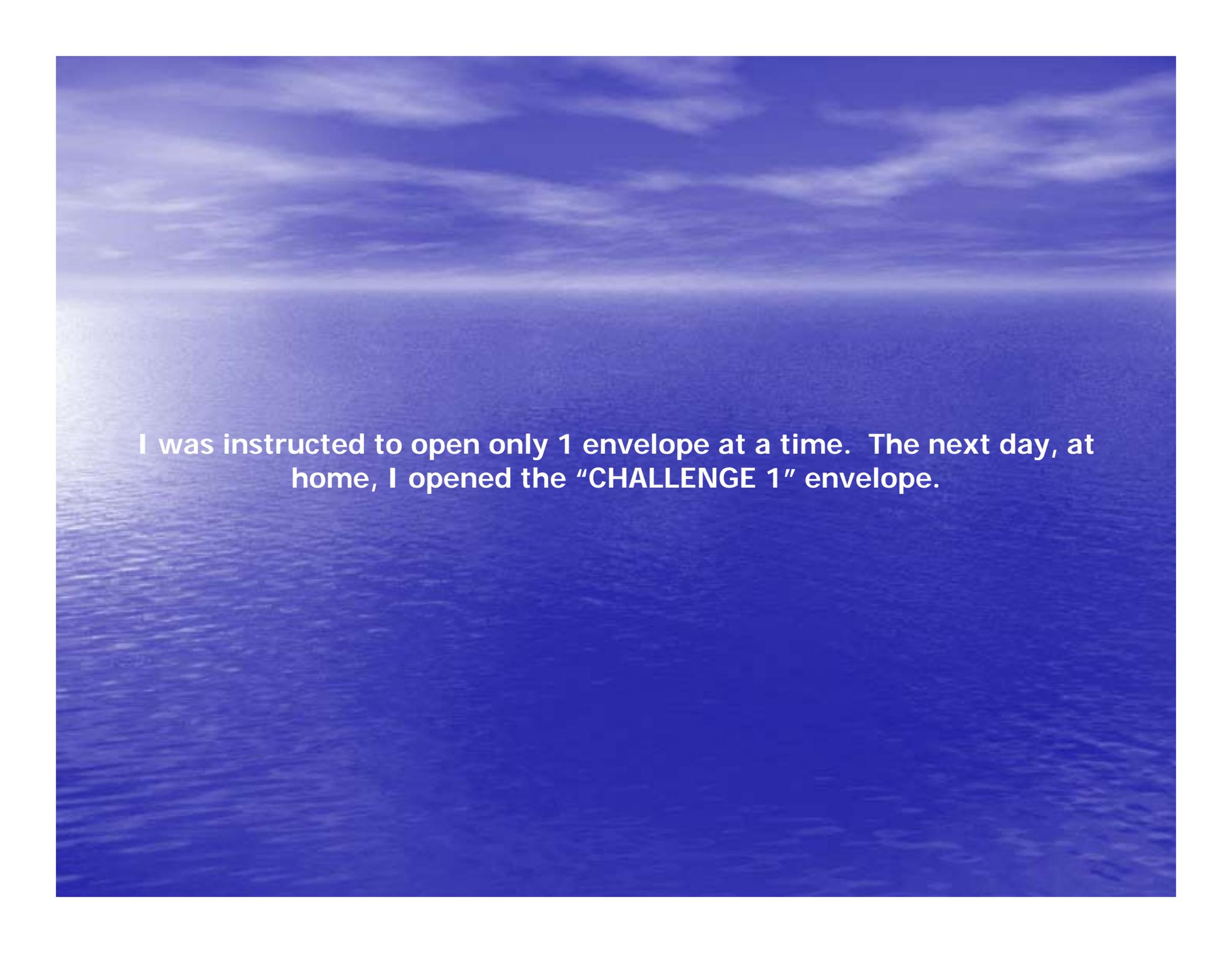
CHALLENGE 5

CHALLENGE 6

I thought I'd get an early insight into what this "CHALLENGE" thing was all about, so I attempted to open file "CHALLENGE 1".

NO LUCK

The files were password protected!

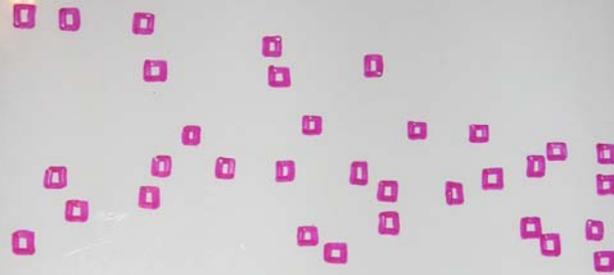
A blue-tinted photograph of a vast ocean under a cloudy sky. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

I was instructed to open only 1 envelope at a time. The next day, at home, I opened the "CHALLENGE 1" envelope.

The image features a blue gradient background that transitions from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom. A white double-line rectangular border is centered on the page, enclosing the text 'CHALLENGE 1'. The text is in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a slight drop shadow effect.

CHALLENGE 1

STVII OYRU OLLAC RBAILRY OT NBITAO
TNXE ELUC.
ENXT FO INK, LLWELD UNDSGI,
GAPE TEYNTW GITEH.
AERGHT CUB OF AEMLT OOBK
DUNER ZOABGE.



OT EOPN NA EYNDPRCET HVACREI
ENO NSDEE A PRSDOASW



Contents: A clear plastic sheet with apparent anagram clues and a bunch of scattered boxes.

The unscrambled anagram said:

visit your local library to obtain next clue.

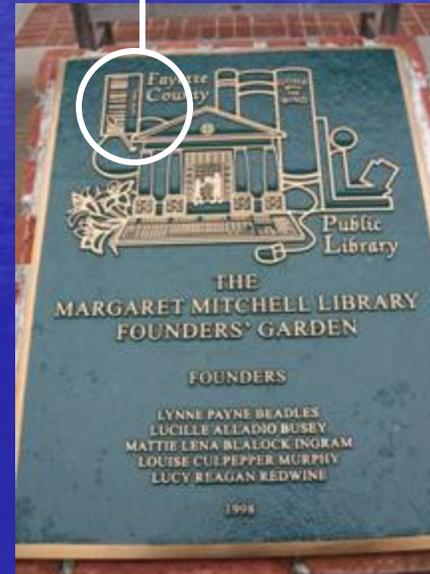
next of kin, lowell (gunsid???), page twenty eight.

gather upc of metal book under gazebo.

to open an encrypted archive one needs a password. *(Yeah, no kidding.)*

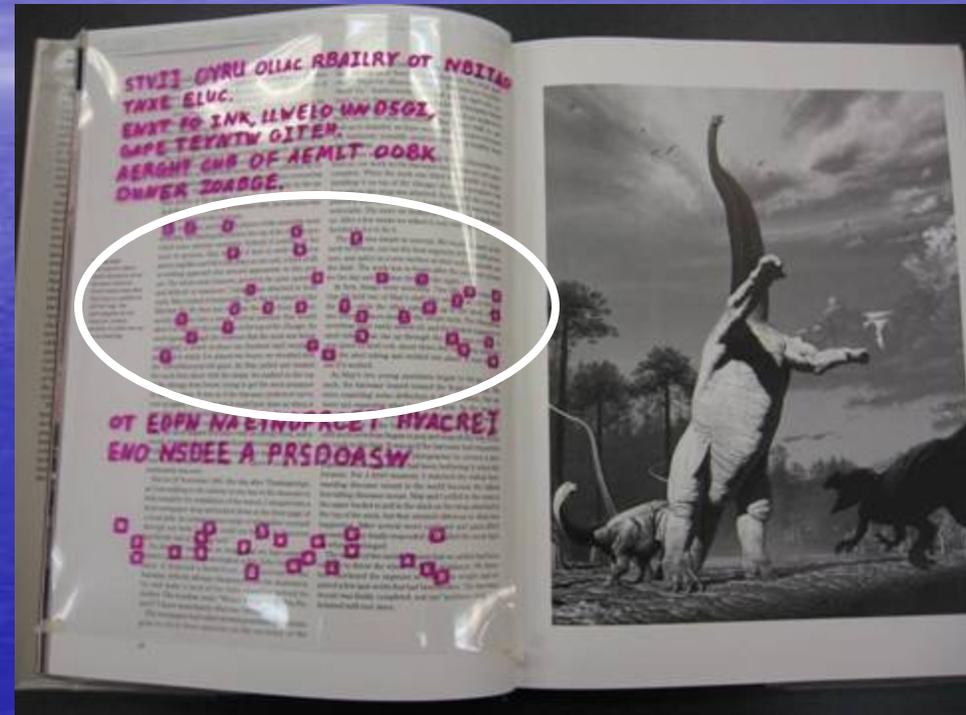
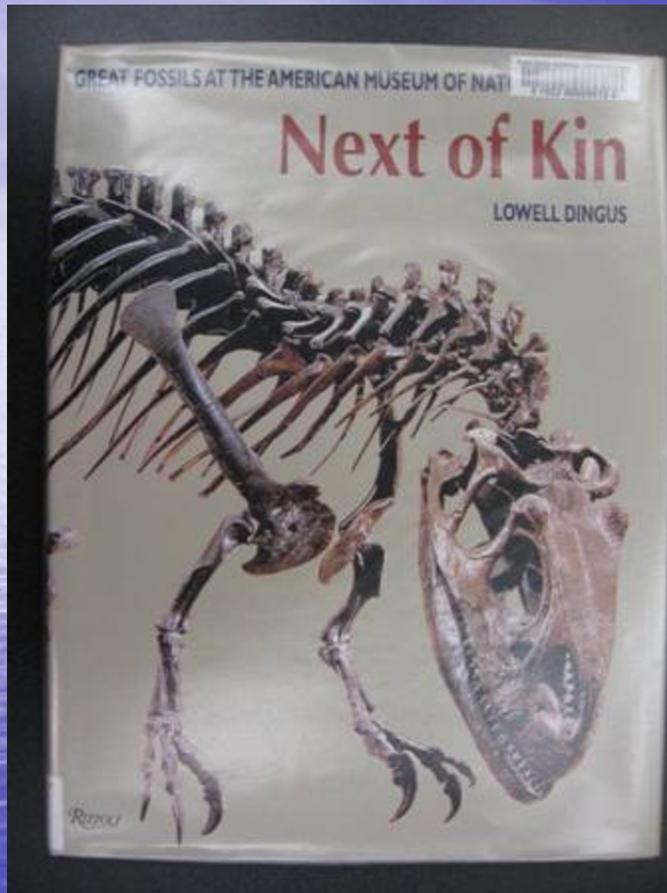
Without knowing exactly what I was going for, I headed for the Fayetteville library...

UPC of metal book at the library gazebo....



The UPC was obviously "18907001". What that meant, I DIDN'T KNOW.

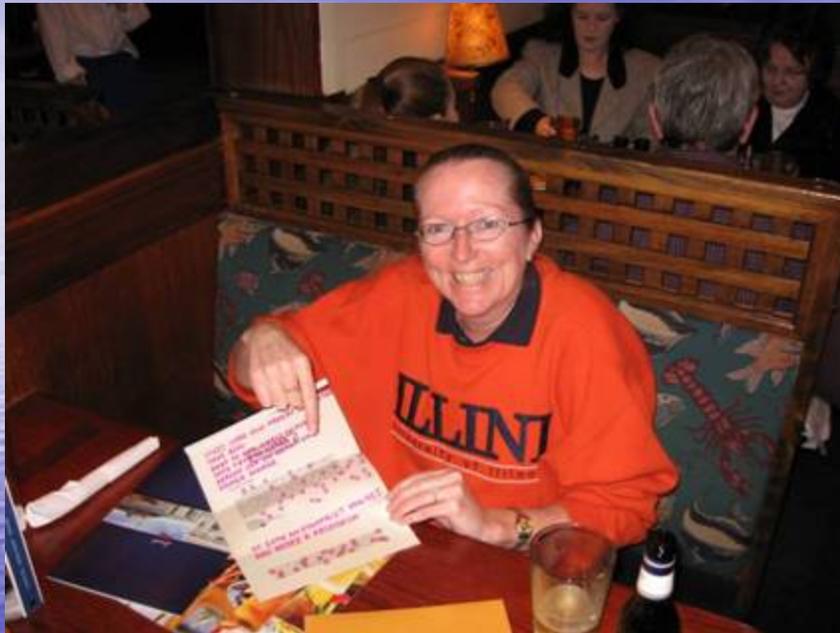
Next of kin, lowell (gunsid???), page twenty eight....



The top transparency boxes lined up on page 28 of the book "Next of Kin" by Lowell Dingus, and read:

The clue you seek resides with Georgene.

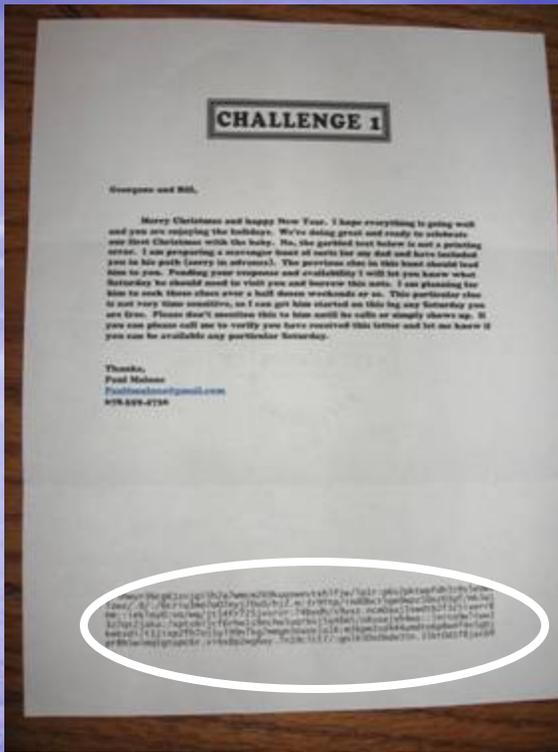
I called Georgene. We agreed to meet the next day at Red Lobster where she would provide me with the next clue (Paul had mailed it to her).



Georgene at Red Lobster with the new clue and transparency (even when she has the clue – she HAS NO CLUE)



Me at Red Lobster simultaneously attempting to solve the latest clue on the laptop and tempting the lobsters with my finger.



Georgene's clue. A bunch of garbled gibberish at the bottom.



Original transparency

When the original transparency was placed over Georgene's gibberish clue, the following message appeared:

The password is: upcmod13579

We tried using the password "upcmod13579" as the password to access the "CHALLENGE 1" file on the thumb drive.

NO LUCK

We were, of course, omitting the UPC number obtained at the library. Maybe substitute the upc number "18907001" obtained at the library for "upc" in the password – for a real password of:
"18907001mod13579"

NO LUCK

Although we were half way there with our attempt at substitution, two University of Illinois engineers couldn't see that the password clue (upcmod13579) was actually a mathematical equation. (It took a hint from Paul to set us down this trail). Once we viewed the password as a mathematical equation [(UPC) MOD (13579)], we (alright – Georgene) suggested that we enter the two numbers (18907001 and 13579) into the MOD function in Excel. The result of the mathematical function was "5033".

PROMISING...

When we used "5033" as the password, we gained admittance to the file and obtained the below sheet. It contained the picture of a building and driving directions to some location in downtown Atlanta.

CHALLENGE 1



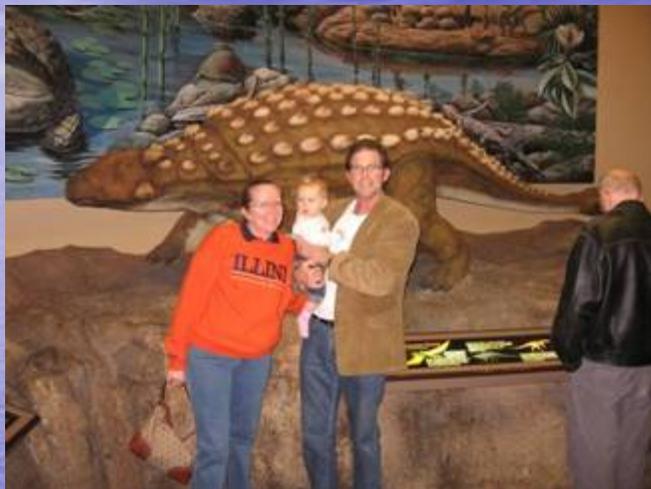
Go north on I-75/I-85 to downtown Atlanta. Take exit 248C Freedom Parkway (GA 10 East). Go 1.7 miles to Ponce de Leon Avenue and turn right. Go 1.7 miles to Clifton Road and turn left. Go 1/10 mile to the entrance and turn right.

man in front apparently looking for someone. Thinking he may be one of Paul's cohorts, I approached him and said; "Looking for someone?" Taking a half step backward, with eyes darting about - apparently anxiously looking for an escape route or for a weapon to defend himself, he said; "I'm just waiting for someone." Moments later we spied Paul, Laura and Lilly!

We braved the Atlanta traffic and, with Georgene as the navigator, followed the driving directions. The final destination was the Fernbank Museum of Natural History. We parked and went inside the lobby – looking for something that we might recognize as the next clue.

After several minutes of nothing, Georgene noticed a

What a treat! I used the debit card to obtain museum tickets and the five of us spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying the museum exhibits. Lilly was excellent all day long – and I got to carry her most of the time!!



The background is a smooth blue gradient, transitioning from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom. A white double-line rectangular border is centered on the page, enclosing the text.

CHALLENGE 2

CHALLENGE 2

					2		8
9	2			4			
			2	8		7	1
	3	6					
			7		9		
						6	4
8	6		4	1			
			9			2	7
2		9					

C6B3
C1F1
A9G8
I3C2
D1
G7
D2F7
B9H1
T

D9
H5E7
H8A4
G2
E6
B9I4

F4D2
F3A1
G3
H7
G8A7
H5

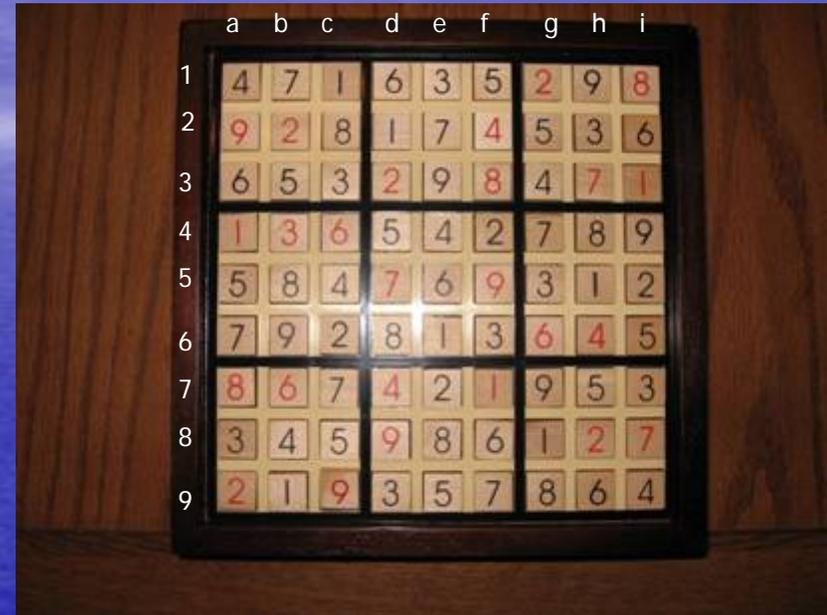
E6A2
T
F7I6
C1I6
D4
A4
T

T
F3
I6
G8B7
F7B1
C1E4
I9

Contents: A Sudoku puzzle with alpha-numeric characters below.



After FOUR HOURS of trying to unsuccessfully solve the Sudoku puzzle I decided to see if the web could offer me any assistance – before I wrought any permanent damage to the nice wooden Sudoku board that Tammy had given me for Christmas.



The web solved the puzzle in 0.4 seconds.

By converting the alpha-numeric on the bottom of the clue sheet to numbers from the completed Sudoku grid, and then converting those numbers to a letter using the A=1, B=2, C=3... format, the following message appeared:

**YOUR FIRST CLUE IS UNDER A STONE
AT THE POND**

It was off to the backyard pond....



The backyard pond (with the rock removed from atop the clue)



Under a rock, a baby food jar with a small slip of paper that said "CHALLENGE 2"



On the reverse of the small piece of paper was the word "fishes".

Some clue! Where should "fishes" guide me?....



Inside the pond... (I would have thought that Paul would use "frogs" if he was directing me into the pond, but I tried anyway.) Although this is Atlanta, the water's still pretty cold in late December!

NO LUCK



The fishes mobile over Lilly's crib... I was sure this was it. I inspected every inch of every fish for a clue. I even searched Lilly's entire crib.

NO LUCK



A fishes puzzle on the puzzle wall
of the downstairs den...

NO LUCK



Fishes on the various hand soap
dispensers throughout the
house...

NO LUCK



A half-discarded fishes flower pot in the back yard...

NO LUCK

I spent a day and a half searching the entire house – upstairs and down – inside and out - with the word “fishes” on the tip of my tongue, looking for anything that might look like a clue...

NO LUCK

I finally thought that maybe “fishes” was actually the password for the encrypted “CHALLENGE 2” file. Nah, Paul’s too sadistic for that. But I searched the entire house and yard several times over and came up with nothing. Maybe it’s worth a try...

Sure 'nuff – it was the password! The following sheet was obtained:

CHALLENGE 2

		9			1		
		4		3			
			5	6	7		3
						1	7
8		1			2		4
2	9						
	7		3	5	1		
				4		6	
		8				9	

Your next clue starts at:

N $\frac{A9}{A9} \frac{I9}{I9} \circ \frac{B4}{B4} \frac{C8}{C8} \cdot \frac{F6}{F6} \frac{E4}{E4} \frac{F1}{F1}$

W $\frac{H6}{H6} \frac{D6}{D6} \circ \frac{F4}{F4} \frac{C4}{C4} \cdot \frac{I6}{I6} \frac{B9}{B9} \frac{I1}{I1}$

Then walk:

124, 125, 132, 134, 137, 139, 150, 152, 155, 157, 170, 173, 176

Another Sudoku puzzle (I told you Paul was sadistic!). This time with apparent lat./long. information and some kind of weird walking directions.



The completed second Sudoku puzzle. I only spent 3 hours unsuccessfully trying to complete it this time - before I went to the web. *(It's not cheating - it's an intelligent use of available resources!)*

A similar alpha-numeric to number conversion using the second completed Sudoku grid provided coordinates of:

N 33° 45.594'
W 84° 23.615'

The coordinates put us in the middle of Centennial Olympic Park:



Tammy and I set out for the park. Hopefully, the walking directions code will become apparent to us when we get there...

Then walk:

124, 125, 132, 134, 137, 139, 150, 152, 155, 157, 170, 173,
176

The walking instructions did become apparent when we got to the coordinates!



They were concrete marker numbers in the brick walkway identifying the Section number of the brick paths (to aid in finding a particular engraved brick). We followed the sequence of Section numbers until it led us to the edge of the park, right across the street from the Georgia Aquarium - where we spied Paul, Laura and Lilly.



While at the Centennial Park we looked up the "1995 Malone Family Reunion" walkway brick that Georgene had obtained in Section 26.

I used the debit card to purchase tickets (I got the senior's discount) and spent a delightful day at the Aquarium.





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CHALLENGE 3

CHALLENGE 3

PRKKNIR2Q. QXYNO4UU8 3QR2 3N73 6XW3 341W RW3X PRKKNIR2Q O1XV
 KNRWP 2X LXUM. OX1 3QN WN73 UNP XO 8X41 JM5NW341N 8X4 6RUU QJ5N
 3X SX41WN8 3X LNW3NWWRJU YJ1T. 3QN LXX1MRNJ3N2 XO 8X41 ORWJU
 MN23RWJ3RXW J1N UR23NM KNUX6, K43 3X QRMN R32 UXLJ3RXW O1XV
 X3QN12 R3 QJ2 KNNW NWLXMNM. R QRM 3QN L8YQN1 RW 8X41 LXTN
 O1NN9N1. 3QN L8YQN1 2QX4UM QNUY 8X4 MNLXMN 3QN ORWJU
 MN23RWJ3RXW, K43 R OX1PXT 2XVN XO 3QN LXX1MRWJ3N2. QXYNO4UU8
 8X4 LJW ORP41N R3 X43. PRKKNIR2Q, MRM R3 341W RW3X PRKKNIR2Q?

Final Destination:

$N(\square + \blacktriangle)^{\circ}(\square + \heartsuit + \odot + \blacktriangle) \cdot (1000 - (\heartsuit + \square + \heartsuit + \odot + \clubsuit + \blacktriangle))$

$W(\square + \heartsuit + \odot)^{\circ}(\heartsuit + \odot + \clubsuit + \blacktriangle) \cdot (800 - (\heartsuit + \square + \blacktriangle))$



Contents: A sheet with letters and numbers making no sense at all, with a "Final Destination:" coordinate at the bottom making even less sense. Also included: A wheel with a spinning inner wheel with numbers and letters on it.

After many false starts and much spinning of the wheel, I discovered that when the letter "T" of the outer wheel lined up with the number "3" of the inner wheel, a sensible correlation between the gibberish on the page and what even Paul would consider reasonable English – appeared. Letter by letter the scrambled letters/numbers was decoded as:

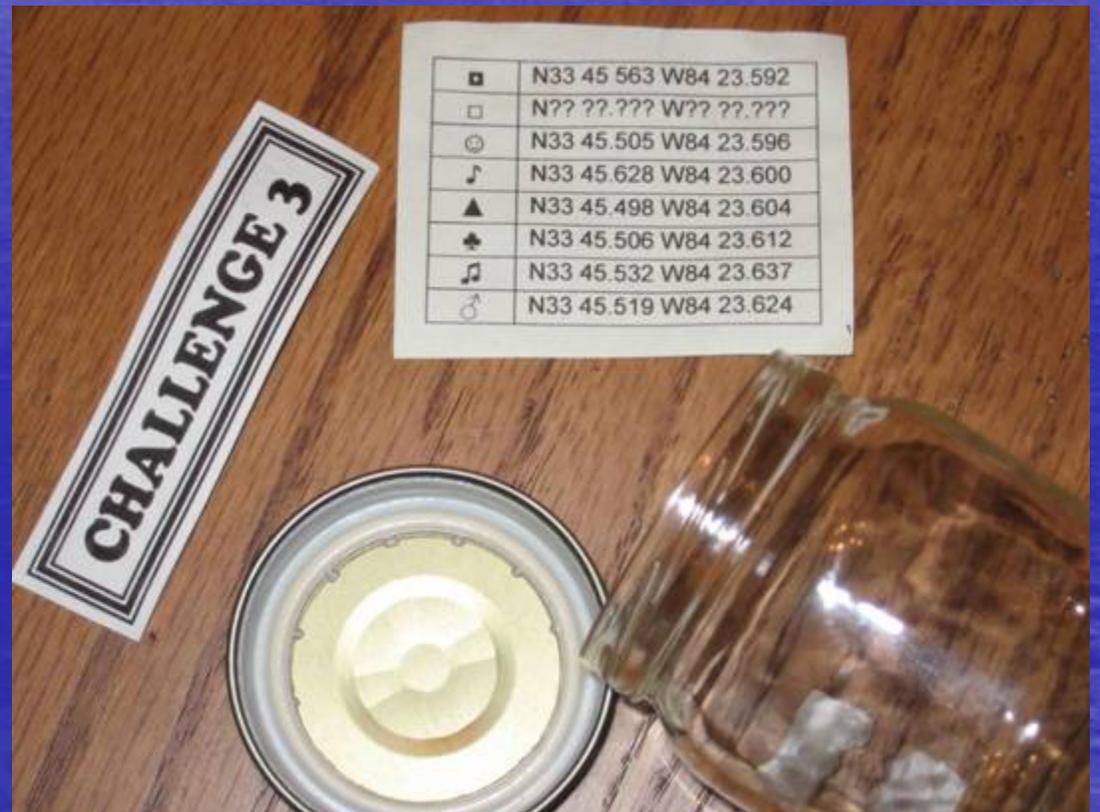
Gibberish. Hopefully this text won't turn into gibberish from being too cold. For the next leg of your adventure you will have to journey to Centennial Park. The coordinates of your final destination are listed below, but to hide its location from others it has been encoded. I hid the cypher in your coke freezer. The cypher should help you decode the final destination, but I forgot one of the coordinates. Hopefully you can figure it out. Gibberish, did it turn into gibberish?

I went to the garage refrigerator where we keep soft drinks. In the freezer section (which needs defrosting, by the way) was a baby jar labeled "Challenge 3"...



Inside the baby jar was a small piece of paper that assigned a coordinate to all but one of the symbols used in the "Final Destination" cypher.

Solving for the "Final Destination" is not going to be as straight-forward as I thought it might be...



After a lot (probably too much) of mathematical thought and manipulation (*I felt I had to make up for my slight mathematical short-coming in CHALLENGE 1*), I finally decided that since the original clue mentioned going to the Olympic Centennial Park, I might go to the park - specifically to the coordinates assigned to each of the symbols (*all of the coordinates are fairly close together – probably all within the park*) and see if, when I get there, the location somehow correlates with a specific number.

Maybe they might direct me to specific concrete Section walkway marker numbers that I discovered in Challenge 2!

It's probably worth a try. Mathematics certainly ain't gettin' me nowhere!

It's off to the Olympic Centennial Park in downtown Atlanta – with my GPS tracker – and Georgene - in hand...

George_____

As I see it: (□ + ▲) has to equal 33

(■ + 🎵 + 😊) has to equal 84

(□ + ♂ + 😊 + ▲) has to equal 45

(🎵 + 😊 + ♣ + ▲) has to equal 23

Because the Final Coordinate has to be: N 33⁰ 45 (+ some decimal fraction)'
W 84⁰ 23 (+ some decimal fraction)'

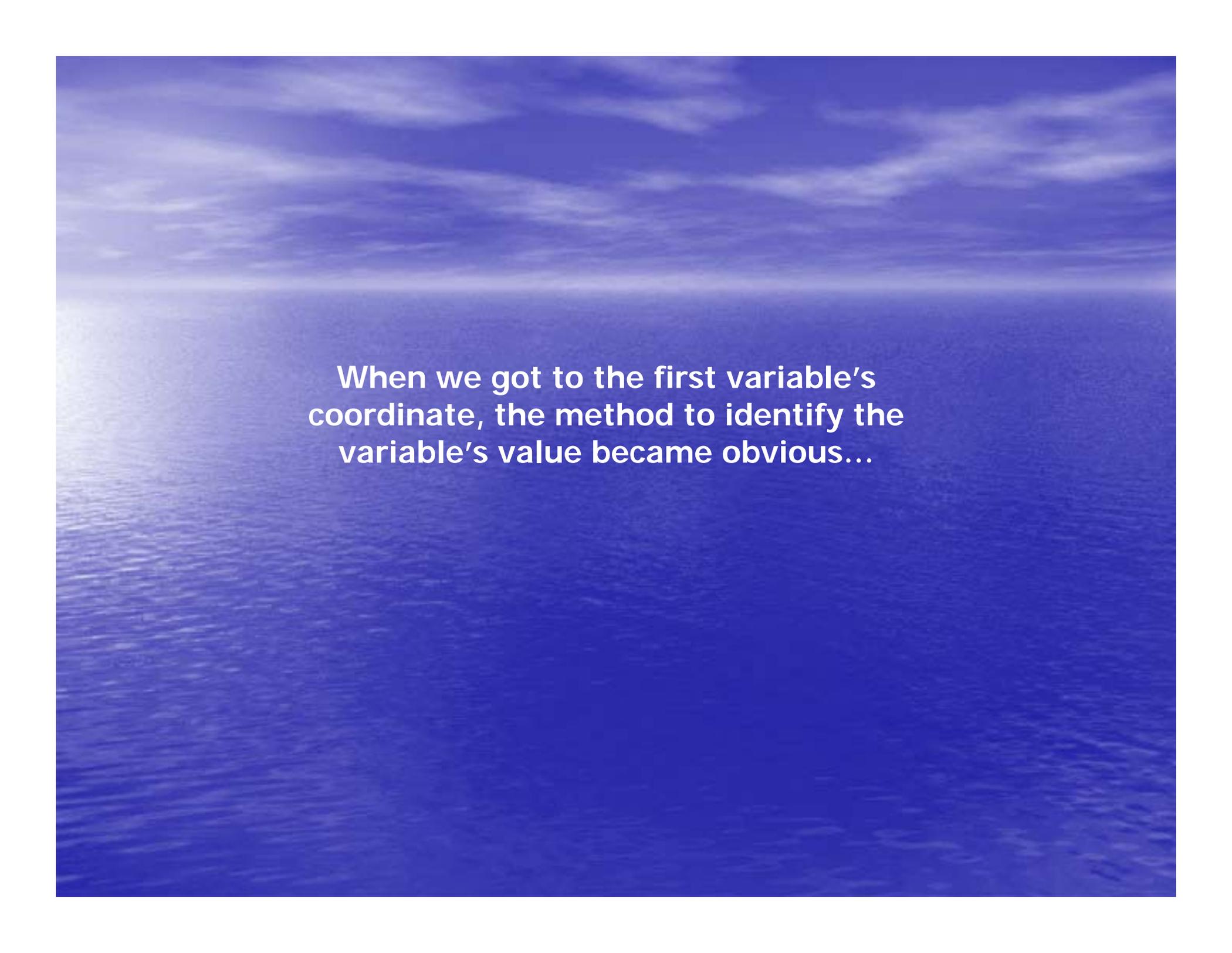
All the symbols must somehow convert to a single number, probably an integer, because of the "(1000 -)" and "(800 -)" portions of the equations.

Or not.....?

Any ideas??

I sent this sheet to Georgene to see if she could help me solve for the variables and for the "Final Destination" coordinates.

I told you I put too much mathematical thought into this.

A blue-tinted photograph of a vast ocean under a cloudy sky. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

**When we got to the first variable's
coordinate, the method to identify the
variable's value became obvious...**

SYMB.

COORD.

MARKER (Value)



N33 45.563'
W84 23.592'



N33 45.505'
W84 23.596'



N33 45.628'
W84 23.600'



N33 45.498
W84 23.604'



N33 45.506'
W84 23.612'



N33 45.532'
W84 23.637'



N33 45.519'
W84 23.624'



Since, if the final destination is in the Atlanta area, the latitude must be N33°. Therefore, □ + ▲ must equal 33. Since ▲ is 1, then □ is 32.

Using the Final Destination equation...

$$N(\square + \blacktriangle)^\circ (\square + \text{♂} + \text{😊} + \blacktriangle) \cdot ((1,000 - (\text{🎵} + \text{🎵} + \text{😊} + \text{♣} + \blacktriangle)))'$$

$$W(\text{🎵} + \text{😊})^\circ (\text{🎵} + \text{😊} + \text{♣} + \blacktriangle) \cdot ((800 - (\text{🎵} + \text{🎵} + \blacktriangle)))'$$

And plugging in the symbol values into the Final Destination cypher yields...

$$N(32 + 1)^\circ (32 + 8 + 4 + 1) \cdot (1,000 - (121 + 16 + 4 + 2 + 1))'$$

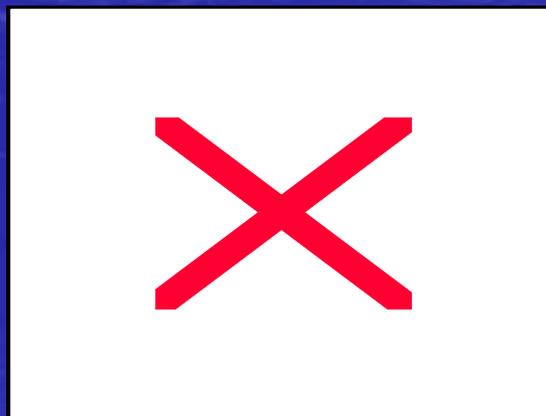
$$W(64 + 16 + 4)^\circ (16 + 4 + 2 + 1) \cdot (800 - (121 + 64 + 1))'$$

For Final Destination Coordinates of...

$$N33^\circ 45.856' \quad W84^\circ 23.614'$$

These Final Destination coordinates put us at the World of Coca Cola Museum just north of the Olympic Centennial Park.

There we met up with Paul, Laura and Lilly and went through the museum. We got our fill of coke and different Coke drinks from around the world.



The image features a blue gradient background that transitions from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom. A white double-line rectangular border is centered on the page, enclosing the text 'CHALLENGE 4'. The text is in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

CHALLENGE 4

CHALLENGE 4

Go directly to Piedmont Park, do not pass go, do not collect two hundred dollars. Match the inscriptions with the coordinates to get the password of the encrypted file for your next clue. Don't forget your locked box or your computer.

Head North on I-75/I-85
 Take **exit 250** toward Georgia Tech/Tenth St/Fourteenth St
 Merge onto **Williams St NW (377ft)**
 Turn **Right** at **10th St NW (1mi)**

Parking as well as the traffic can be quite poor. You should see Piedmont Park on your left on Tenth Street and eventually the Grady High parking lot on your right toward the end of the park. Park wherever you can near the park.

TOM "ZIP" MADDEN-JONES EVER SOARING, EVER DARING FREE AT LAST	0
IN VERY SPECIAL APPRECIATION TO JOHN IZARD FOR EXTROIDINARY LEADERSHIP FROM THE PPC STAFF 2006	1
IN MEMORY OF PAUL B. DARROW 1948-2005	2
MAYORS MEMORY GROVE ATLANTA PLANTED AND DEDICATED BY THE ATLANTA WOMENS CLUB FEBRUARY 1925	3
IN CELEBRATION OF THE 100 TH ANNIVERSARY OF PIEDMONT PARK THE COCA-COLA COMPANY AND DELTA AIRLINES OCTOBER 2, 2004, HANDS ON ATLANTA DAY	4
ELIZABETH AND CARLY I LOVE YOU DADDY	5
TO KALIE WHEN I'M WITH YOU, THE SUN SHINES BRIGHTER	6
GIVEN IN HONOR OF SARAH KENAN KENNEDY BY THE LANDMARK LUNCH LADIES	7
DONATED BY THE ATLANTA TRACK CLUB	8
PIEDMONT DRIVING CLUB DONATES THIS BENCH TO PIEDMONT PARK FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE 100 TH ANNIVERSARY	9

The password is:

—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
N33° 47.085' W84° 22.460'	N33° 47.164' W84° 22.225'	N33° 46.955' W84° 22.397'	N33° 47.164' W84° 22.493'	N33° 47.018' W84° 22.585'	N33° 47.082' W84° 22.487'	N33° 47.075' W84° 22.540'	N33° 47.043' W84° 22.635'	N33° 47.111' W84° 22.478'	N33° 47.169' W84° 22.554'

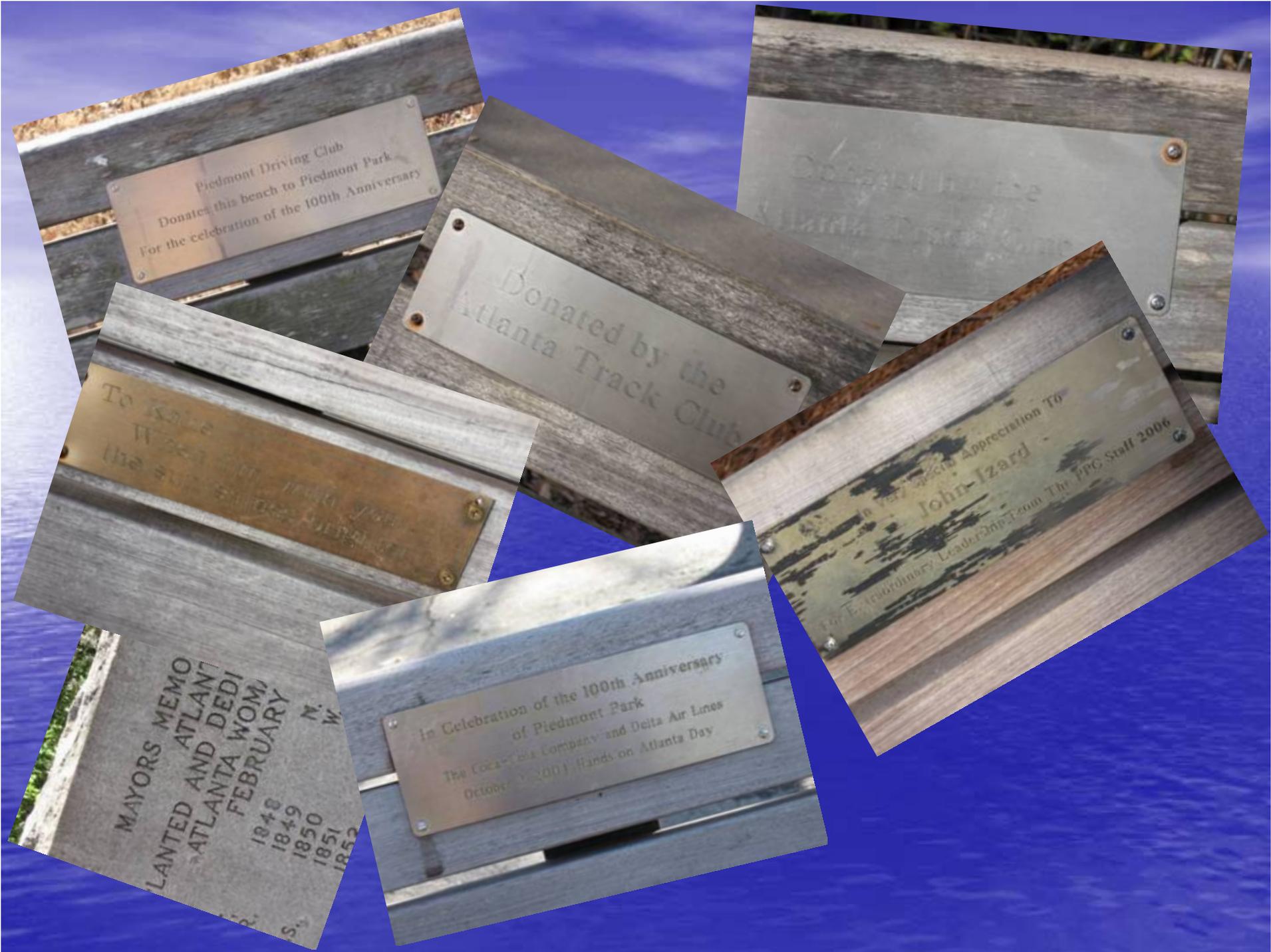
Contents: (above) Instructions to go to Piedmont Park to match (on right) the inscriptions with the coordinates on the bottom of the page to get the password for the next clue. It reminded me to bring along my laptop computer and the "locked box".

It was off (with Tammy in tow) to Piedmont Park in downtown Atlanta....

It was a beautiful, sunny, January day. In the 60's. I had a great time traversing the park (it was quite large – with two small lakes). Tammy enjoyed watching all the people in the park (mostly their dogs).

I used the GPS navigator to one by one locate the coordinates given. Once at the coordinate, I looked for something that resembled the given inscriptions. Low and behold, once I got to a coordinate the “inscription” was obvious. It was a dedication inscription on a park bench, swing or a fountain.





Piedmont Driving Club
Donates this bench to Piedmont Park
For the celebration of the 100th Anniversary

Donated by the
Atlanta Track Club

Donated by the
Atlanta Track Club

To Kalle
W...
the...

In Appreciation To
John-Izard
For Extraordinary Leadership From The IPC Staff 2006

MAYORS MEMO
LANTED AND ATLANT
ATLANTA WOM
FEBRUARY
1848
1849
1850
1851
1852
M. W.
S.

In Celebration of the 100th Anniversary
of Piedmont Park
The Coca-Cola Company and Delta Air Lines
October 3, 2001 Hands on Atlanta Day

Once I matched up all the coordinates with the number associated with each inscription, I arrived at the password:

4091856732

When I entered the password for the encrypted Challenge 4 file, the following appeared. It instructed us to proceed to the High Museum of Art for additional clues.

CHALLENGE 4

You have to gather a few more clues before you can leave downtown. Your next destination is the High Museum of Art. There you will gather the rest of the needed clues to open the locked box you have with you. I would drive opposed to walk, but it is only 1.2 miles away depending where you parked. Head west on 10th street back toward I-85. Take a right on Peachtree St NE. The museum should be on your left. You can usually find parking on 16th street. Though you are not required to purchase a ticket to the museum to gather the clues, you may want to if you have the time.

High Museum of Art
1280 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

The first number of the combination is the age of the sculpter of The Shade minus fifty-two. (N33°47.388 W84°23.108)

The second number of the combination is in the title of the yard art shown in the picture. (N33°47.428 W84°23.113)

The third number of the combination is the span between dedications of the First Presbyterian Church minus forty-eight. (N33°47.447 W84°23.125)



The clues were to find the combination of the “locked box”:

The first number of the combination is the age of the sculptor of the Shade minus fifty two.

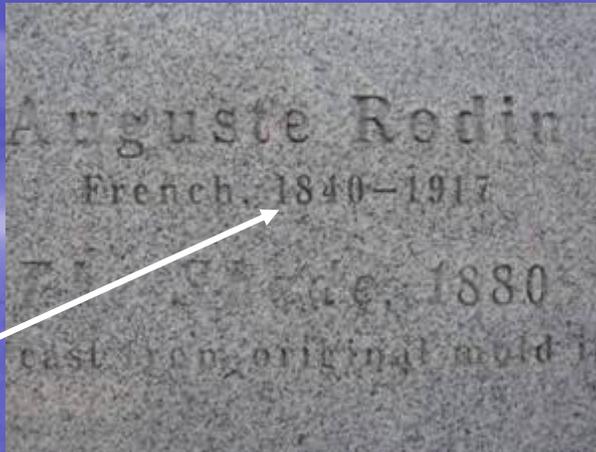


The second number of the combination is in the title of the yard art shown in the picture.



The third number of the combination is the span between dedications of the First Presbyterian Church minus forty eight.

The first number of the combination is the age of the sculptor of The Shade minus fifty two...



*The first # was
1917 - 1840 - 52
= 25*

The second number of the combination is in the title of the yard art...



*The second
was
3*

The third number of the combination is the span between dedications of the First Presbyterian Church minus forty eight...

The church was immediately beside the High Museum of Art...



The third # was $1996 - 1919 - 48 = 29$

After finding the information at the High Museum of Arts, and after a few math calculations, I discovered the combination to the “locked box” to be...

25 – 03 - 29

I still didn't exactly know what to do with this. The original directions reminded me to bring the computer and “locked box” with me to Piedmont Park. I thought the “locked box” referred to the computer thumb drive with the encrypted (locked) files on it. This is where Tammy's complicity in this part of the Challenge arose. She directed me to a “locked box” hidden in the back of the car...



It was a suitcase locked with a combination lock.

I used the newly obtained combination to open the lock. In the "locked box" were dress clothes (slacks, shirt, socks & shoes, sport jacket and a dress) and the following directions:

Peachtree St NE
Drive: 10.5 mi – about 17 mins

1. Head southeast on Peachtree St NE toward 15th St NE	0.2 mi
→ 2. Turn right at 14th St NE	0.4 mi 3 mins
→ 3. Turn right at Williams St NW	0.2 mi 1 min
4. Take the ramp onto I-75 N	7.3 mi 9 mins
5. Take exit 258 for Cumberland Blvd	0.5 mi 1 min
→ 6. Turn right at Cumberland Blvd SE	0.5 mi 1 min
→ 7. Slight right at Akers Mill Rd SE	1.0 mi 2 mins
→ 8. Slight right at Powers Ferry Rd SE	0.4 mi

6700 Powers Ferry Rd NW
Atlanta, GA 30327

These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, or other events may cause road conditions to differ from the map results.

Map data ©2007 NAVTEQ™, Sanborn

Overview

Map data ©2007 NAVTEQ™, Sanborn

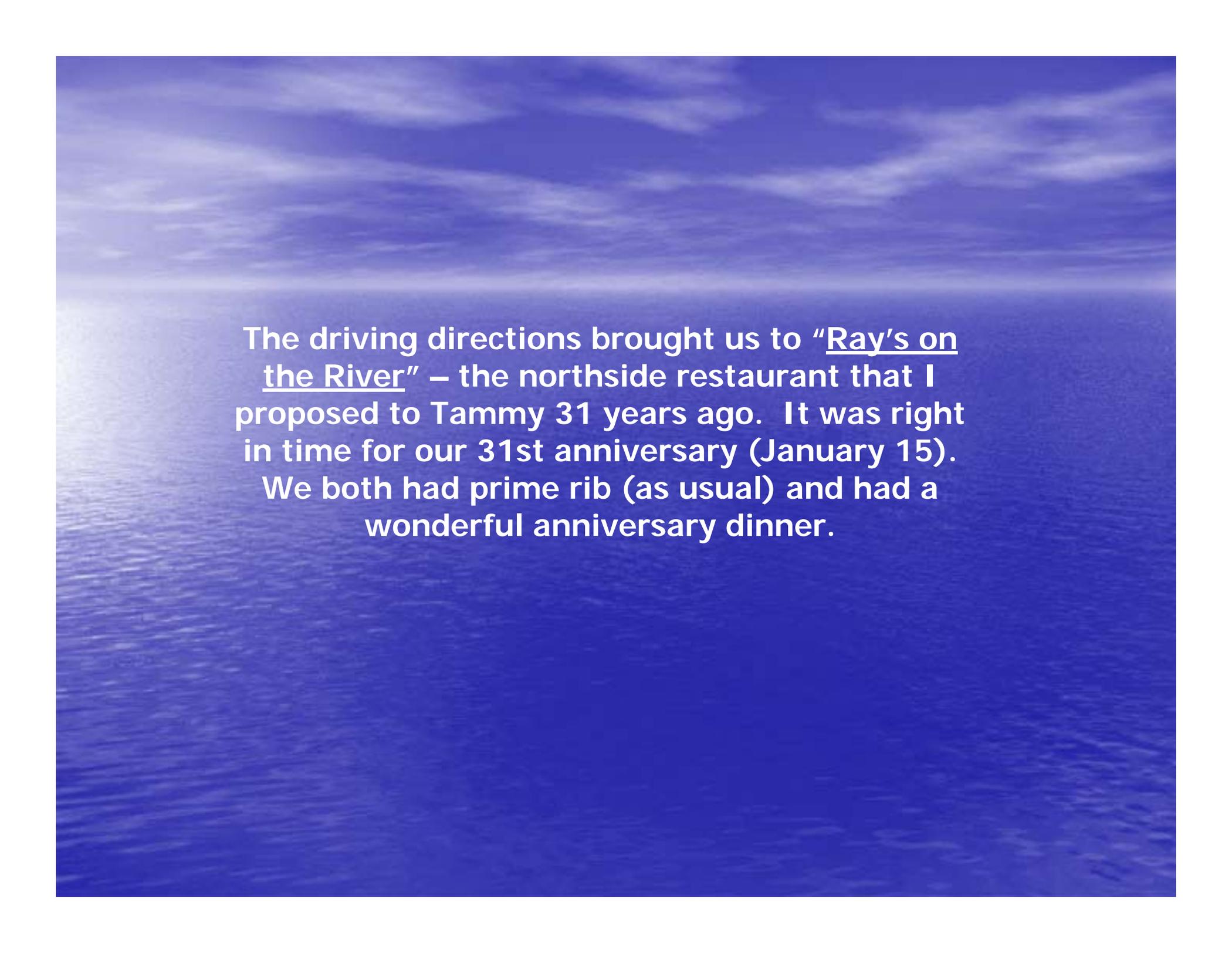
Start

Map data ©2007 NAVTEQ™, Sanborn

End

Map data ©2007 NAVTEQ™, Sanborn

After briefly arguing over who was going to get to wear the dress, we changed clothes and proceeded to follow the directions...



The driving directions brought us to "Ray's on the River" – the northside restaurant that I proposed to Tammy 31 years ago. It was right in time for our 31st anniversary (January 15). We both had prime rib (as usual) and had a wonderful anniversary dinner.

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CHALLENGE 5

CHALLENGE 5

An encrypted file with your next clue is on your thumbdrive. The password is found by solving the Rubik's cube and sequencing the letters on the facelets in the order shown below. Good luck.



Contents: Designated facelets on the completed Rubik's cube that gives the password to the encrypted CHALLENGE 5 computer thumb drive file.



Completed Rubik's cube

(I needed the help of a Rubik's cube solution web page to successfully solve the cube)

The password was: 417534673353

Using the password, the following page was obtained:

CHALLENGE 5

Make your way to Centennial Park; directions are provided. Use your GPS to walk to

N33°25.093
W84°27.237

From there follow the numbers.

104,103,102,101,111,110,109,108,98,97,87,86,79,73,74,64,65,55,45,35,27,26,13,9,6,4,3,2

Continue Southwest across road.

Enter building designated 190.

Ten paces beyond the top of the left set of stairs lies a map to the left.

Final Destination is designated by "265" on that map.

It was directions to go to a specific coordinate in Olympic Centennial Park - and then some cryptic walking directions (similar to CHALLENGE 2??). Then to proceed to building "190" and then to location "265" on some map in "building 190".

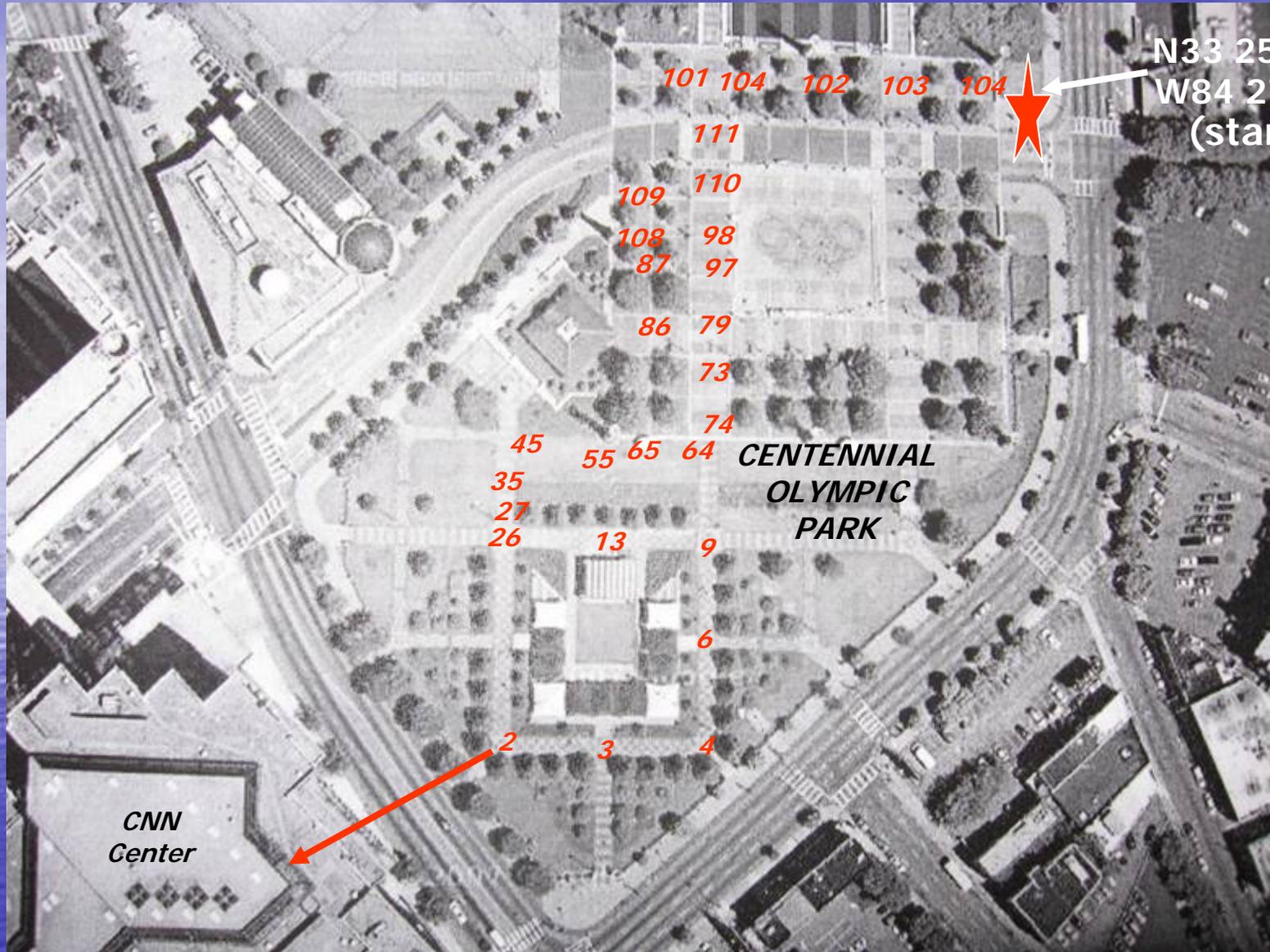
It was off to Olympic Centennial Park...

It was a cold January day – about 20⁰. It had snowed last night and there was still some snow on the ground.



When I got to the given coordinates at the Olympic Park, the walking numbers made sense. They were Section numbers in the brick walkway....





The Section markers led me through the entire park.

After following all the Section markers to the end (#2), I was at the edge of the park – directly across the street from the CNN Center (address 190). Following the directions I went up the left stairs and spied a directory map. The final destination (#265) was Jock's and Jill's sports bar/restaurant where Paul and Laura were waiting with three tickets to the Atlanta Thrashers Hockey game that day at 2:00 pm. We had lunch at Jock's and Jill's and went to the Thrasher's game in Phillip's Arena (adjacent to CNN Center). The Thrashers lost, 4 – 1, in true Atlanta sports tradition.



190





The image features a blue gradient background that transitions from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom. A white double-line rectangular border is centered on the page, enclosing the text 'CHALLENGE 6'. The text is in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a slight drop shadow effect.

CHALLENGE 6

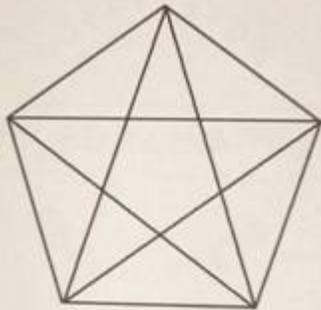
CHALLENGE 6

The password to your next clue encrypted on your thumb drive is in the hollow of a tree at the GPS coordinates below. To keep it secret I encoded it using the following riddles.

Clue in hollow of tree: $N\alpha^* \beta, \gamma W5^* \epsilon, \eta$

α = The number of triangles in the following figure minus two.

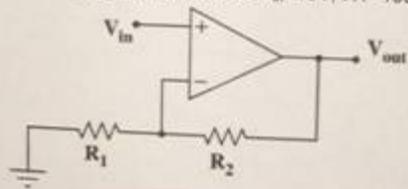
= 33



β = The number worn by Barry Bonds.

= 25

γ = V_{out} of this standard non-inverting amplifier, where $V_{in}=15V$, $R_1=100\Omega$, $R_2=640\Omega$



= 111

δ = Atomic number of Polonium

= 84

ϵ = Number of books in the New Testament

= 27

$$\eta = \sum_{k=16}^{21} (K - 10)^2$$

= 451

Contents: The sheet at left.

It directed me to the next clue in a hollow tree, but the coordinates of the tree are encoded by several riddles/problems.

The answers to the problems are inserted in red.

(I had problems with variable 'y'. It seems that Paul mistakenly believes that people other than Electrical/Electronic engineers care anything about "non-inverting amplifiers". I gave the problem to Georgene who had one of her Electronic Engineer flunkies at work solve it for me.)

Plugging the variable numbers into the coordinate equation gave me the coordinates of the hollow tree:

N33° 25.111' W84° 27.451'

The coordinates led me to the clubhouse area of our Royal Ridge subdivision where I spied a hollow tree...



Inside the hollow tree, and under some leaves, was a baby jar with a slip of paper that said "CHALLENGE 6".

On the reverse side of the slip of paper was the word "monkeys".



"monkeys"... The only thing I could think of was Lilly – the way she just recently started to crawl about and climb over everything. But then I remembered the day and a half I spent in CHALLENGE 2 looking for "fishes"...

I saved a day and a half this time. "monkeys" was the password to the CHALLENGE 6 encrypted thumb drive file that yielded:

CHALLENGE 6

Your next stash is hidden within the picture below. Your job is to find out where this is and where the stash is hidden. Drive up GA-85 using your GPS for when to turn off. You will not go as far as Riverdale before you should turn to reach the following coordinate.

N33 28.907 W84 26.176



A picture (of something, somewhere) that was hiding the next clue. Also included was a coordinate.

I entered the coordinate in my GPS tracker and found that the location of the coordinate was about 4.6 miles north of the house. I got in my car and headed north...

The GPS led me to a parking lot immediately in front of the Fayetteville Pet Smart store.



Inside the Pet Smart store I found the spot from which the original picture was taken.



The picture seemed to be a small part of a large 10' high by 15' wide mural picture above the aquariums. I believed that the answer to my quest was hidden somewhere in this mural...

I studied and studied the mural. I even had several Pet Smart employees helping me.

We physically searched the mural – NOTHING.

We investigated the snail aquariums (because of the picture of a snail) – NOTHING.

We counted the number of fish – NO HELP.

We looked in aquariums that had similar fish as in the mural – NOTHING.

We looked at the electrical box in the original picture – NOTHING.

Then, as I stepped back about mid-store and looked at the mural, I noticed that a large part of the mural was what looked like a piece of coral – or driftwood. I have a similar-looking piece of driftwood in the backyard at home. Maybe that was it. It was back to the house...



I searched all around the driftwood at home, but - NOTHING

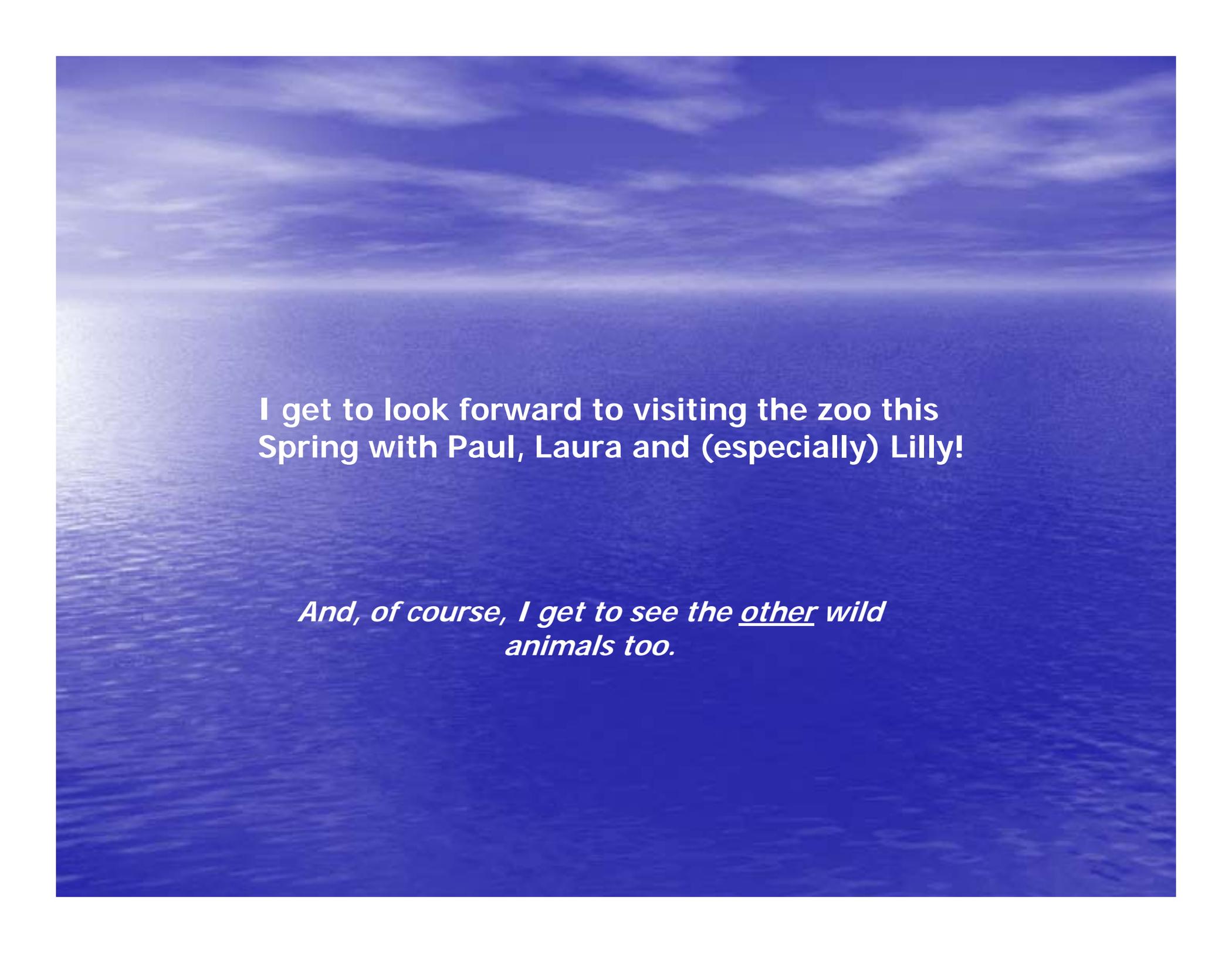
Then I guessed that maybe I was paying too much attention to the mural and not enough to the confines of the actual picture taken. It was back to Pet Smart to more closely examine the area included in the photograph.



Sure enough, after about 20 seconds of searching I discovered a CHALLENGE 6 sheet of paper in a small plastic bag hidden on the backside of the metal channel aquarium stand, fastened with small magnets.

The paper gave directions to someplace in Atlanta on Georgia Avenue. I later learned that it is the Atlanta zoo. Paul suggested I wait until Spring before I go there. I bet I'll see Paul, Laura and Lilly there!!



A blue-tinted photograph of a vast ocean under a cloudy sky. The water is a deep blue with gentle ripples, and the sky is a lighter blue with wispy white clouds. The horizon line is visible in the distance.

I get to look forward to visiting the zoo this
Spring with Paul, Laura and (especially) Lilly!

*And, of course, I get to see the other wild
animals too.*

That was my Christmas '07 CHALLENGE Experience.

It was fun to solve the puzzles, locate the clues, work with Georgene and Tammy – but mostly to meet up and spend time with Paul, Laura and Lilly at the end of each CHALLENGE.

This has turned out to be my most precious Christmas gift ever. My undying thanks to Paul for all his time, ingenuity and hard work in setting up these CHALLENGES, and for his thoughtfulness in realizing that the best Christmas gift possible was to be able to spend some quality time with him and his beautiful family.

Oh, Laura gave me a special
Christmas present too...

It was a large box with ten individually wrapped gifts inside – each with a witty saying relating to...

*Now that you're retired...
Here are the ten best things
about Staying at home!*

Tom-
This comes from one OCD person to the other! Have fun being a "Kept" man! "Kept" really means kept busy by:
K- Keeping a clean house
E- Errand running
P- Personal Chef all hours of the day/night
T- Top-notch handyman work!
Nobody told you that you would work less at work and more at home after you retired! Did you think you'd get to eat pizza and drink beer all the time? Soap operas can be quite deceiving! We don't really get to eat all the bon-bons we want and drink diet coke - or for a guy's case it would be pizza and beer! I hope you enjoy retirement!

Love,
Laura



They consisted of cleaning supplies, duct tape, laundry aids, toilet scrubs and various "house-husbandly" items....

Of which I made very good use of...



The duct tape came in handy. I finally patched that crack in the concrete basement wall.



The toilet cleaning supplies came in handy – although when cleaning my toilet I needed some additional tools.



The floor cleaning supplies worked almost too good on the downstairs bathroom floor. It not only removed the dirt – it removed the linoleum!

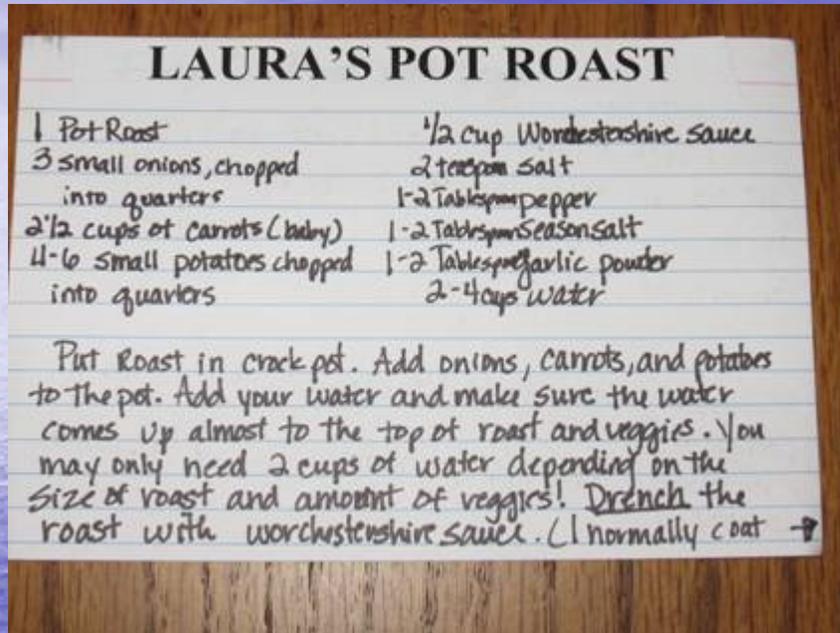


The glass cleaner worked great on the downstairs bathroom mirror. The mirror's so clean – you can't even see it.



The new laundry detergent allows me to get in some really **BIG** loads.

Also included was a recipe for "Laura's Pot Roast".



You don't get to see the reverse side. Us premier chefs have to keep our trade secrets safe.

The Master Chef in action.

Laura also got Kilar a Christmas gift. It was a feeding/potty/grooming/vet appointment schedule.

I let Kilar fill it out herself...

KILAR!

Schedule	Food	Potty
Morning	TOM'S FACE	
Mid-Morning	CHICKEN	ANTIME/ ANYWHERE
Noon	STEAK	I DAMN WELL WANT TO!
Mid- Afternoon	LAURA'S POT ROAST	
Evening	PRIME RIB	
Before Bed	MARTINI	

Grooming Appointment:
YOU CAN'T IMPROVE
ON PERFECTION!

Vet Appointment:
JUST TRY GETTING
ME CLOSE TO ONE
OF THOSE BUTCHRS!



A man with short brown hair and blue eyes, wearing a grey long-sleeved sweater, is sitting on a dark couch. Behind him is a wall with a floral painting. Two thought bubbles are superimposed on the image. The bubble on the left contains the text 'Thank you Paul, Laura and Lilly.' and the bubble on the right contains 'I love you very much.'

**Thank you Paul,
Laura and Lilly.**

**I love you very
much.**



You mean **THAT'S**
my daddy!?